ESL FOR NATION-BUILDING:
THE ORIGINS OF FEDERALLY-FUNDED ESL IN CANADA

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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University of Toronto

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Abstract

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Master of Arts, 1997

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The purpose of this thesis is to study the origins of federally-funded ESL in Canada and to argue that political elites played a definitive role in the introduction of the classes as part of a post-war nation-building strategy. Nation-building in Canadian history has consisted of the exclusion and marginalization of immigrants and the perpetuation of the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. I show that ESL instruction was introduced in 1947 not as a tool for ESL fluency but to preserve Canadian “values,” “norms” and “our way of life.” Political elites regarded this form of instruction as a guarantee of national unity in the post-war era. Understanding the limitations of current federally-funded ESL programs necessitates examining the interconnections of ESL, citizenship and federal nation-building strategies. This thesis relies on a system for identifying covert racist discourse to analyze these interconnections.
Dedicated to

David Skafason

Gloria Gomez Ciccarelli
&
Nazareno Ciccarelli
Acknowledgements

This thesis required a great deal of work on my part and on the part of those who guided me through the process. I would like to thank the members of my thesis committee first. I am privileged to have had Sherene Razack as my supervisor. Her guidance and insistence that I read "one more book" and "one more article" were indispensable to my writing. In addition, her creative criticism and comments inspired me to delve deeper into the questions I raised. Thank you so much. Alison Prentice, my second reader, provided me with a dosage of reality when I felt overwrought with anxiety. Her words of encouragement became my mantras. Now living in Victoria BC, she will be greatly missed at OISE.

My friends have been invaluable to me for the past two years. Their words of encouragement and helped me through the darkest stages of the thesis-writing process. Kerrie Kennedy deserves special mention. I benefited tremendously from our chats and her insights. We began as fellow students and have become strong friends. Joanna Cohen has been an unfailing advocate of my education. I am grateful to her for her empathy and willingness to spend long hours with me at the Robarts library. Awad Ibrahim’s enthusiasm for this project gave my ego an incredible boost. He believed in this thesis and prompted me to “write it all down.” Words cannot express how much I appreciated his advice and well wishes. Lisa Alexandrin gave me her time and ears when I needed some one to talk to.

The staff and librarians at the OISE and Robarts libraries at U of T helped me find all those documents which I might otherwise have given up on. Special thanks to Isabel Gibb of Interlibrary Loans at OISE and the staff of Interlibrary Loans at Robarts. I must also thank the librarians at Government Publications of Robarts who often used their intuitions in helping me locate obscure pamphlets and other federal publications. One final word of gratitude to Kamlesh Sharma of OISE’s Circulation Dept.: the best boss I have ever had and great champion of higher education.

Lastly, I wish to express my debt of gratitude to my family. I want to thank those who stopped asking when I would finish writing my thesis. My parents have been the source of inspiration behind this thesis. Their hard work and perseverance humbled me and caused me to dedicate myself to the study of education and immigrants. I am grateful to them for believing in
me and for supporting me every step of the way with their love. I could not have finished this project were it not for the emotional and practical aid of my partner and friend, David Skaftason. This thesis was not completed without cost to him. He provided me with clarifications on SLA theory, a critical ear, useful pointers, discriminating editing and unswerving love and patience. I hope to one day repay him by giving him as much as he has given me in the past four years. This thesis is dedicated to him.
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Preface

I remember that when I was between ten and thirteen years of age I was the major communicator between my parents and Toronto society. I was their ears and their voices. They studied long hours, they practiced verb drills, they went to English as a Second Language classes, yet it seemed that they were not learning English fast enough or adequately enough. One of their priorities upon arrival in Canada was to learn English as soon and as well as possible. There was never any doubt in my mind that my mother and father studied willingly and diligently. The connection between the acquisition of English and a good job was patently clear to them and by extension to me. Of particular interest to my parents were the federally-funded English as a Second Language (ESL) classes available through the Manpower offices.¹ As a woman, my mother was not eligible for these classes because only (male) heads of households were qualified to attend. My father was placed on a waiting list. Counsellors at the Manpower Centre tried to persuade my father to withdraw his name from the ESL waiting list telling him that his knowledge of English was adequate enough for the construction work he was doing at the time. He, however, wanted to put his degree and job skills to work here in Canada. He regarded construction work as a temporary job until he could learn to master the English language and pursue a better-paying career. He waited for six months to be called for the ESL classes. Finally, in desperation, he feigned an accident at the construction site so that he could take time off from work and be granted a seat in the ESL classes. Most of the ESL my parents learned was self taught. Because my mother had been a teacher back home she prepared class plans replete with verb drills, new vocabulary, idioms, sentence structure and so on. Given the importance of ESL they could not understand why the federal ESL classes were so inaccessible. The supply could not keep up with the demand.

That was in 1978. Without the necessary linguistic skills their chances of practicing their professions again were severely limited. For a long time they worked in low-paying, hazardous, dead-end jobs. Eventually they worked their way up to jobs related to their careers, yet neither of them ever regained the professional status they enjoyed in their homelands. Presently, there are thousands of immigrants in Canada who like my parents before them are desperate for ESL skills. However, under the present federally-funded ESL program they cannot learn as much ESL as they would like. Little has

¹ The federal government's "Manpower" offices have been renamed "Canada Employment Centres."
been done to make ESL classes more accessible for immigrants. For example, eligibility to ESL classes is more open to women but there are still many obstacles women must overcome on the way. Childminding is still quite limited and very few women can afford to pay for a private caregiver. Many immigrants also find that they must choose between work and ESL instruction because they cannot collect unemployment insurance while enrolled in classes. Without ESL fluency the job prospects of non-English speaking immigrants are poor. Being forced to choose between ESL instruction and other family and financial obligations leads to what some critics have called the “vicious cycle” of ESL. The result is the ghettoization of non-English speaking immigrants in the margins of society and the labour market. The image of the nation is that it is divided amongst those who speak English and those who do not, who are not seen, who are not heard. Lack of English language skills is but one of the many obstacles faced by immigrants on the road to full participation in Canadian society. However, it is one of the first and most obvious barriers an immigrant must overcome.

If immigrants are not learning adequate ESL, it is not because they have failed to learn, rather the system of ESL provision has failed them. The reason it has failed them is because ESL, as it was originally introduced by the federal government, was not meant as a tool for ESL proficiency but as a means to acculturate immigrants to Canada’s “values”, “norms”, and “way of life.” The impetus for this study came from the disillusionment I experienced with the general evaluation of ESL programs thus far. Canada’s present immigrant language training policy was introduced as a means to do away with the inequalities of preceding programs and to remove barriers to access to ESL. However, a close examination of LINC and LMLT revealed that the agendas of Canada’s ESL learners’ had gone unnoticed, old issues have been left unaddressed and new inequalities and barriers were created. In addition, ESL critics failed to see ESL in a historical context. I felt that to understand LINC and LMLT it was necessary to trace the roots of federally-funded ESL to their source: a movement for national unity and post-war nation building.

This thesis looks at the historical roots of federally-funded ESL instruction in Canada and argues that political elites played a decisive role in their implementation. The chapters are arranged to guide my argument. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the topic and an outline of my methodology. The point here is to show that Canada’s immigration policy has been used to exclude certain immigrants on racial grounds. Political elites legitimized a system of selective immigration by arguing that racialized immigrants were unassimilable and undesirable for Canada’s future. Their overt racist discourse focused on the inferiority of “others” and the superiority of Anglo-Canadians. Following the Second World War, immigration officials continued to discriminate against racialized
immigrants but their discourse was more subtle and covert. The shift to covert racist discourse was the result of a post-war movement for nation-building. This movement involved the opening of the immigration gates to accommodate a greater demand for labour. More importantly, the shift to covert racist discourse was part of the movement to promote national unity. The question of unity and security during the war developed into plans to introduce Canada’s Citizenship Act. The unity of Canada and the identification of non-Anglo immigrants to the dominant culture was to be assured through Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction. Teun A. van Dijk’s system for identifying covert racist discourse is the basis for my methodology and is explored in detail here.

Chapter two explores several theoretical perspectives of ESL in an effort to examine some of the assumptions theorists make about the objectives of ESL instruction. It also tries to argue in favour of a theory of critical ESL. The theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) initiated the study of ESL from the point of view of linguistics. SLA remains a major field of study but its focus is on improving teaching methods in order to improve ESL learning. Until recently, little attention was given to the effect lack of ESL has on immigrants’ lives. Liberal ESL critics expanded on the work of SLA theorists by analyzing this cause and effect relationship. Their approach consists of finding solutions to the structural problems in ESL programming but problem-solving solutions cannot address the problems which originate in ESL policy. Feminists working in ESL see the problems in ESL programming as arising from sexist and racist ideologies supported by social structures of domination. They do not view ESL as a panacea to immigrants’ social, economic and political marginalization and dismiss such a notion as a myth. Critical Pedagogy theorists insist that education plays a role in maintaining and legitimizing inequality. They also believe that education is a function of myth-making because certain dominant realities are reproduced at the expense of “other” realities. This view of education is crucial to my theory of ESL for nation-building.

Chapter three is dedicated to analyzing the political text/talk which led to the introduction of federally-funded ESL in Canada. Here we trace the bureaucratic road to the adoption of the Citizenship Act and Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction in 1947. On one hand, politicians worked behind the scenes and conceived ESL as a means to preserve the dominant language and culture of Anglo-Saxon Canada. They believed that by providing immigrants with Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction they were taking a step towards securing post-war national unity. On the other hand, Members of Parliament lent credence to the national-unity movement through their talk in the House of Commons. Van Dijk’s system for analyzing covert racist discourse is instrumental to understanding how political elites
envisioned post-war Canada. The result was the establishment of an ESL policy aimed at the preservation of the status quo.

Chapter four is not merely a conclusion to the thesis. Here I argue that political elites continue to employ covert racist arguments to legitimize the exclusion of immigrants from Canada and that ESL is still regarded as a tool for nation-building. The prerogative of the programs introduced in 1992 is to orient immigrants to the “Canadian way of life”, “our” values and “our” customs. The programs are not geared to fluency in ESL and the structural barriers which existed in the past are still in place. ESL critics in the 1990s continue to recommend problem-solving solutions to the flaws in ESL programming. Liberal ESL critics disregard the interconnections of ESL programs, ESL policy and immigration in the process of building a nation and preserving the dominant language and culture of Canada. I end by speculating on the potential of critical ESL instruction and making recommendations for further research.
Chapter One

Federally-Funded ESL: A Strategy for Nation-Building

In January 1997, Canada celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Canadian Citizenship Act. The Act symbolized a break from Britain and the emergence of a new post-war Canadian identity. January 1997, also marked the fiftieth anniversary of federally-funded English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction in Canada. The federal government introduced ESL classes in conjunction with citizenship training. There were six conditions that prospective Canadian citizens had to meet before a judge granted them citizenship.

- adequate knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship
- adequate knowledge of one of Canada’s official languages
- five years of residency in Canada
- be of good character
- minimum of twenty-one years of age
- intent to reside permanently in Canada

Government sponsored Basic English/Citizenship classes became available throughout Canada in 1947 and were aimed at helping immigrants meet the first two conditions listed above. The Citizenship Act came about as a result of a government movement to promote national unity during and after the second world war. This thesis is a study of the origins of federally-funded ESL and argues that political elites played a definitive role in the introduction of the classes as part of a nation-building strategy. ESL was conceived as a tool for national unity because it worked to preserve the dominant culture of Canada as white, English-speaking and Anglo-Saxon.

In this chapter we will look at the theory of racist covert discourse which is central to my analysis of racist nation-building. Before the war, politicians used overt racist arguments to exclude racialized immigrants from Canada and Canadian society. Conceptualizations of Canada as a white man’s land were based on racist ideologies and relied on discourse for legitimization. Following the war, a shift to covert racist discourse allowed political elites to continue to exclude immigrants based on race while creating the image of post-war openness. This shift was the result of a movement to promote national unity.

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1 Canada Department of the Secretary of State. Proud to be Canadian,(Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1987), 7.
Benedict Anderson explains that nations, nationality and nationalism are cultural artifacts that can best be understood in terms of history: how they come into being and how their meanings change over time. Nations are imagined because "the 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."\(^2\) The political debate on national unity during the war centred on Canadian identity and the place of non-British immigrants and in particular non-white immigrants within the "imagined community"\(^3\) that was Canada. The meaning of national unity and the identification of Canadians were under greater scrutiny during the war. Politicians identified strongly with the British war effort and considered it the duty of Canadians to enlist. However, the war also provided an opportunity for political elites to express their racism and demand that action be taken against "enemy aliens." Enemy aliens were those immigrant Canadians whose homelands happened to be at war with Canada. Those political elites who had regarded non-white and non-Anglo Canadians as undesirable and outsiders now found cause to express their hostility and claim that Canada needed to get tough with immigrants and unite the nation behind the war. The rhetoric in favour of the regulation of minority Canadians centred on the claim that unless controlled, Canadians and Canada (white, Anglo) risked the possibility of ethnic disloyalty and sabotage. This classification of non-Anglo Canadians as possible traitors was unfounded considering the high enlistment record of minority Canadians.

The government employed two strategies for building a united war effort. On one hand, the War Measures Act allowed the government to take any steps necessary to eradicate all threats to national security and Canadians. Some of those measures included the internment and/or deportation of enemy aliens, fascists and communists, as well as those suspected of sabotage and espionage. On the other hand, the government charged the Department of National War Services with the responsibility of promoting loyalty to Canada amongst minority groups. The Nationalities Branch, the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship (CCCC) and the Bureau of Public information, all branches of the Department of National War Services, relied on public education to promote national unity. The work of the Department of National War Services was to promote national unity by encouraging ethnic and racial minorities to identify with Canada and persuading

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\(^3\) Anderson, 6.
Anglo-Canadians to accept minority Canadians. Political elites imagined that Canada’s unity depended on the identification of non-Anglo Canadians with the dominant Canadian group.

As the war neared an end, the government of MacKenzie King foresaw the benefits of a united nation for economic growth in peacetime. The work of the Department of National War Services developed into a discussion concerning post-war nation-building. The heads of the CCCC studied the issue of citizenship and recommended that the government institute a Citizenship Act which would recognize all immigrants as Canadians regardless of country of origin. These politicians recommended that public education for national unity be carried over into peacetime. Citizenship training, they suggested, would teach prospective Canadian citizens the value of democracy, the rights and privileges of citizenship, the Canadian way of life, and provide those who spoke neither English or French an opportunity to learn these languages at the basic level.5

1947 was thus a monumental year for Canadian nation-building. The Citizenship Act became law, a new immigration act was passed, and for the first time in Canadian history the government sponsored ESL classes. Another reason why this was a monumental year for nation-building was that politicians now identified Canada and Canadians in different terms. MPs followed the lead of the politicians and civil servants responsible for the Citizenship Act and adopted a new political discourse. Overtly racist references to ethnic and racial minority Canadians were less common. The nation was no longer described as one plagued by smaller nations but as a nation made up of diverse but equal elements loyal to “one common country.”7 Rather than being labeled foreigners and aliens, politicians spoke of minority Canadians as “newcomers.”8 No longer did the government concern itself with assimilating immigrants.

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9 Canada, House of Commons Debates (Ottawa: King’s Printer, Feb. 17, 1938), 588.
Policy papers now outlined ways of helping immigrants integrate into Canadian society and alluded to Canada’s long history of tolerance.11

According to Teun A. van Dijk, political elites have the power to change public perception because they have access to the public mind and the tools with which to manufacture consent.12 The purpose of the shift in political discourse was to create an image of a post-war united Canada. In 1948, the government assured Canadians that the country would remain as united after the war as it was during the war and that Canadians were united in their diversity.13 However, the problem with perceptions of national unity is that they can be deceiving. Creating such an image of unity, first of all, required that political elites omit the disunities which had existed during the war. The issue of conscription had divided Canadians and had severe consequences for Ottawa-Quebec relations. In addition, the shift in political discourse acted as a camouflage for the continued application of racist ideologies in policy and law. For example, changes in immigration law did not preclude the continued exclusion of racialized immigrants. The passing of the Citizenship Act and the introduction of Basic ESL/Citizenship classes, did not stop political elites from identifying Canada as an outpost of British traditions. This chapter will attempt to show that Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction was shaped by the racist ideologies of political elites. Moreover their covert racist discourse contained within it a vision of ESL as a means for the “Anglicizing/Canadianizing” non-British immigrants. Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction was a tool for the preservation and reproduction of the dominant language and culture. The post-war nation that the political elite envisioned was not much different from the one they built before the war.

I believe that to understand the limitations of current federally-funded ESL programs we must first, place ESL in a historical context and secondly, examine the vision of Canada held by the political elites responsible for its introduction. Their vision of post-war Canada is evident if we analyze their political discourse. Teun A. van Dijk’s system for identifying covert racist arguments will provide the backbone for my methodology. Van Dijk’s work helps to explain my hypothesis that Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction reflected the racist ideologies of the political elite. I will rely on House of Commons debates, annual departmental reports, pamphlets and other federal

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11 Dept. of Citizenship and Immigration, Our Land (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1951).
13 National Liberal Federation of Canada, Resolutions: National Liberal Convention, 1948, 6-7
publications to show that politicians made use of van Dijk’s seven covert racist arguments to shape the form Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction would take. In his book *Elite Discourse and Racism*, Teun A. van Dijk writes that covert racist political discourse manifests itself in seven argumentative strategies. They are:

1. Positive Self-Presentation: Nationalistic Rhetoric  
2. Disclaimers and the Denial of Racism  
3. Negative Other-Presentation  
4. Firm, but Fair  
5. For Their Own Good  
6. Vox Populi or White Racism as Threat  
7. The Numbers Game

Racism has and continues to be an integral part of nation-building. Throughout Canada’s history political elites have portrayed the nation as a land of opportunity. Seldom do we look beyond the political rhetoric or analyze the ways that political elites have discursively legitimized the exclusion, exploitation and marginalization of “racialized” immigrants in the process of building the nation. However, before we examine the role of racism in Canadian nation-building, we must dedicate some time to van Dijk and his work.

**Racism and Elite Discourse**

According to van Dijk, elites do not see themselves as perpetrators of racism. They see themselves as moral leaders and will disassociate themselves from racism as they define it. Van Dijk defines racism as a social system of group dominance. The actions of the dominated group are limited by the actions, influence and perceived wishes of the dominant group. Dominance defined as social control has both a cognitive and a social dimension. Dominant groups control access to valued social resources and they indirectly control the minds of others. Dominant groups do this through persuasive discourse and by others means (news reporting) which limit the acquisition and use of knowledge necessary to act in one’s own interest. Van Dijk focuses on this discourse dimension of dominance as a means to shape ethnic consensus about the legitimacy of white group dominance. If the social mind is formed by public discourse, and if public discourse is largely controlled by various elite groups, than it warrants searching for some of the roots of racism among elite groups themselves.

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14 van Dijk  
15 van Dijk, 9.  
16 van Dijk, 13.  
17 van Dijk, 21.  
18 van Dijk, 11.
Political elites are involved in the reproduction of a system of ethnic and racial dominance, but they do this in seemingly innocent ways. Their racist discourse is persuasive because their text and talk tries to convince the audience that a particular position is well founded, reasonable, and acceptable, whereas the opposing one is not. Racist discourse may incorporate egalitarian and humanitarian norms, it may be subtle and indirect, and may focus on so called negative characteristics of the “other” group while assuming the positiveness of in-group norms. Discourse both reflects and influences popular as well as other elite concerns. There are four ways in which discourse is interconnected. First, white politicians are members of the white-middle class group. As such they share social representations and receive feedback from their constituents. Secondly, politicians are influenced by academics and other state bureaucracies who form the opinions which are the basis of everyday legislation, and political debates. Thirdly, politicians are influenced by the media as a source of knowledge and opinion formation. Finally, political discourse influences other elites, organizations and both majority and minority populations at large. The thrust for the process of influence is top-down: “In ethnic and racial affairs, it is primarily administration and politicians who define the ethnic situation and set the terms and boundaries of public debate and opinion formation.”

Van Dijk’s analysis of racism and elite discourse is applicable to my theory that ESL was introduced as a tool for nation-building. First, van Dijk writes that when elites act as decision-making bodies they define and constrain the life chances of the groups for whom they have created policies. Secondly, van Dijk believes that central to the continuity of a system of racism is its reproduction. Racism continues as long as there are members of dominant white group or institutions that implement the system, share ethnic prejudices and engage in discriminatory practices. Thirdly, I agree with van Dijk that the argumentative moves of political elites reveal their underlying ideologies as well as their social, cultural, and political role in the reproduction of racism. In chapter three I will show that the political text and talk which preceded the passing of the Citizenship Act betrayed the racist ideologies of political elites. Their covert racist discourse influenced the shape Basic ESL/ Citizenship would take. As a result, the classes worked to define Canadianness for immigrants, failed to remove social barriers, and reproduced racist ideologies.

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19 van Dijk, 59.
20 van Dijk, 71.
21 van Dijk, 113.
22 van Dijk, 50.
23 van Dijk, 11.
25 van Dijk, 51.
Here in greater depth are the argumentative and semantic moves and rhetorical ploys which van Dijk used to identify covert racist political discourse. I will use these to identify the racist ideologies behind the introduction of Basic ESL/Citizenship and ESL policy thereafter.

1. **Positive Self-Presentation: Nationalistic Rhetoric**, consists of expressions of pride, self-glorification and positive comparisons with other countries. Affirmations about Our party, Our country, Our people being humane, benevolent, hospitable, tolerant and modern are a self-defence tactics. These affirmations function as a defence against potential doubts or possible objections.²⁶

2. **Disclaimers and Denials of Racism**, are sometimes uttered in response to negative accusations and other times when no accusations have been made at all. Hence, they are often a clear symptom of underlying prejudice or a sure sign of racism. The most common structure of a disclaimer consists of a positive self-presentation, followed by BUT, followed by a negative other presentation. An example would be “We are tolerant, BUT they abuse our tolerance.”²⁷

3. **Negative Other Presentation**; overtly racist talk such as “lazy” has been replaced with buzzwords such as “less motivated.” This is a subtle and indirect way of disparaging others. However, the intent remains the same. In order to reproduce a system of ethnic inequality, immigrants and minorities must be represented in negative terms. This in turn creates legitimization for policies that might otherwise be opposed on more humanitarian terms. Negative other presentation also includes “cultural threat rhetoric” which speaks of the threat of cultural differences. It allows drawing upon age-old prejudices, for example the threat of Islam, while simultaneously denying racism.²⁸

4. **Firm but Fair**, is a paternalistic strategy which is contradictory but quite effective. Firm can hardly be positive, but when it is combined with fair the meaning changes to a positive portrayal of a political strategy. It implies that those who are fair without being firm are unrealistic. This is a disclaimers that functions as part of a strategy of positive self-presentation, however, firmness, and not fairness, is actually being pursued and implemented.²⁹

²⁶ van Dijk. 72-76.
²⁷ van Dijk. 76-84.
²⁸ van Dijk. 84-93.
²⁹ van Dijk. 93-95.
5. *For Their Own Good*, another paternalistic strategy which works on the same premise as firm but fair. It displays empathy but the result is harshness. For instance, it might be argued that immigrants should go back to their own country and help build it up. In addition, it is assumed that the government is being common-sensical. Therefore, strict immigration is for the good of the indigenous population and immigrants.³⁰

6. *Vox Populi or White Racism as a Threat*, works to warn against motivating the intolerance, discrimination and racism of “the people.” The pretense of listening to the voice of the people conceals the fact that much of the resentment against immigrants is not formulated at the grass-roots level, but rather by conservative elites themselves. Hence a party might claim public support while at the same time prefabricating the conditions which help create the state of mind that gives rise to such support in the first place.³¹

7. *The Numbers Game*, is a rhetorical use of quasi-objective figures to produce scare tactics in the public opinion. Figures may not be lied about or exaggerated, it is the way that they are presented that makes them impressive. The result is that the immigration process is presented as “out of control.” Hence, family reunification and the birthrate of immigrants are used as arguments to suggest that it is not merely large numbers, but also the explosion of a demographic time bomb that must be feared. In addition, it is not the numbers per se, but the numbers of non-Europeans.³²

*Nation-Building and Racism: A Canadian Perspective*

Nation-building and political discourse go hand in hand as it is politicians who draft, debate, and legislate policies which affect the direction a country will take on a given issue. This could not be truer for Canadian immigration and citizenship policies as part of a nation-building. In the pre-World War Two years, the Canadian political elite used overt racist discourse to legitimize the exclusion of “racialized” immigrants in preference for those from Britain or other “Northern” countries. Following the war, racist ideologies remained entrenched in nation-building strategies but a new covert racist discourse disguised the government’s agenda. First, a shift to covert racist discourse camouflaged the continued application of racist exclusionary practices in immigration ³⁰ van Dijk, 95-98.
policy. Secondly, citizenship legislation was introduced as a method to promote national unity. Citizenship became an element of nation-building because Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction became the covert method of acculturализng immigrants.

Daiva Stasiulis and Rhada Jhappan argue that nation-building in Canada has consisted of cloning the British identity. Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis define Canada as a ‘settler society’; a society in which Europeans have settled, their descendants have remained politically dominant, and where a heterogeneous society has developed in class, ethnic and racial terms. The problem the political elite faced was how to build a white nation mirroring the cultural, ideological and political institutions of Britain while simultaneously meeting the economic needs of an expanding economy. Vic Satzewich explains that the ruling group dealt with this problem by dividing immigrants into two groups: those who were desirable future citizens and those “others” who provided cheap labour and never became citizens. Immigration and citizenship policies became crucial as mechanisms for the exclusion/inclusion of immigrants in Canadian society.

According to Philomena Essed, there is in all nations an ideology of differentiating “us” (the dominant group) from “them” (the dominated group) which is utilized to create a sense of group membership. The cohesiveness of the group depends on the cultivation of an ideology which supports the idea of innate group differences based on race and ethnicity. In the case of Canada, Anglo-Canadians identified themselves and their culture as the norm and created myths for the reproduction of Anglo-Canadian national unity. The myth of Canada as a white man's land “bleaches” our colonial past. First Nations peoples had inhabited Canada long before any Europeans set foot on its shores. Yet in the process of creating a Canadian identity Natives were differentiated from Canadians. Euro-Canadian “classifiers” “classified” Natives as uncivilized, exotic, and primitive. The result of

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35 Daiva Stasiulis and Rhada Jhappan, 111.
37 Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 23.
39 Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 23.
discursively framing first peoples in this manner was that it facilitated the maintenance and reproduction of hierarchical social and political relations. In addition, the discourse worked to gain the consent of Euro-Canadians. The "True North Strong and Free" was appropriated as symbolic of Canadian nationalistic discourse but did not include the Inuit and First Nations peoples. Soon Native peoples were forced off their lands and into reserves to make room for white settlers; people with the potential for becoming "Canadian."

The myth of the Canadian North encompasses the notion that Northerness equals racial supremacy because very few could endure its cold winters. Those accustomed to warmer climes were regarded as effeminate and lazy. Southerners could not measure up to Northerners. North became synonymous with strength, self-reliance, and morality. Canada drew a connection between itself and the peoples of Northern Europe but her doors remained closed to immigrants from warmer lands. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior from 1896 to 1905, is regarded as the settler of the west and the founder of the concept of selective immigration. In an article written for MacLean's magazine Sifton related the merit of sorting through immigrants and drawing out the best ones amongst them. He stated that the highest quality of immigrants came from the United States. Under the Americans were ranked the northern English and Scots. The rank of third was occupied by continental Europeans which included Norwegians, Hungarians, Swedes, Danish and Belgians. Under Sifton's direction, the bonuses of immigration agents were doubled if they recruited Northern immigrants. Other Canadian politicians also spoke openly about their preference for "white" and British immigrants. In their minds building a white nation demanded that Canada's character not be contaminated by weaker races from Southern climates where moral laxness and decay prevailed. In 1910, political elites incorporated the climate argument into immigration law. Section 38 of the 1910 Immigration Act prohibited immigrants belonging to "any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada." The limitation of immigration requirements effectively closed the immigration doors to any racialized group in the Southern hemisphere.

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41 Roth, 37.
45 Sir Clifford Sifton. "The Immigrants Canada Wants," MacLean's 1. no.16 (April, 1922), 32-34.
46 Sifton, 32-34.
47 Hawkins, 5.
48 Hawkins, 16-17.
49 Hawkins, 16-17.
David Theo Goldberg writes that racism is structural because it is embedded in state institutions. At the root of structural racism lies first, an ideology which makes it acceptable to exclude and deny and secondly, a discursive method for the reproduction of racism. In Canada, immigration policy has been the means to exclude certain immigrant groups and political racist discourse has been the means for the legitimization of this exclusion. In 1910, Superintendent of Immigration, William J. White stated that it would be wise to prevent more Oklahoma Blacks from immigrating to Canada. He stated that “there is so much Indian blood in the coloured man of Oklahoma, carrying with it all the evil traits of a life or rapine and murder, that it would not be easily assimilated with agrarian life.” His comments illustrated the racist notion that Blacks and Natives had a lower standard of morality. References to immigrants and morality were common and not even children were spared. Chinese workers were described as evil and dangerous and their children a threat to the morals of white children.

Racism is historically specific because the form that it takes is determined by the economic, political, social and organizational conditions of society. In the case of Canada, exclusionary immigration policies were flexible depending on the demographic and economic needs of an emerging nation. Desperate for farmers to settle the west, the state allowed unassimilable (but white) Mennonites to settle in Canada and maintain their distinctiveness and separateness. Political elites were more concerned with the benefits of Mennonite settlement and labour than keeping the land uninhabited. When cheap labour was needed non-Europeans immigrants were also permitted to enter the country. For example,

In the Charter granted to the Grand Trunk Pacific, provision was made by the Dominion Parliament to prevent the employment of Orientals during the construction of the road. Some years later, in view of the disinclination of the Canadian-born to navy under the conditions guarded suggestions were made that Chinese coolies be

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51 Goldberg, 41.
53 Hawkins, 10.
55 Essed, 12.
57 Stasiulis and Jhappen, 99.
admitted temporarily...to complete the delayed work on the mountain section of the new road.  58  

This was dangerous work that Canadian men had refused to do. In 1909, James Woodsworth, wrote that there was no objection to immigration from the Orient as long as it was limited to a few odd Chinamen willing to do the work white men found distasteful.  59

Ethnic and racial fragmentation became a central feature of the settler society’s labour market.  60 In The Bunkhouse Man, Edmund Bradwin explained that above all the ethnic and racial labourers stood Canadian-born, British, American, Scandinavian and German immigrants. To the “white men fell most of the positions which connote a ‘stripe’ of some kind, officials of one capacity or another.”  61 In contrast, Slavic “foreigners” whom he described as “slow and immobile, lacking initiative; rather careless about personal appearance,” provided “the human material for a camp boss to drive.”  62 Like Chinese labourers many Slavs died as a result of industrial mishaps.  63

Undesirable immigrants were expected to return to their homelands when their work permits expired. Despite occasional exceptions to immigration regulations, the final factor in the selection of permanent settlers and future Canadian citizens continued to be race. As early as 1872 the government passed the Immigrant Aid Society Act which provided services aimed at helping immigrants settle permanently on the land.  64 By the 1920’s the government had introduced the “3000 Families Scheme”, “The Dominion-Provincial Land Settlement Scheme” and “The Dominion-Provincial Training Farms Plan,” which provided immigrants with financial assistance for their passage to Canada and settlement upon arrival. These schemes the direct result of a collaborative effort between Canada and Britain.  65 The government also recruited the help of organization such as the YWCA, Canadian Council for Agriculture, Neighborhood Workers’ Association, and the Young Women’s Christian Association of Canada to help desirable immigrants “become established.”  66 In contrast, any immigrant who was considered either a threat to or incapable of assimilating to Canada was not permitted into

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60 Stasiulis and Jhappan, 99.
61 Bradwin, 100-101
63 Bradwin, 118.
65 Hawkins, 26-27.
66 Dominion of Canada, Report of the Department of Immigration and Colonization (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1926), 53-54.
Canada or excluded from Canadian society. For instance, MacKenzie King acknowledged the contribution of Indian labourers but did not believe that Indians were suited or adaptable to Canada because they were accustomed to a tropical climate and possessed manners and customs unlike Canadians.

Just as the government could make exceptions to immigration rules, it could also make entry into Canada more difficult. For example, the definition of Asia was expandable. When elites spoke of “Asiatics” they included practically all nationalities in the eastern hemisphere outside of Europe. “Asiatic” encompassed the southern border of the Soviet Union and the Black Sea and around the eastern and southern coast of the Mediterranean, all of Turkey and the countries around it and by association and extension the whole of Africa. Immigration regulations could also be manipulated to bar particular groups. In 1908 Ottawa sought to put an end to immigration from India. At the time, steamships arriving in British Columbia from Asia refueled in Hawaii. An order-in-council was passed to “Prohibit the landing in Canada...of any immigrant who was to come to Canada otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of which he is a native and naturalized citizen...” Writing retrospectively in 1941, Stephen Leacock wrote: “Hindu immigration to British Columbia was ingeniously sidetracked by the ‘continuous journey’ rule, as smart a piece of legislation as any that ever disenfranchised Negroes in the South.” Chinese immigrants were subject to a head tax which steadily increased and finally dropped in 1921 only to be replaced by the stricter Chinese Immigration Act. The Japanese, did not have to pay a head tax but were only allowed to enter Canada in accordance with the Gentlemen’s Agreements between Canada and Japan. These agreements limited Japanese immigration to 400 per year.

Canadians felt that the nation was the inheritance of the white settlers who had pioneered it. Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada between 1911 and 1920, insisted on keeping Canada white and British. He said, “British Columbia must remain a British and Canadian province, inhabited and dominated by men in whose veins runs the blood of those great pioneering

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69 Hawkins, 21.
70 Hawkins, 16-18.
73 Ferguson, 7.
74 Hawkins, 22.
races which built up and developed not only Western but Eastern Canada." Borden's words dismissed the reality of Native civilizations present in Canada before colonization as well French-Canadian society prior to the conquest of 1759. In addition, he disregarded the many other non-British communities throughout Canada which had played a major role in the building of the nation. One example is the large number of Black communities in Nova Scotia. Colin A. Thomson writes that Blacks were not included in the emerging national character because elites regarded Blacks as unsuitable and unassimilable to life in Canada. A 1911 issue of Maclean's magazine read that the "Ultimate Canadian Race" was bred from the best 'stocks' and did not include Blacks. Even if the assimilation of Blacks were possible, it would leave a 'tinge' of coloured blood on the ultimate race. 

As a process, racism begins with the classification of otherness/differences to create a racial hierarchy. This ordering of groups makes it justifiable to assign those at the bottom less worth. As "other" a group is not entitled to the same privileges as those who belong. Canadian citizenship was guarded and reserved for those who were selected to settle here permanently, embodied the culture and values of the dominant group, or were assimilable. Any group considered undesirable or unassimilable faced obstacles on the road to becoming naturalized or practicing his (women did not enjoy the federal suffrage until 1918) citizenship rights. For example, between 1915 and 1930, only 349 Chinese were naturalized. In 1931 naturalization became more difficult to obtain because Chinese applicants were required to acquire the consent of the Ministry of the Interior of China. Moreover, naturalized and unnaturalized Chinese were subjected to the same anti-Chinese legislative bills because the definition of a "Chinaman" was any native of the Chinese Republic not born of British parents. The discrimination against Chinese-Canadians was in direct conflict with the Dominion Naturalization Act of 1914 so that they were reduced to second-class citizens.

In contrast, to Chinese-Canadians British immigrants held a privileged position over non-British immigrants in regards to citizenship. British subjects enjoyed the same citizenship rights as any Canadian-born British subject. However, a problem arose in regard to racialized British subjects of

75 Hawkins, 21.
78 Goldberg, 50-53.
79 Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 15.
Commonwealth countries. By law all British subjects were entitled to a privileged status of immigration within the colonies. The Canadian government was determined to limit immigration from the West Indies. In 1923, West Indians were stripped of their preferential immigration status. The term British subject was limited to nations with predominantly white populations. These countries were South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, United States, Newfoundland, Irish Free State, Northern Ireland and Great Britain. White Canadians were also of the opinion that Blacks should not be admitted as equal partners in Confederation, sit in Parliament, or become enfranchised. These were privileges that were automatically granted to newly arrived immigrants from Britain.

Stasiulis and Jhappan add to Anderson’s theory of imagined communities by saying that national collectivities are ‘imagined communities’ which are ‘culturally fabricated.’ That is, nations share in historically specific myths of common origin and common destiny. In addition, collectivities conceive their imaginary unity against other possible unities. This is true of Canada. First, the nativist movement in Canada claimed that the country was plagued by little nations within the nation. In an article entitled “Immigration and Nation Building,” George Exton Lloyd wrote, “The question for Canada is this: Can we build up a great nation while racial groups with different traditions, instincts, and ideals are being poured into the country?” He went on to claim that hyphenated Canadians would demoralize “our British institutions.” In 1901, Frank Oliver, later Minister of the Interior, targeted Slavs as a hindrance to Canadian nation-building:

“There is nothing [Canadians] more earnestly resent than the idea of settling up the country with people who will be a drag on our civilization...We want to build a nation...we could enjoy, be proud of and transmit to our children; and we resent the idea of having the millstone of this Slav population hang around our necks.”

Secondly, myths of common origin and destiny legitimized the reproduction of the dominant culture via immigration policy. Arguments of racial inferiority were aimed at excluding racialized immigrants while claims of cultural inferiority were used against immigrants other than British and northern European. Southern and Central Europeans, for example, were considered

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82 Burnet, 37-38.
83 Hawkins, 20.
84 Colin A. Thomson, 22.
85 Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 20.
86 George Exton Lloyd, 105-106.
87 Canada, House of Commons Debates (April 12, 1910). 2939.
culturally inferior, their only value being their brute strength and manual labour. In 1928 southern European immigrants were rejected in preference for Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish, German, Swiss, Dutch, Belgian and French immigrants.

Thirdly, an ethnocentric view of the past and future of Canada resulted in feelings of entitlement amongst Canadians who believed that it was their destiny to bear the fruits of the land. During the Yukon Gold Rush, white diggers expressed resentment of Asian speculators: "a totally different race, with a different language, clothing, customs and way of life [was] cutting in on their territory and taking a share of their findings..." White veterans of the First World War also expressed sentiments of entitlement as well. They demanded that non-Anglo immigrants give up their jobs to them. Accusations of communism were used to fire up public opinion against ethnic and racial minority labourers and thus force them to leave their jobs.

Canada experienced a peak in immigration just before war broke out in 1914. Between 1907 and 1916, 2,227,245 immigrants entered Canada. War and depression in the 1930’s cause immigration levels to drop considerably, the years of the Second World War being the lowest at 193,314. Both wars intensified the racism and ethnocentrism of Anglo-Canadians against minorities in Canada. The internment, dispersion and repatriation of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War is often cited as the worst case of racism during the war. Ann Gomer Sunahara believes that the war against Japan gave the Canadian government, and in particular British Columbia politicians, the opportunity to be rid of Japanese-Canadians forever. Although immigration levels had fallen considerably during the war Canada continued to practice a racist/ethnocentric/anti-Semitic immigration policy. For example, political elites refused to admit Jewish refugees. In 1938, a group of Czechoslovakian Jews had been refused admission. When they applied once more as Christians and were given entrance visas. In 1940, a senior immigration officer

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89 Hawkins, 27.
90 Hawkins, 10.
92 Satzewich, 303.
94 Sunahara, 161.
would not admit Polish Jewish children but conceded to admitting "Roman Catholic Jewish children."  

Immigration levels jumped again in peacetime. Between 1947 and 1956 1,315,457 entered Canada. Peace allowed the government to plan for post-war reconstruction. Reconstruction involved two concurrent nation-building strategies. First, nation-building necessitated meeting the labour needs of a booming economy. Secondly, nation-building required a new post-war Canadian identity. It is no coincidence that a new immigration act and the Citizenship Act were introduced the same year.

**Post-war Nation-Building**

There are several "conventional theories" explaining why the Canadian government re-opened immigration following the war and introduced citizenship legislation as a tool for nation-building. The most common explanation for the rise in post-war immigration is that a shortage of workers and lobbying from labour-intensive industries forced Ottawa to open the doors. Nevertheless, according to Harold Troper immigration officials refused to abandon their hierarchy of racial preferences. Asians continued to face legislative bars against their entry. In addition, immigration officials made use of what Troper calls "administrative tinkering" to make the entry of southern and eastern Europeans more difficult. "Administrative tinkering" was used to select 'Nordic' Displaced Persons, to restrict family reunification, and to limit the number of immigration offices in non-European countries.

There is no consensus for why the Citizenship Act was introduced. Paul Martin Sr., Secretary of State in 1945, credits his visit to a Dieppe cemetery as the event which prompted him to return to Canada with the idea of a new Citizenship Act. The many racial origins of the dead soldiers impressed him. He wrote, "Nothing has since epitomized the concept of our nation more poignantly than that cemetery. Of whatever origin, these men were all Canadians." Burnet

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95 Irving Abella and Harold Troper. *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*. (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1982), 1-2, 77-78.
96 Satzewich, 303.
99 Troper, "Canada’s Immigration Policy Since 1945." 259.
100 Harold Troper, "Canada’s Immigration Policy Since 1945," 260-261, 266.
writes that as a result of the fight against Nazism, policy makers grew aware of racism in immigration policy and society and attempted to address issues of discrimination.\textsuperscript{102} William Kaplan, on the other hand, attributes post-war nation-building to common Canadians who came out of the war with a stronger sense of themselves.\textsuperscript{103} Jack Granatstein asserts that Canada went into the war a fearful colonial people and emerged a nation.\textsuperscript{104} Following along these lines, a 1987 government document explains that Canadians were proud of their achievements and felt that giving people the right to call themselves Canadians was the next logical step in nation-building. The government in power agreed with common Canadians and began drafting a citizenship act.\textsuperscript{105} These arguments rely on naive assumptions about the goodness of Canadians as a whole and politicians as individuals and their patriotism. The passing of the Citizenship Act was a complicated process which began in the early years of the war, started at the top in the bureaucratic branches of government and gained legitimacy in the House of Commons.

Troper is correct in asserting that the immigration administration continued to apply racist mechanisms for the exclusion of immigrants. Later on the point system would be introduced acting as little more than an updated version of the “head tax.” The reason for this is that immigrants classified as entrepreneurs are admitted to Canada on the promise that they will invest money in Canada.\textsuperscript{106} In contrast to Burnet and Martin, Taylor is critical of the theory of that “enlightened” policy-makers were responsible for post-war changes in policy. He writes that in view of the long established tradition of racial exclusion, it was unlikely that racism would disappear overnight by administrative decree.\textsuperscript{107} Kaplan’s, Granatstein’s, and the government’s assertion that common Canadians were responsible for launching a citizenship movement and changes to immigration is also flawed. This theory ignores the certainty that policies emerge from policy-makers who are members of an elite class of decision-makers. Their decisions are based on supposedly universal practices which in fact originate in the dominant class and become naturalized.\textsuperscript{108} Policies reflect the interests of elites who dominate the state apparatus.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{102} Burnet, 115.
\textsuperscript{103} William Kaplan, 14.
\textsuperscript{105} Proud to be Canadian, 6.
\textsuperscript{106} Taylor, 11.
\textsuperscript{107} Taylor, 4.
Taylor brings up the idea that changes in immigration regulation were only cosmetic because the removal of racist language still left the racist agenda intact. However, he does not explain what overt racist language was replaced with nor the role that political elites played in sustaining a racist nation-building agenda. Racist language had not disappeared after the war; it became more complex, subtle and covert. Nation-building now relied on covert racist arguments for the exclusion of immigrants into Canada. Gone were phrases such as undesirability and unassimilability as the legitimization for exclusions based on race and ethnicity. The promotion of idea of national unity demanded that political elites adopt a new discourse. The focus of political discourse was now on inclusion based on adjustability, adaptability, and absorption so that exclusion based on race or ethnicity was not apparent. Post-war nation-building also relied on covert racist discourse for the promotion of citizenship. National unity became the rationale for the acculturation of immigrants. Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction became the covert method for doing this.

A speech made by Prime Minister MacKenzie King illustrates the shift to covert racist discourse. On May 1, 1947, MacKenzie King announced that the government would foster the growth of the population by the encouraging immigration. He lamented that transportation by steam ship from the UK was still scarce in 1947. Shortage of shipping meant that Canada must choose which immigrants would be granted priority entry. He warned that “the essential thing [was] that immigrants be selected with care, and that their numbers be adjusted to the absorptive capacity of the country.” The prioritization of immigration was completely justifiable, he asserted, because “Canada is perfectly within her right in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens.” King conceded that in the past Canada's immigration policy had “seemed” to place Chinese immigrants in an inferior category. The Chinese Immigration Act would be repealed and Chinese residents would now be naturalized. However, the government would not go as far eliminating all the bars on Chinese immigration. King closed his speech with these words:

There will, I am sure, be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the Orient would change the fundamental

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110 Taylor, 4.
111 Canada House of Commons Debates (May 1, 1947), 2644.
112 Canada House of Commons Debates (May 1, 1947), 2644.
113 Canada House of Commons Debates (May 1, 1947), 2645.
114 Canada House of Commons Debates (May 1, 1947), 2646.
115 Canada House of Commons Debates (May 1, 1947), 2646.
composition of the Canadian population. Any considerable oriental immigration, would moreover, be certain to give rise to social and economic problems... The government, therefore, has no thought of making any change in immigration regulations which would have consequences of the kind.116

King made use of several of van Dijk’s covert racist strategies: “Firm but Fair,” “Positive Self-Presentation”, “Vox Populi,” “The Numbers Game” and “Negative Other-Presentation.” MacKenzie King spoke opening the immigration gates but prioritizing immigrants in view of a shortage of people from the UK. He insisted that this was fair because it was Canada’s right to select future citizens (Firm but Fair). He prided himself in the abolition of the Chinese Act and the extension of citizenship to Chinese-Canadians (Positive Self-Presentation). However, he spoke on behalf of Canadians (Vox Populi) and declared that “large-scale” immigration of “Orientals” (The Numbers Game) would affect the “fundamental composition of the population.” By referring to the “fundamental composition of Canada,” King implied that Asians could threaten Canada’s racial make-up and dominant culture (Negative Other-Presentation). On the surface, it appeared that Canada was prepared to change its immigration policy and citizenship regulations. However, a closer analysis of the political rhetoric reveals that Canada was not completely willing to abandon its policy of ethnic and racial preference. The whiteness of Canada and the dominance of the Anglo-Canadian culture would be preserved. One way to preserve the “Canadian way of life” was through citizenship training.

In Canada there are three theories which have dominated discussion on immigrant adjustment. First, Anglo-conformity demands the rejection of immigrants’ culture and traditions and the adoption of the behaviour and values of the dominant Anglo-Canadian group. Secondly, the melting pot, envisions a biological merging of settled communities with new immigrant groups and a blending of their cultures to make a new Canadian type. Finally, cultural pluralism calls for the preservation of some aspects of immigrant culture and communal life within the context of Canadian citizenship and the political and economic integration into Canadian society.117 The “Melting Pot” was disdained by Canadians as an American experiment not suitable to Canada, and pluralism did not gain any popularity until the 1960s. Non-Anglo immigrants were expected to adopt the culture and values of Anglo-Canadians because those values and norms were established and because immigrants chose to come to Canada. Anglophone Canada saw itself as “an outpost of British institutions...Anglo-Canadians were in North America but were not

116 Canada House of Commons Debates (May 1, 1947), 2646.
Americans—they were British subjects resident in Canada. The national identity myth fixed on Canada as an integral part of British imperial destiny.”\(^{118}\)

The Department of the Secretary of State wrote that the Citizenship Act was introduced to “impress upon Canadians the value of citizenship and to promote national unity.”\(^{119}\) However, the Citizenship Act was also an opportunity for the government to do more than that. Basic ESL/Citizenship classes became a covert pedagogical tool for the preservation and reproduction of the Anglo-Canadian way of life. In chapter three we will see how the House of Commons debates leading up to the passing of the Citizenship Act influenced the shape that Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction would take. Political elites relied on covert racist discourse to argue that national unity depended on the transformation of immigrants into “Canadians.” The result of the political debates was that Basic ESL/Citizenship classes embodied the political elites’ racist conceptualizations of Canada.

Rather than providing immigrants with the linguistic tools to participate in the democratic process, Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction taught immigrants “habits and attitudes.”\(^{120}\) Of-course immigrants also received instruction in the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship\(^{121}\) and instruction in Canadian geography, history and government.\(^{122}\) However, great effort was also placed on teaching immigrants proper pronunciation because “How words are pronounced is almost more important than what words, when a person is living in anew country.”\(^{123}\) The Canadian Citizenship Branch was of the opinion that proper instruction and acceptance from “native Canadians” would help immigrants become Canadians “both in status and attitude.”\(^{124}\) Finally, the Department of Education of Ontario wrote that its programs were designed to give immigrants “essential information about Canada and our way of life.”\(^{125}\) These descriptions of the government’s goals for Basic ESL/Citizenship concur with the theory that


\(^{119}\) Proud to be Canadian, 6.


\(^{121}\) W.J. Lindal, Canadian Citizenship and Our Wider Loyalties (Winnipeg: Canada Press Club, 1946), 147.


\(^{123}\) Canadian Association for Adult Education, This is Canada (Ottawa: Department of Mines and Resources, 1948), 80.


citizenship is as much a rite of passage as a measure of the assimilation and/or adjustment of immigrants to the Canadian environment. 126

The Citizenship Act of 1947 did not introduce a new Canadian identity. The political elites controlling policy and nation-building continued to identify Canada as an extension of British colonialism. However, elites succeeded in creating the image of a new post-war united Canada. At the National Liberal Party convention of 1948, the government made clear its commitment to the idea of unity in diversity. National unity would be achieved through the recognition “in the spirit and in the letter, of the rights and privileges of the diverse elements which make up the population of Canada.” A truly Canadian spirit would be fostered by developing “loyalty to the common country.” The Liberal Party stood “for the effective participation of all the people of Canada in the national life as emphasized by the enactment of the Citizenship Act.” 127

The political rhetoric was only a screen. Canadian citizenship did not cut the ties with Britain and the Anglo-Canadian ideal. Citizenship continued to identify Canadians as British subjects. In addition, the content of Citizenship/Basic ESL classes showed that immigrants were expected to adopt the culture, values, norms of the dominant Anglo-Canadian society. The classes were compulsory for all immigrants. The exception to this rule were those who immigrated from Britain. The rationale was that British immigrants did not need citizenship or language training. However, any person wishing to partake of the classes was free to do so. British immigrants were also privileged in that they neither lost or gained anything by becoming citizens of Canada. They could vote in elections and run for office as British citizens. In contrast, non-British immigrants were required to renounce their allegiance to their homelands upon becoming Canadian. Moreover any immigrant who did not have an adequate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and adequate knowledge of ESL were not granted citizenship. Judging from the importance that the classes placed on teaching immigrants the “Canadian way of life” we are led to believe that acceptance into the Canadian community went beyond meeting the conditions for citizenship. Did immigrants give up their identities, culture, values, norms and language upon becoming Canadian citizens? Sherene Razack explains that when culture and acculturation are the framework of schooling, the focus of schooling is away from ‘the host’ and

on the 'foreigners.' Immigrants’ foreignness than becomes the problem to be solved.\footnote{Sherene Razack, “Schooling Research on South and East Asian Students: The Perils of Talking about Culture.” (Unpublished Document, 1995). 6.} The problem to be fixed through Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction was, as Frideres et al put it, how to "transform immigrants into Canadians."\footnote{James S. Frideres, S. Goldberg, J. DiSanto, J. Horna, “Becoming Canadian: Citizen Acquisition and National Identity.” 105.}

In the next chapter we will look at the philosophical interconnections between citizenship, ESL training, and nation-building. Chapter three will show that there was a shift in political discourse to covert racism. However, racist ideologies remained intact and the elites’ belief that Canada continued to be identified as “Anglo-Canadian” shaped the final look of Basic ESL/Citizenship classes. In chapter four we will turn our attention to the federally-funded ESL program introduced in 1992. We will examine the continued use of covert racist discourse in the legitimization of ESL policy and the enduring role of ESL in nation-building.
Chapter Two

The Interconnections of Nation-Building, Citizenship and ESL

In chapter one, I argued that Basic ESL/Citizenship was introduced as a key strategy in nation-building. In the pre-war years, political elites openly articulated the idea of Canada as a white, Anglo-Saxon nation. In the post-war years, the official rhetoric changed to one of unity in diversity. As I suggested, this change of rhetoric merely disguised and re-packaged the vision of Canada as white and Anglo-Saxon. ESL was regarded as a tool for the integration of this new yet old Canada. This vision of ESL made an important connection between ESL, citizenship and nation-building. In this chapter, I examine theories of ESL which help me show these interconnections. In addition, I provide a critique of ESL theories which fail to see these interconnections and which make racist assumptions about immigrants and their in/ability to learn a second language. Conceptualizations of the immigrant as other are particularly evident in traditional ESL theories.

The dominant theory in the study of ESL has been Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. Devised by linguists, SLA is a multi-branch theory used to explain how people learn a second language. Because SLA is dominated by linguists the focus has been on developing better ESL teaching for better ESL learning.¹ In recent years, Liberal ESL scholars, practitioners and researchers have given more attention to the consequences of inadequate programs for immigrants. Critical pedagogy and feminist theories encompass an analysis of political and social structures to better understand the effect of power relations on education. I chose to review these different approaches to ESL because they provide an overview to how the field has evolved and much farther it can still grow. My theory of ESL for nation-building cannot be supported from a SLA or Liberal ESL perspective. The problem with these theories is that they are focused on problem-solving and on the improvement of teaching strategies. I view the problems of ESL as far more complex and historical. In addition, I do not accept that education is neutral but believe that it is value-laden. Critical pedagogy affords me with the theoretical foundations to argue that at the root of Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction lay the belief that education could be used to perpetuate the dominant view of Canada and Canadianness.

Beginning in the 1940's, the field of ESL was influenced by theories of first language acquisition. The difference between language learning and language acquisition is that acquisition is a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing a language, much like a child "picking up" a language. Language learning, on the other hand, is a conscious process in which learners attend to form, rules, and are aware of their own progress. The debate in ESL has been whether immigrants learn or acquire ESL and how to improve upon the learning process. These are valid points for discussion but in the jumble of ideas scholars often ignore the social, political, and economic factors which affect the learning/acquisition process. It is important that we look at the origins of SLA theory to understand why critical analysis of ESL has been so slow in coming.

In 1945, Charles Fries revised the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which held that a more effective second language pedagogy would result if points of difference and similarity between the native language and the target language were identified. Contrastive Analysis theorists, called "Behaviorists", held that language acquisition was the product of habit formation and that learners must overcome the habits of their native tongue in order to acquire a second language. This, they believed, was to be accomplished through such techniques as memorization and imitation; the goal being automaticity. In 1959, Noam Chomsky began his attack on the behaviorist school of thought. Chomsky argued that language acquisition was not the product of habit formation but of rule formation. He claimed that humans possess an innate predisposition to induce the rules of a target language from the input to which they are exposed. He discovered that second language learners and first language learners commit similar developmental errors that are not due to interlanguage interference. Chomsky believed that SLA was, like first language acquisition, a process of rule formation.

Chomsky's ideas led to Error Analysis, which in turn led to much debate about Interlanguage. Interlanguage is the term used to describe the language system that a learner uses while advancing from his native language towards the acquisition of the second language. It was believed that the first

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4 Larsen-Freeman and Long, 52.
5 Larsen-Freeman and Long, 55
7 Larsen-Freeman and Long, 57-58.
language interfered with the second language thereby producing errors. Yet by the mid 1970s, this theory also began to fall into disfavour. Schachter and Celce-Murcia contended that focusing on errors alone was not enough. They argued that by paying so much attention to errors researchers ignored what learners did correctly. In addition, they asserted that identifying a unitary source for an error was impossible. Error analysis was not abandoned as a legitimate theoretical perspective. Instead it was incorporated into Performance Analysis which sought to understand second language acquisition in the process of development. There were four major theories within Performance Analysis which studied: morpheme usage, developmental sequence, learning strategies and formulaic utterances. These analyses acted as modes of inquiry which lead to the emergence of many fruitful careers. Under the broad umbrella of Nativist theories in SLA was Krashen's Monitor Theory. The Functional-Typological Theory of Givon came from the Interactionist side. Schumann's Acculturation model was part of the Environmentalist camp.

SLA theorists did not express overt anti-immigrant sentiments, however, during the early years SLA theory was covertly racist because the focus was on unlearning the first language. Immigrants were expected to learn how to "overcome their first language habits", "imitate the target language", and "prevent the first language from interfering" with the second language. First languages were classified as "other" because immigrants' native tongues were portrayed as undesirable, producing bad habits and impeding learning. In contrast, the English language was depicted as the desirable means of communication in "our country" and theorists claimed that immigrants should strive to imitate it and embrace it as their own. SLA theories, therefore, reflected the ethnocentric/racist beliefs of the theorists. SLA's disregard of the social environment in which ESL learning took place leads us to believe that SLA theorists viewed ESL learning as taking place in a vacuum.

It looked like the introduction of Schumann's Acculturation Model in the 1970s might shift the focus of SLA away from the learning process to the social conditions in which second language

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11 Larsen-Freeman and Long, 61.
learning takes place. However, Schumann's hypotheses did not veer far enough from the dominant ideologies of the time. He continued to view the individual learner as the single most important element in SLA success. In 1973, Schumann was involved in a project which studied the untutored acquisition of English amongst six Spanish speakers in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There were six subjects in his study: two children, two adolescents, and two adults. Once the project was finished Schumann continued working with Alberto, a thirty-three year old Costa Rican immigrant living in the United States. Alberto had been the least successful learner in the study and Schumann believed that had Alberto tried to achieve greater social and psychological proximity with his target language group (native speakers of English in Cambridge) that his English might have been improved. Schumann's criticism of SLA theory was based on his belief that that psychological factors alone could not be held accountable for second language acquisition. He wrote:

The effects of aptitude and motivation on proficiency in second language learning have been examined, but relatively little has been said about what social factors might influence the degree to which a second language is learned. Within the construct of social distance, this paper explores societal factors that either promote or inhibit social solidarity between two groups and thus affect the extent to which a second language learning group acquires the language of a particular target language group.

The Acculturation Model asserts that the extent to which a learner integrates into the host society affects the degree to which the second language is learned. According to Schumann, immigrant groups practice one of three integrative strategies: assimilation, adaptation, or preservation. Assimilation occurs when a second language learning group gives up its own life style and values and adopts those of the target language group. Adaptation is used to describe what happens when a second language group adapts to the life style and values of the host society but maintains its own life style and values for intragroup use. In the case of preservation, the group decides to maintain its values and lifestyle while simultaneously rejecting those of the host society. Each strategy has a different effect on the amount of a contact that is likely to take place between the second language group and the target language group. Consequently, the degree of integration affects the degree of second language acquisition experienced by the second language group. Assimilation is the favoured integrative strategy

19 Schumann, "Research on the Acculturation Model for Second Language Acquisition." 381.
because it maximizes contact between the two groups and therefore enhances second language acquisition. Adaptation is less preferable because it yields varying degrees of contact and thus produces varying degrees of target language acquisition. The least productive strategy, preservation, creates social distance which makes second language acquisition highly unlikely.20

In the 1970s, Schumann’s work was considered ground-breaking. However, there are several flaws in his interpretation of the role of social and psychological factors in the second language learning process. First Schumann assumes that immigrants can control the “social and psychological distances” which divide them from English speakers. To prove this, Schumann cited several examples of how Alberto had chosen to reject the life style and values of “Americans.” Alberto did not own a television (a mechanism for language learning), only played Spanish music on his new stereo, worked day and night instead of making time to attend ESL classes, made no effort to make friends with English speakers in Cambridge21 and lived in a Spanish neighbourhood.22 Schumann contested that Alberto’s pidginized speech was the result of his unwillingness to “close” the psychological distance between himself and native speakers of English in Cambridge. Schumann was so convinced of this that he refused to believe Alberto’s assertions that he wanted greater contact with English speaking Americans. When Alberto responded to a questionnaire regarding motivation and attitude, Schumann stressed that Alberto “tended not to like to displease and therefore his answers may reflect what he thought the experimenter wanted to hear.”23 Schumann deduced that by rejecting to close the social and psychological gaps between himself and American society, Alberto must have also “chosen” not to learn English adequately.

Secondly, Acculturation Model presumes that immigrants are in a position of power which may or may not exist. Schumann believed that any immigrant group who stubbornly chose to preserve its identity could only blame itself for its failure to integrate into the host society and not learn the new language. Schumann’s social factors did not include the structural and ideological barriers which are manufactured by a racist society. For example, it is doubtful that Alberto could have afforded to live in an affluent white neighbourhood. If Alberto could spare no time to attend ESL classes, it was probably because he needed to work day and night just to make ends meet. Nor did Schumann take into account that racist “Americans” might not want contact with Alberto. The closest Schumann came to admitting that immigrants may not be able to close the gap between themselves and English-speakers occurred

when he wrote: “American society in general expects them [Latin American immigrants] to assimilate as it does all immigrants, but it does not make the assimilation easy.” Schumann did not question why immigrants were expected to assimilate to the American way of life nor the role that he, as an elite member of academia, played in “manufacturing consent” for this idea.

There are several points that I want to make about Schumann before we move on to more recent developments in ESL scholarship. First, the notion that there existed “Social and Psychological Distance” between immigrants and the host society is important because it resembles the arguments used by Canadian elites to rationalize the inequalities experienced by racialized minorities in Canada. For example, immigrants are often blamed for their low job status because they supposedly chose not to learn English, have not learned to speak it fluently, or refused to assimilate to Canada. Secondly, Schumann never defines integration but we can assume that it is limited to cultural integration. In Canada, as in the United States, cultural integration hinges on assimilation into the myth of “our” society, “our” life style and “our” values. Integration for immigrants does not comprise economic, social or political equality to the dominant group. Finally, despite Schumann’s disdain for other SLA researchers, his work carried on the tradition of placing complete responsibility for the success or failure of learning a second language on the learner. This is equally true of Canadian research. In Canada, little thought was given to inadequate programming and its effects on immigrants lives until the 1980s. The tradition amongst ESL critics in Canada has been to seek remedies to the flaws and failures of ESL programs. However, even this strategy has its problems, as we will see below.

**Liberal Theories of ESL**

Since the 1970s, the analysis of ESL has gone beyond problems of effective learning/teaching to include questions of social, political and economic stratification caused by inadequate ESL programs. For example, critics are including such issues as discriminatory admission criteria, inaccessible educational facilities, inadequate assessments, poor federal funding, and insufficient learning hours into their researcher. This liberal approach is based on the belief that better ESL training must provide immigrants with the linguistic tools to open the doors that would otherwise be closed off to them. I call this approach liberal because the focus is on working within the problem-causing system to find solutions to the problems. This approach suggests that the acquisition of ESL is the panacea for immigrants’ problems. The marginalization of immigrants in Canadian society is a historical reality.

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consequently there is no easy way to "fix" the problem. Attempts at trying to solve the political, economic and social obstacles faced by immigrants through better ESL alone shows the disregard some scholars have of history and the mechanisms for the legitimization of the exclusion of racialized immigrants from society. I want to illustrate the limitations of a liberal approach to ESL by pointing to two reports of TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) Canada. The views of TESL Canada deserve attention because as an national organization, its influence is wide, it represents a large number of Canada’s ESL practitioners and researchers. Consequently, TESL Canada represents the dominant view of those involved in the ESL profession.

The arrival of South-East Asian refugees in 1979 forced ESL providers to question the efficacy of ESL provision. TESL Canada claimed that the problem of immigrants not receiving ESL had always existed, but never so glaringly. Their response to the crisis in ESL was to host a conference whose purpose was to find problem-solving solutions for the structural barriers in ESL programs. Soon after, TESL Canada published a position paper entitled The Provision of English as a Second Language (ESL) Training to Adult Newcomers: Six Principles Toward a National Policy. The report identified the aims of ESL as the provision of ESL for citizenship and functional literacy. Because citizenship is the main focus of ESL programming, students must be knowledgeable of and conversant in: the rights, privileges and responsibility of the individual vis-à-vis other individuals, the government and the community; the implications of becoming a Canadian; and the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens in regard to the vote, enumeration and so on. The report also stated that without functional knowledge of English, immigrants could not exercise their rights of citizenship (democratic right), they would be discriminated against in the labour market (labour right), be denied access to job training (education right), and be handicapped in obtaining equal access to federal and provincial services (equality right). TESL Canada recommended the establishment of a national ESL policy comprising six principles: accessibility, flexibility and sufficiency, coordination, settlement support services, Canadian content, and professionalism. The recommendations of the TESL Canada report were forwarded to the federal government.

The intentions of the TESL report of 1981 were clear; to reaffirm the objectives of federally-funded ESL and to inculcate the idea that Canada needed a national ESL policy which

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would address the most obvious structural problems in the delivery of ESL programs. However, by framing ESL policy in terms of problems and solutions TESL Canada failed to address broader issues which might have explained the origins of those structural problems. In other words, TESL Canada did not consider that the problems in ESL programming may in fact have been part of a strategy to ensure that Canadian society remained stratified along, racial, gender, class, and language lines. The result is a report replete with contradictions. For example, TESL Canada insisted that the prime goal of ESL training is citizenship preparation and that ESL learning must be "lifelong, second chance learning."\(^{29}\) The discrepancy here lies in the fact that functional ESL provided by the government is insufficient for immigrants to do little more than subsist in the margins if society. Read and MacKay explain that functional literacy enables learners to read unfamiliar material, perform problem solving, transfer knowledge to new contexts and write adequately. A learner who has achieved functional literacy can "cope" with the demands of society and "may be" able to achieve individual goals.\(^ {30}\) Functional literacy, therefore, is not a guarantee that immigrants will achieve the ESL proficiency needed to meet the demands that TESL Canada has in mind. TESL Canada treated functional ESL as the precursor for citizenship. We do not expect Canadian-born citizens to practice their labour, educational, and equality rights with functional literacy alone. TESL Canada’s welding of citizenship and functional literacy reduces immigrants to second class citizens.

Ten years later TESL Canada produced another report suggesting that the government had continued to neglect the inadequacies in ESL programming. The aim of the 1991 Magahay report was to promote the idea that ESL should lead to participation in society. This report stated that there were three phases in successful immigrant settlement: orientation, integration, and participation. Magahay claimed that at the orientation level immigrants were taught enough language skills to survive during the initial period of adjustment. Integration programs helped immigrants fit into Canadian society as productive members. The emphasis here was on rapid integration into the labour market. The final stage, participation, would encourage immigrants to take part in the full spectrum of economic, political, social and cultural life of Canada.\(^ {31}\)

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\(^ {29}\) TESL Canada Action Committee (1981), 19.

\(^ {30}\) Catherine Read and Ron MacKay, Illiteracy Among Adult Immigrants in Canada (Montreal: Concordia University, December, 1984), 5-7.

Magahay neglected to note that the federal government of Canada is not obligated to provide anything beyond ESL for orientation because it is bound to a long-established ESL policy of ESL for citizenship. Nevertheless, Magahay demanded that the state provide a higher level of ESL. We can praise Magahay for her conviction, but her report was marred by covert racist remarks. Magahay doubted that all immigrants had the capacity to pass through all three stages of settlement. For instance, she remarked on the difficulty Vietnamese immigrants face in integrating into Canadian society. She wrote that there was no consistent answer to how long the settlement process would take since much depended on a learner's motivation, background experience and goals. This statement is reminiscent of Schumann's idea of social and psychological gaps between the immigrant and the host society, and presumed choice. How could Magahay make demands on the federal government when she herself questioned immigrants' ability to become culturally integrated in Canadian society? The answer here is two-fold. First, the answer lies in the covert racist notion that somehow cultural inferiority is to blame for immigrants' marginalization. Secondly, Magahay is a member of the elite group which creates consent for and reproduces these exclusionary notions. The report showed that despite the heightened awareness of the marginalization of immigrants in society, elites such as Magahay continued to think of immigrants as "outsiders." Magahay also stated that settlement must be thought of in terms of survival, productivity, and employment. The implication here is that immigrants' failure to become settled leads them to become an economic burden on Canadian society. Her comment is meant, I am sure, as a condemnation of the government. Yet the implication that immigrants are potential economic burdens and non-immigrants are not is inescapable. The Magahay report, therefore, supports the notion that immigrants must be economically independent from the host society as soon as possible. What type of work immigrants might find without adequate ESL is not given much attention here.

Of course the two TESL Canada reports above do not represent a comprehensive sample of liberal ESL ideology. However, they are important considering the prestige of the organization. The problem-solving tradition has remained the bedrock of ESL scholarship. The problem with this approach is that it is limited because theorists and critics try to find solutions to the problems in ESL programming rather than questioning the social and political structures which produce those problems. Consequently, in the long term this is an ineffective methodology. Every newly elected government has a vision of ESL programs. The pattern has been that a new program is introduced and

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32 Magahay, 32.
the ESL profession reacts to it and makes recommendations for its improvement. I call this the "Band-Aid syndrome": one bandage covers another and another and the wound is never examined. ESL programs cannot be repaired without examining the policy behind them or the social structures and ideologies behind the policy.

**A Feminist Approach to ESL**

Neither SLA or Liberal ESL took a political stance or looked beyond the symptoms of inadequate ESL to ask how the problem-causing system works. In recent years more and more ESL scholars have paid attention to the unequal power relations which shape ESL policy and contribute to the subordination of immigrants. Feminism, in particular, has made a great contribution in this direction. Feminist methodologies examine ESL from the perspective that patriarchal and sexist ideologies place women in a position of inferiority. Race is often also added to the equation because while immigrants in general suffer discrimination it is women and women of colour who face the additional cumulative effects of racism and sexism. The problems that women face in accessing ESL are particular to them because of the sexism inherent in ESL policy. I believe that nation-building necessitates an underclass of labourers to do the work the dominant group refuses. This has been the role of immigrants in Canadian history. When one adds gender, colour and lack of fluency in the dominant language the result is an segment of society which is vulnerable and exploitable.

Wenona Giles writes that immigrant women’s inaccessibility to ESL can be traced back to Canada’s immigration policy. Canadian immigrant women seldom enter Canada as “independent” or “head of family” immigrants. Most often, immigration authorities classify women as “dependents” of a male immigrants. Immigration regulations define dependents as children and wives of males. This subordinate classification results in unequal access to ESL for women. Under ESL accessibility rules the “head of the household” (predominantly male) is given priority eligibility to ESL programs. Giles claims that without ESL women become part of the exploitable labour market and are made all the more vulnerable by their inability to speak English. Giles does not just state this as a matter of fact, but challenges the institutions which profess that we live in a just society. She writes that if Canada’s multiculturalism policy purports to provide equal access to society than multiculturalism is discredited by immigrant women’s inability to express their needs in English. This is an important point because it

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34 Giles, 131.
35 Giles, 129.
sets the multicultural myth against the reality of continued inequality in all its forms. Inadequate and inaccessible ESL are an affront to the multicultural ideal which presumes that barriers outside of language and culture are non-existent. Citizenship as an ideology and an institution makes the same assumptions about living in an equitable and just society. However, this myth falls apart if we consider that and fluency in ESL plays such a large role in practicing our democratic rights and privileges.

Milagros Paredes’ approach to the flaws in ESL relies on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory that there is an unequal distribution of linguistic resources in society. She claims that (non)access to ESL structures the lives of women by organizing their patterns of employment. Canada’s official languages are representative of linguistic capital because they provide access to society and the economic processes that create material capital. Sexist eligibility criteria in ESL is a means to control access to linguistic capital. Paredes believes that the role of the state has been to maintain an unequal distribution of this social resource. She echoes Giles in saying that these resources have not been distributed equally amongst immigrant men and women. Unequal distribution of resources has been a staple of Canadian nation-building. The inclusion of adequate knowledge of one of Canada’s official languages as a condition for citizenship combined with inadequate and inaccessible ESL is a means to ensure the unequal distribution of a linguistic capital and the continuation of a stratified society.

ESL training is the teaching of the transformation into “the Canadian identity”: the funneling of different cultures into one particularly white Anglo-Saxon mold. Kathleen Rockhill and Patricia Tomic write that ESL training is a mechanism for creating this “otherness” because the process of acquiring a second language involves the loss of identity for immigrants. The learning of English requires the subjugation of entire identities, knowledges, cultures, and histories. This process of identity loss is unknown to the privileged members of society because they are caught up in their arrogance of white supremacy. They need never have contact with immigrants because lack of ESL results in the segregation and ghettoization of “foreigners.” English functions to dominate and stream immigrant

37 Paredes, 23.
38 Paredes, 26.
women into low paying and low status positions. In addition, discriminatory ESL policies deprive immigrant women of opportunities to acquire English.

Rockhill and Tomic also argue that the institutional denial of language training is a screen for racism and classism. The denial of language training results in isolation, dependency, and bad employment. Their study is a departure from traditional analyses of ESL because they claim that the act of immigrating is intertwined with the sudden onset of racism, changing class positions, “shock” of departure, and the crisis of language. These changes cause feelings of vulnerability and psychological experiences of devaluation and low self-esteem. Tomic and Rockhill do not blame immigrants for these feelings, but assert that these psychological factors are a direct consequence of living in a racist, sexist and classist environment. In other words, immigrants are not held responsible for producing these psychological conditions themselves. The onus is shifted to the larger society and its ideologies of subordination. Rockhill and Tomic also insist that knowledge of ESL is not enough to break the vicious cycles which affect immigrants lives because racism continues after the acquisition of ESL. Immigrants often meet accent discrimination or the unwillingness of employers to recognize their foreign degrees. Accent discrimination is used by the dominant society to justify segregated spaces. It is a subtle form of racism and a process of devaluation.

Feminist ESL writers debunk the myth that acquisition of ESL will solve the problems immigrants face because there are other structural forms of racism and sexism which ensure that immigrants are stratified in the lowest ranks of society. The application of feminist philosophies to the critique of ESL has been particularly helpful in reinforcing my belief that ESL is a function of nation-building. First, feminist critics of ESL understand ESL differently from SLA or Liberal scholars. As a theory, feminism studies systems of subordination, consequently they do not attempt to stop at finding solutions to ESL programming or stating the current status of thereof. Feminism tries to envision an equitable future by challenging the sources of inequality in the present. Secondly, feminists do not view the acquisition of ESL as the panacea for immigrants social, economic and political problems. They dismiss this notion as a myth. Nation-building relies of myth-making: the myth that a nation is united and that ESL will lead to participation in Canadian society.

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My theory that ESL was introduced as a tool for nation-building relies on the notion that elites played a major role in the introduction of Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction. Feminist ESL critics have not drawn a connection between political discourse, citizenship, ESL and nation-building. The theory of Critical Pedagogy helps draw these links because it works to explain first, the role of political elites in producing a particular history/vision of Canada and secondly, how they used Citizenship/Basic ESL instruction to reproduce it.

**ESL in a New Light: Critical Pedagogy**

In chapter three I will show that federally-funded Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction was conceived by political elites to promote national unity. By employing van Dijk’s system of identifying covert racist discourse I hope to show that political elites believed that national unity depended on the preservation of the English language and the reproduction of the dominant culture. The question I want to tackle here is how education is manipulated by political elites to perpetuate a particular view of the nation. The theory of critical pedagogy has its roots in the literacy movement but its key concepts help support my hypothesis. We will look at ESL in terms of hegemony, knowledge and power, discourse, identity, myths, critical citizenship, the idea that education is not neutral, culture, silencing of voices and the omission of histories.

I believe that a critique of ESL founded on the levels of instruction immigrants receive is redundant since federally-funded ESL more about culture than it is about language skills. When the government introduced federally-funded ESL in 1947, it was clear that the main focus was on teaching immigrants the norms, values, and attitudes of “Canadians.” The presumption was that immigrants’ knowledge of the dominant group’s culture was all they needed to feel Canadian themselves. Lankshear and McLaren are critical of the concept of cultural literacy as devised by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. Lankshear and McLaren write that cultural literacy is synonymous with acquiring the meanings, values, views and historical information necessary for informed participation in the political and cultural life of the nation. They disagree with Hirsch that cultural literacy is a guarantee of automatic membership as a full citizen. Hirsch, they claim, fails to view the dominant culture as that which has

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prevailed in a process of struggle between competing groups possessing unequal positions of power, to establish dominant meanings, values, knowledges, relations and practices.\textsuperscript{46}

Cultural literacy is essential to nation-building. Lankshear and McLaren write that cultural literacy denies cultural differences, thereby demonizing and silencing the "other." It bolsters an unequal and oppressive social order because it serves as a mechanism for immersing the economically, socially and politically disadvantaged into a particular view of the world. This world view leads them to accept as inevitable the social practices and relations that disadvantage them. The nation becomes the prevailing order which consists of hierarchies, denial of opportunities and repression.\textsuperscript{47} Immigrants often internalize the idea that their situations are unchangeable. Women in particular blame themselves for not having the cultural and linguistic capital to acquire well-paying jobs or communicate with their English-speaking children.\textsuperscript{48} In her study of Puerto Ricans and the imposition of the English language by the United States, Katherine Walsh asserts that the dominant (colonizing) language is seen as primary. Other languages, in this case Spanish, are regarded counterproductive and nationally divisive. In addition, students are told that their cultural and linguistic realities are of little importance and that their past will impede their future success and integration.\textsuperscript{49} This is comparable to the assimilationist arguments that the Canadian government and educators used to legitimize the English-only education of immigrants children.\textsuperscript{50} However, Walsh also points out that while the English language is portrayed as a national unifier it does not preclude equal relations of power.\textsuperscript{51}

One of the basic tenets of critical pedagogy is that education is not neutral. Henry Giroux writes that schools provide students with a sense of place, worth and identity by offering them selected representations and values that presuppose particular histories and views of the world. Schools are not neutral institutions because they are implicated in forms of inclusion and exclusion that produce particular moral truths and values. They also produce and legitimate cultural differences as part of a project constructing particular knowledge/power relations and producing specific notions of citizenship.\textsuperscript{52} This is pertinent to Basic ESL/Citizenship because the classes provide prospective

\textsuperscript{46} Lankshear and McLaren, 15-17.
\textsuperscript{47} Lankshear and McLaren, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{48} See Kathleen Rockhill and Patricia Tomic, Accessing ESL.
\textsuperscript{50} See J.T.M. Anderson, The Education of the New-Canadian: A Treatise on Canada’s Greatest Educational Problem, (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1918).
\textsuperscript{51} Walsh, 4.
Canadians with a sense of place and identity via citizenship. However, Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction is not neutral because the curriculum is selective. Certain histories, realities and voices are omitted, and the dominant culture is represented as the only true Canadian culture. Giroux also says that schools are "contradictory agencies." Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction is also contradictory because it promises membership in society, participation in the democratic process and equality to all Canadians. On the other hand, it does not provide the linguistic skills to guarantee all these things, it does not tackle broader issues of inequality, is not adequate for critical citizenship, and citizenship is limited to membership in the form of acculturation. It is because of these contradictions that we need to ask what is the purpose of Basic ESL/Citizenship and whom does it speak for.

Dialectical theory may help answer these questions because it focuses simultaneously on both sides of a contradiction. Dialectical thinking teases out the histories and relations of accepted meanings and appearances. If we think of citizenship in regards to the French and American Revolutions we know that the original language of citizenship was radical. French revolutionaries chose the word citizen to show that people were no longer subjects, enjoyed fundamental rights of freedom and equality and were involved in running the community. However, in spite of nationalists' beliefs that nations existed of their own volition, it soon became apparent that nations had to be created, histories taught, languages formalized, literature established, traditions invented, minorities assimilated, and loyalties created. Likewise, political elites spoke of Canadian citizenship as a break from Britain, and as the dawn of a new Canadian identity. Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction was the tool needed to create a particular view of the Canadian nation and citizens for that nation.

The view of Canada that Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction helps to perpetuate becomes apparent from the perspective of "hegemony" as conceived by Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci. Marxist analyses of education insists that schooling does not take place in a vacuum, but exists with other institutions in a social setting, full of economic, political and cultural meanings. In a society characterized by political and economic inequality, schooling plays a role in maintaining and legitimizing inequality. Moreover, structural inequality is integral to capitalism, and its strength relies on

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53 Giroux, 373.
56 Ken Osborne. 5, 21.
the fact that people see inequality as natural and inevitable. They blame themselves for not "making it."58 Gramsci defines hegemony as the power of one class to articulate the interests of other social groups to its own. This power is not necessarily the result of brute force but ideological control used by the dominant group to subordinate the other group. Gramsci believed that the domination of one class over another is exercised by popular consensus. He understood the state as not simply imposing domination, but transforming beliefs, values, cultural traditions, and social practices to mask the "real" and to perpetuate the existing order.59 In chapter one I explained that political elites "manufacture consent" for their policies through discursive strategies that make the order of things appear common sense and natural. Racist discourse is used to justify the subordination of the other. Hegemony is another way of explain how elites reproduce systems of inequality through education.

Federally-funded Basic ESL/Citizenship is not education like that provided to children in provincial school systems. However, just as children are "sorted" to fit certain niches in society, I believe that ESL does the same to adult immigrants. Federally-funded ESL is language training at the basic level for the purpose of preparing immigrants for citizenship. When federal policy-makers write/say that ESL leads to the equal participation of immigrants in Canadian society they imply that ESL is commensurate to empowerment, equality, and possibility. We know that this is not the case. Yet we can borrow from critical pedagogy to imagine a more radical ESL which allows immigrants to become critical citizens.

**Critical ESL**

Roger Simon believes that education presupposes a vision of the future.60 The idea that the acquisition of ESL will lead to a better future is promoted by the government and Canadian society at large. Simon also believes that in order for education to be empowering it must enable those who have been silenced to speak, to counter the power of the dominant group to make them "mute."61 Simon is referring to more than the act of acquiring literacy, but the act of finding one's voice. He writes that the idea of a pedagogy of possibility is "to introduce a counterdiscourse which provides the possibility for students to understand who they are in ways that are different from identities in-formed by the dominant culture."62 Henry Giroux believes that literacy must allow learners to govern and shape

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58 Osborne, 45-47.
59 Walsh, 32-32.
60 Roger Simon, "Empowerment as a Pedagogy of Possibility," *Language Arts* vol. 64, no. 4. (April 1987), 372.
61 Simon, 375.
62 Simon, 378.
History rather than being consigned to the margins.\textsuperscript{63} Schools produce and legitimate cultural differences as part of a broader project of constructing particular knowledge/power relations and producing specific notions of citizenship.\textsuperscript{64} Ethnic and racial differences are regarded as threatening to the integrative character of the nation and national unity.\textsuperscript{65}

The federal government is more concerned with teaching immigrants cultural literacy than giving them the tools for critical citizenship. Basic ESL/citizenship instruction does not allow immigrants to speak of their real world and challenge the dominant discourse. In addition, it perpetuates the notion that immigrants’ “failure” to make it is personal. Cultural literacy also assumes that the unity of the nation demands that immigrants acculturate. All this takes away from what ESL could really be. It could provide immigrants with the potential to challenge the very ideologies and institutions which work against their “liberation.”\textsuperscript{66} ESL programs are not structured to encourage immigrants to find their voices, re/write the immigrant history for themselves and challenge the dominant view of Canada as a land of equal opportunities. I state this not as a matter of fact, but in the hopes that ESL practitioners might be induced to apply critical pedagogies in their classrooms. Critical ESL could provide immigrants with the knowledge and skills necessary for self and social empowerment. However, in order to understand the potential that ESL might have in the future we need to understand the roots of federally-funded ESL and the way that political elites used ESL as a means to perpetuate their view of Canada. The next chapter is dedicated to proving this point.

\textsuperscript{63} Henry A. Giroux, 367.
\textsuperscript{64} Giroux, 373.
\textsuperscript{65} Giroux, 371.
Chapter Three
Political Discourse and Nation-Building: The Origins of Federally-Funded Basic ESL/Citizenship Instruction

The process leading up to the introduction of federally-funded ESL began with an intent to unite the country in the face of war. At war’s end, the government passed the Citizenship Act along with Basic ESL/Citizenship training. In the past, political elites had relied on overtly racist discourse and policies to select immigrants and thus build a white nation. During and following the war, the government would continue to use immigration regulations to prevent certain immigrants from entering Canada. However, in the interwar years the adoption of a movement to of national unity and post-war nation-building forced political elites shift to covert racist discourse. They supported national unity but also argued to preserve the their racist vision of post-war Canada. The debate on post-war nation-building reached a climax on April 27, 1944 when the House of Commons debated the reorganization of the Nationalities Branch and the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship. This reorganization was the result of a report which recommended the creation of a Citizenship Division which would develop a citizenship act and provide ESL and citizenship training.¹

The process leading up to the introduction of Basic ESL/Citizenship is illustrative of the power that political elites hold over nation-building policies. First, ministers and civil servants worked behind the scenes in developing a strategy for post-war nation-building. Secondly, MPs discussed, argued and debated the details in the House, thereby lending legitimacy to the programs and manufacturing consent amongst Canadians. The outcome was the introduction of a program which provided Canadian immigrants with Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction and worked to reproduce the dominant cultural norms. The objective of this chapter is to identify and analyze the covert racist discourse of political elites to determine how they argued in favour of the perpetuation of a racist vision of Canada. I begin with a look at the problem of public security, the identification of the “enemy aliens” and the ways the government dealt with this problem.

The Enemy Within

I wrote in chapter one that the debate on national unity centred on the place of non-Anglo-Saxon Canadians in the “imagined community” that was Canada. The imagined community had regarded non-Anglo Canadians as outsiders in peacetime but the implementation of the Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR) made this an even harsher reality. DOCR’s was introduced under the War Measures Act in 1939 allowed the cabinet to govern the country without reference to Parliament. The objective was to allow the cabinet to make quick decisions to protect Canada and Canadians without delay. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was instrumental in carrying out DOCR. Soon after Canada declared war on September 30, 1939, the RCMP was commissioned to work with the Department of National Defence in investigating alien enemies in order to protect public security. Public security consisted of establishing a register for all enemy aliens, arresting and internment of all known Nazi agents, the confiscation of anti-war and defeatists propaganda, cooperation with large industrial organizations to secure their protection, and guarding strategic and vulnerable points throughout the country.\(^2\) Of all the DOCR measures enforced by the RCMP, the internment of enemy aliens best illustrates how political elites identified Canadians as white.

In Canada, alien was the term used to describe all immigrants to Canada who were not of Anglo-Saxon descent. Enemy aliens were those people resident in Canada, Canadian-born, naturalized or immigrant who were of the same racial/ethnic origin as the countries with which Canada was at war. The inclusion of “alien” into Canadian naturalization law originates in Britain’s Citizenship law and its identification of citizens of foreign states resident in Britain.\(^3\) This classification was extended to Canada and served as the means to differentiate Canadians along racial lines. “True Canadians” were considered the direct descendants of those British immigrants who first settled Canada. The implications of differentiating “true” Canadians (Anglo-Saxon) and “others” in at a time of war were great. Canada’s close ties to Britain and its conflicting relationship with other European countries brought into question the loyalty of “other” Canadians. DOCR worked on the rationalization that it was the government’s duty to protect Canada and Canadians from “them,” the outsider ethnic group. Conversely, “other” Canadians were the subject of suspicion and repressive government actions.

\(^2\) Dominion of Canada RCMP, Report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for the Year Ended March 31, 1940 (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1940) 8-10.

The war would provide "other" Canadians with an opportunity to prove their loyalty to Canada. Their high enlistment records were a challenge to the notion that Canadianness and loyalty to Canada was the reserve of the dominant Canadian group. In some regions, the enlistment of ethnic Canadians outnumbered that of Anglo-Saxon Canadians. A government pamphlet read that these soldiers insisted that they were Canadians and "who shall venture to contradict them when they sign for their citizenship with their blood?" An MP reported that in his Saskatchewan community, Ukrainian and Jewish Canadians proved their loyalty through sacrifice and acts of bravery. However, he was distressed that a Chinese-Canadian had been given the "run-around" when he attempt to enlist in the armed forces. Nevertheless, ethnic civilians were subject to distrust. For example, the RCMP investigated Bulgarian and Roumanian Canadians as soon as these countries entered the war on the Axis side. On the other hand, the RCMP ignored the fact that membership in the Communist and Nazi movements was largely Anglo and French Canadian. Scots were the most aggressive members of the Communist Party and the Nazi movement was headed by Adrien Arcand in Montreal and by Sir Oswald Mosley in Toronto and Winnipeg.

The work of the RCMP did not stop at investigation of enemy aliens. DOCR provided for their internment as well. In its annual report of 1941, the RCMP stated that internment was directed specifically "at enemy aliens and persons known to have engaged in subversive or anti-British activities." The report also emphasized that "No person other than an enemy alien may be interned except on the order of the Minister of Justice..." Between March 1940 and March 1941, 375 Germans and other Nazi sympathizers, 558 Italians, 96 Communists, and 29 members of the National Unity Party and were interned. German interments were dealt with on an individual basis. Two hundred and ninety-five Italians were interned as soon Italy declared war on June 10, 1940. The internment policy suggests that those of Anglo-Saxon descent were protected from wrongful internment. In addition, different ethnic groups were treated differently, as if there were a hierarchy of severity in the implementation of public security measures.

All enemy aliens were interned under Regulation 25 (8) of DOCR with the exception of Japanese Canadians who were interned under Regulation 21. In 1941, the RCMP reported that

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5 Canada House of Commons Debates (April 27, 1944), 2419-2420.  
7 Watson Kirkconnell, Canadians All (Ottawa: Director of Public Information, 1941), 14-15.
the Japanese situation had been closely watched and made easy since the larger portion of these nationals were resident in one province. The report stated that "It is likely that the re-registration of all Japanese in Canada will soon be undertaken." Soon after Japan entered the war on May 7, 1941, the government of Canada had ordered the removal of all Japanese from the coastal areas of British Columbia and the confiscation of their, cameras, radios, cars and other commodities. Japanese-Canadians were interned under Regulation 21 of DOCR because they had refused to evacuate the "protected areas of British Columbia" and had failed to comply with the orders of the British Columbia Security Commission. Japanese-Canadians were only released from detention if they agreed to accept proffered employment. No such conditions were placed on other interned groups. By August 1944, the government announced three measures to help British Columbia with its "racial problem." First, Japanese-Canadians judged disloyal to Canada would be deported to Japan. The Prime Minister announce this while also stressing that no Canadian-born Japanese had been charged with disloyalty or sabotage thus far. Secondly, the dispersal program which had gone into effect in 1942 would continue to "spread the loyal Japanese throughout Canada, and so avoid undue concentration in any one place." Thirdly, the federal government would agree to stop all immigration from Japan. These steps were described as "fair and just to all concerned." The role of the RCMP was to canvass and accept applications for repatriation to Japan. No other enemy alien group was deported en masse. Nation-building had not included Japanese immigrants before the war; great efforts had been made to control their immigration into Canada. Their dispersal and deportation at war's end ensured that this group of non-white Canadians remained apart from post-war nation-building.

In war, it is the government's responsibility to protect its citizens but the way the Canadian government went about doing this is telling of how political elites identified Canadians. DOCR divided Canadians rather than united them. The treatment of Japanese-Canadians during the war best illustrates the division of Canadians into those that belonged and the outsiders. Some of the Japanese interned were third generation Canadian-born yet they were forcibly removed

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11 George F. Drummond, British Columbia (Ottawa: Wartime Information Board, 1944), 14-16.
from their homes and scattered through Canada. Since the early, 1900s British Columbia had denounced the immigration of Asians. The Second World War gave BC the ideal opportunity to be rid of the Japanese forever.\textsuperscript{13} An excellent account of the uprooting, dispossession, deportation and dispersal of Japanese-Canadians can be found in Ann Gomer Sunahara’s \textit{The Politics of Racism}.\textsuperscript{14}

The question of the loyalty to Canada of enemy aliens was raised in 1938 by the Committee on Enemy Aliens and Enemy Alien property. This committee generated suggestions for restrictions on aliens in the event of war. Some members pushed for the wholesale internment of enemy nationals. Others such as Norman Robertson of External affairs felt that DOCR had been too harsh and called for government programs to promote the integration of immigrants into Canadian society.\textsuperscript{15} Robertson was not alone, after all, the government could not intern every Canadian suspected of disloyalty. The alternative was to use propaganda and education to unite the nation. Political elites played a major role in developing the programs which eventually led to the passing of the Citizenship and the introduction of federally-funded ESL.

\textit{Nation-Building: Behind the Scenes}

According to Gordon Selman, citizenship education is the great tradition of Canadian adult education. He believes that the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) contributed greatly to the mobilization of Canadians during the Second World War. Before the war, the CAAE had been a clearinghouse for adult education and continuing education university programs. By 1939, E.A. Corbett, Director of CAAE, had established ties with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and National Film Board (NFB) because he believed that citizenship education was vital for the fight against totalitarianism. Building a single nation and promoting a Canadian national consciousness were Corbett’s major concerns.\textsuperscript{16} The CBC in conjunction with the CAAE produced the “Citizens’ Forum” series which was dedicated to the discussion of issues facing the nation during and after the war.\textsuperscript{17} The CAAE also assisted in the work of the NFB. According to John Grierson, head of the NFB, propaganda and education were

\textsuperscript{13} Sunahara, 161.
\textsuperscript{14} Sunahara.
\textsuperscript{15} N.F. Dreisziger, 4.
\textsuperscript{17} Isabel Wilson, \textit{Citizens’ Forum: Canada’s National Platform} (OISE: Department of Adult Education, 1980).
His documentaries were circulated around the country so as to assist educators in interpreting the war, providing issues of discussion and promoting action. The main objective of the NFB was to unite Canadians in the fight against fascism. The CAAE’s work was targeted at English and French speaking Canadians. The government made use of other agencies focusing specifically on non-English/French speaking Canadians.

The government’s plan to unite Canada for war and postwar nation-building began with repressive measures against enemy aliens (DOCR). Slowly a framework was established to create unity through a citizenship act and citizenship and ESL instruction. By 1944, a Citizenship Division was established within the Department of Secretary of State for this purpose. This bureaucratic process began in the Department of National War Services and was accompanied by a great amount of debate in the House of Commons. While MPs debated and criticized the work done by the bureaucrats, both MPs and bureaucrats knew that at stake were Canada’s unity and national identity.

The Department of National War Services was established in 1940 and charged with mobilizing consent for the war effort amongst Canadians. Propaganda work was done under the auspices of the department’s Bureau of Public Information (BPI), later renamed Wartime Information Board. The first responsibility of the BPI was to monitor ethnic presses for Nazi, Fascist, or Communist propaganda. The fear that grassroots ethnic presses were flooded with anti-Canadian propaganda caused the government to enforce the closing of these newspapers. J.F. MacNeill, of the Department of Justice was critical of this move. He believed that immigrants relied on ethnic presses because they could not read in English or French. Rather than rob ethnic immigrants of war news, he suggested that the Canadian government provide the presses with war news. By 1942, the government had re-opened the presses and began supplying editors with “Canadian” war news items. Considering that the war was aimed at fighting totalitarianism, it is ironic the Canadian government chose to take this course.

The BPI was also in charge of government propaganda publications. Watson Kirkconnell, of McMaster University, was hired to write pamphlets promoting the “permanent unification of all our groups into one strong resolute nation.” In his Canadians All, Kirkconnell urged

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19 N.F. Dreisiger,4-7.
20 Leslie A. Pal, 416.
21 Watson Kikconnell, Canadians All, i.
European immigrants not to transplant old antagonisms from Europe into Canada’s national life. He wrote that the war had accelerated Canada’s national unity as it forced Canadians to stand together against the enemy. However, to protect that unity Canadians needed “to cultivate the consciousness that we are all Canadians...” In European Elements in Canadian Life, Kirkconnell wrote that the school system had been the chief influence in coping with the “inherited forces of disunity.” Kirkconnell was referring to “alien ideologies” brought from Europe and the persistence of old languages and traditions amongst ethnic groups. The BPI pamphlets were heavily distributed during the war. While Kirkconnell argued in favour of tolerance and diversity, the dominant argument in his pamphlets was that disunity was the result of immigrants’ “different” cultural and political identities. The cultivation of a Canadian consciousness seems to have depended on the adoption of the dominant language and culture by non-Anglo-Saxon Canadians. It is worth noting that Kirkconnell was considered an acknowledged authority on the subject of Canadian unity.

Kirkconnell’s work was supported by the BPI but the national unity movement could not have succeeded without a boost from powerful ministers. By 1940, the stage to build such a bureaucratic for national unity was set because several key cabinet members and senior civil servants had become aware of the treatment of Canada’s non-Anglo Canadians. For example, J.G. Gardiner, Minister of the Department of National War Services, felt that during the First World War, Canada had harmed Canadians of European descent by discriminating against their enlistment. He hoped that the creation of a new branch within his department might help make “these people feel that we welcome them as loyal citizens of this country.” The department had employed Tracy Phillips to lecture through Canada in favour of the war effort and to write a report outlining the politics of Canada’s minorities and their relationship to Canadian society at large. Phillips’ report supported Gardiner’s idea. He wrote that national unity might be achieved by the creation of a unit called the Canadian Council for Education-in-Citizenship. The creation of such a council would uphold Phillips’ idea that in the process of transplanting immigrants to Canada the “old soil” must not be excluded. The old soil of their old virtues and arts should be blended as the basis of the transition to Canadianism. The unit would foster a partnership between

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22 European was used to describe immigrants from the continent and did not include immigrants from the UK.
23 Watson Kirkconnell, Canadians All, 12-13, 19.
24 Watson Kirkconnell, European Elements in Canadian Life, 8-11.
26 N.F. Dreisziger, 9.
Canadians and immigrants and spread among old Canadians and appreciation of the contributions made by the newcomers.27

While Phillips lobbied for the creation of this council, the Associate Deputy Minister of the Department of National War Services, Thomas C. Davis, also lobbied Gardiner arguing for the creation of good feelings among the foreign-born in Canada and getting them behind the war effort. Davis’ strategy was to call a meeting of representatives from the RCMP, BPI, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property, and External Affairs, plus Robert England, of the Department of National Defence and a specialist on the settlement of the Prairies. Davis asked the participants to make recommendations for the establishment of a new unit but plans were delayed when Gardiner was replaced by J.T. Thorson. Davis quickly informed Thorson of the project. Davis believed that a unit dealing with immigrants would work to “weave these people into the fabric of our Canadian nation.” In late June and early July of 1942 Thorson began considering who would head the new section and chose George Simpson, a history professor at the University of Saskatchewan, and Tracy Phillips as his advisor. The unit, named the Nationalities Branch (NB) would be aided by an advisory committee, the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship (CCCC).28

In chapter one I wrote that elites do not see themselves as perpetrators of racism, but as moral leaders. Gardiner, Davis, Phillips, MacNeill, Robertson and many others disapproved of OCR and foresaw the benefits of a united nation in peacetime. They believed in the need to build a branch of government which would rely on education rather than coercion to build a united Canada. However, their vision of unity was fixed on the idea that “European” immigrants were themselves to blame for the disunity. Consequently, ideologies of exclusion/inclusion were imbedded in the NB and CCCC. For example, these they argued in favour of creating good feelings and reassuring minority Canadians that they were welcome yet they insisted that “immigrants” be woven into the fabric of “our” Canadian nation or that in the process of transplanting immigrants into Canada their old soil be blended with the Canadian soil. People are neither plants nor threads in a blanket but these analogies helped their speakers illustrate how they envisioned Canada, its “foundations” and future direction. These politicians stood out because they recognized the alienation of minority Canadians and argued for their acceptance as equal members of Canadian society. However, membership still depended on preserving the dominant cultural norms.

27 N.F. Dreisziger, 10-16
28 N.F. Dreisziger, 13-20.
In November of 1942, the NB and the CCCC were in operation. Their objective was to keep the government informed on the points of view of ethnic Canadians so as to build a solid Canadian front in the war and continued cooperation between Canadians in peacetime. More importantly, their objective was not to encourage the preservation of group differences, but to encourage ethnic immigrants to identify as closely as possible with the rest of the Canadian community. The NB and CCCC worked closely with the BPI in monitoring and advising the foreign-language presses and preparing and distributing news items. However, before the branches were able to expand any further Simpson resigned due to ill health, T.C. Davis left his position and recommended that the NB be abolished, several high-ranking bureaucrats called for Phillips’ resignation, and adequate funds and staff were denied when Phillips requested them.

The NB and CCCC fell into obscurity for a year but in 1943 the new Minister of the Department of National War Services, General LaFleche, asked the CCCC to meet and advise him as to the future direction of the NB. The committee agreed that the best course would be to seek the professional advise of Robert England in order to reorganize the branch and prepare it for the transition from war to peacetime activities.

Robert England’s 1944 Report of the Reorganization of the Nationalities Branch, Department of National War Services laid the foundation for the citizenship act and citizenship training. In his autobiography, England wrote that since the length of the war was uncertain “It was a measure of wisdom to attach them (ethnic Canadians) closely to Canadian ideals and aspirations in the interest of their peace of mind and the future welfare of their children.” The report was critical of the NB. England stressed that the articles supplied to the ethnic presses needed to be focused on helping immigrants adjust to the Canadian scene and encourage them to adopt Canadian attitudes. In addition, the dominant group needed to be reminded of the contributions that ethnic immigrants had made to the war. Fighting racial prejudice might be bolstered with a celebration of the meaning of citizenship. New citizens, he felt, needed to acquire

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30 N.F. Dreisziger, 20.
31 N.F. Dreisziger, 20 and Pal, 417.
32 Pal, 418.
a knowledge of our institutions and way of life. England recommended the creation of a Citizenship Division within the Department of the Secretary of State in place of the NB. Of the eight-teen recommendations for the establishment of the Citizenship Division, the most important was that within the Secretary of State, there be the development of a naturalization branch, the preparation of Citizenship Act, and the inauguration of a program of citizenship training followed by a citizenship ceremony. England asked Frank Foulds to head the Citizenship Division, which in 1945 was transferred from the Department of National War Services to the Department of the Secretary of State.

England was not a linguist or an expert of civics education. He had been hired by the federal government to find a way to fix an agency whose nation-building agenda had been approved but which did not function in any practical way. England was not concerned with providing ethnic Canadians and immigrants with educational tools. Rather, he was interested in establishing a government branch dedicated to uniting Canadians. In the years to come, descriptions of Basic ESL/Citizenship programs would echo England’s vision of citizenship education: the classes were aimed at helping immigrants to adjust, adopt Canadian attitudes, and provide them with knowledge of our institutions and way of life. His report limited post-war nation-building and citizenship education to the perpetuation of the dominant cultural norms and values. Unity was also defined in these terms. General LaFleche approved the report and presented it to the House of Commons with the request that funds for the department be increased from $18,347 to $46,367 for the coming year. The outcome of the debate was that Paul Martin, Secretary of State, proceeded with the recommendations for a Citizenship Act, the Act went into effect on January 1, 1947 and Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction became an essential element of Canadian nation-building.

**Covert Racist Discourse and Nation-Building**

Bureaucrats worked behind the scenes to establish the political infrastructure for the promotion of national unity and post-war nation-building. In the public forum of the House of Commons, MPs also influenced the shape of post-war nation building. Their political discourse lent credence to the idea of national unity and nation-building. Within the first year of hostilities, there were question as to what Canada would look like after the war, and how national unity

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35 Pal. 421.
36 England. 141-142.
might be achieved. Like the bureaucrats working behind the scenes, MPs continued to identify Canada as the preserve of British customs, norms and values. Before the war, political elites used overt racist arguments to differentiate Canadians along racial and cultural lines. During the war, the movement for national unity in wartime precluded overt racist references to ethnic minority Canadians. The result was a shift to covert racist discourse. On one hand, MPs supported post-war nation-building. On the other hand, they promoted the continued application of racist practices in nation-building policies. The Citizenship Act produced the image of a united post-war nation, while citizenship training provided the means to reproduce the dominant cultural norms. The debate on post-war nation-building culminated in 1944 when General LaFleche requested $46,367 for the reorganization of the NB and CCC. Citizenship training was supported in the House of Commons as a tool for nation-building because it was conceived as an educational tool for the Canadianization of immigrants.

The three major concerns for post-war nation-building were: first, what measures the government would take to maintain the level of national unity that had been achieved during the war; secondly, what national unity would look like; and thirdly, the resumption of immigration. Van Dijk’s system for identifying covert racist discourse is instrumental to uncovering how political elites envisioned post-war Canada and how they discursively legitimized that vision. Covert racist rhetoric worked to camouflage the continued application of racist ideologies in nation-building policies. Here again are van Dijk’s seven argumentative strategies:

1. Positive Self-Presentation: Nationalistic Rhetoric
2. Disclaimers and the Denial of Racism
3. Negative Other-Presentation
4. Firm, but Fair
5. For Their Own Good
6. Vox Populi or White Racism as Threat
7. The Numbers Game

What follows is my analysis of the talk of MPs in the House of Commons debates from 1939 to 1945.

As early as 1939, MPs expressed concern over the kind of nation that would arise after the war. The outbreak of hostilities had affected immigration to Canada, limiting emigration from Britain and increasing the number of refugees from other countries. In addition, there were questions as to the loyalty of ethnic Canadians. Canada imposed DOCR to deal with national security, but what of immigrants entering Canada during the war? In looking at the national well-being of Canada, one Mr. Reid confessed that he was alarmed at the drop in British immigration
to Canada. He said that he was not against bringing people from other lands, but he wondered what the political outlook of the peoples of Canada would be twenty-five to thirty years hence. His suggestion was that rather than allowing a large number of refugees to enter Canada, we give greater encouragement to people from Britain to come and settle here. The implication here was that refugees from other parts of the world brought with them different political ideas (negative other presentation) and that these ideas would in the future affect the established political ideologies of Canada. Mr. H.A. McKenzie concurred. He stated that of all the immigrants in 1938, only 3,389 came from the British Empire and the rest from central Europe (numbers game). While many of them made good citizens, he thought the government should adopt a policy of more selective immigration.

By 1940, the government decided to take steps toward uniting all Canadians behind the war effort. On July 8, 1940, the Prime minister announced that establishment of the Department of National War Services for the purpose of mobilizing and guiding patriotic activities. Amongst its varied duties, the department was responsible for coordinating government information and publicity services connected with the war to ensure that Canadians were well-informed on all aspects of the war effort. The idea was to enlist maximum support for the cause. The department would help Canadians help Canada in the effective prosecution of the national effort. Thorson was appointed Minister of the department. He felt that Canadians needed to be conscious of the struggles of war. More importantly, he was of the opinion that Canada should embark on a program of national reform which would lay the foundation for a strong post-war Canada.

Thorson was proud of the work of the BPI because he felt that it had succeeded in bringing “the war effort of Canada as close to the people, and the people as close to the war effort, as possible.” For example, Kirkconnell’s “Canadians All” had been re-edited for radio broadcast. Thorson explained that the main theme in the broadcasts was to emphasize the importance of national unity and to educate Canadians of every racial group concerning the contributions to our national culture and welfare being made by other groups. However, some MPs were not so supportive of the BPI. Mr. Church, for instance, was in favour of national unity, but advocated a unity which did not disturb the dominant status of British-Canadians. He declared

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37 *House of Commons Debates* (April 28, 1939), 3383-3384.
38 *House of Commons Debates* (May 2, 1939), 3494-3495.
39 *House of Commons Debates* (July 8, 1940), 1398-1399.
40 *House of Commons Debates* (November 13, 1940), 75.
41 *House of Commons Debates* (November 5, 1941), 4104.
42 *House of Commons Debates* (May 14, 1942), 2417.
that "Canadians All" had hurt the country because it encouraged "separatism" and the idea that Canada did not belong to the British Empire. He called "Canadians All" a piece of political propaganda which glorified the foreign born at the expense of the British-born and unity. Disunity was the result of pitting one group against another, as when Kirkconnell wrote that the Japanese in Canada had the lowest crime rate of any group. Church insisted that this was a misstatement of facts and challenged it (negative other presentation). He went on to say that "almost" all our foreign-born people made good citizens and were welcome in this country (positive self-presentation) but the book was an insult to the British-born.\(^{43}\) Church did not go as far as saying that Canada was an extension of Britain and that true Canadians were those of Anglo-Saxon descent, yet his words implied it.

The Department of National War Services continued its work despite detractors such as Church and in the process gained several endorsements. Mr. John Diefenbaker had this to say about national unity: "The challenge to us to-day as Canadians, without regard to race or creed, is to unite in a common dedication to our way of life, and our national life itself." Diefenbaker believed that Canadians were too prone to identifying themselves as hyphenated Canadians. Unity might be better achieved if Canadians adopted the assimilationist policy of the United States. Diefenbaker was convinced that out of the war, would emerge a united Canada.\(^{44}\) Mr. Angus MacInnis agreed. The need to defeat the Axis powers had united nations throughout the world. However, he felt that the Canadian government had failed to explain to Canadians why we were in the war, why and how we entered of our own free will, and what we expected to achieve. This, MacInnis asserted was essential to bringing about unity during the war.\(^{45}\) The work of the BPI was aimed at addressing the same issues raised by MacInnis. In addition, the CCCC held the same view of national unity as Diefenbaker. Finally, the creation of the Citizenship Division in 1944 would have suited Mr. J.W. Noseworthy. He believed that the debate over conscription was the result of disunity which in turn had been caused by the failure of the educational system to teach the meaning of unified citizenship. Noseworthy foresaw the usefulness of citizenship education for national unity and so did the heads of the Department of National War Services.

The NB and the CCCC fell into oblivion for about two years until the new Minister of the Department of National War Services brought up the issue of national unity and post-war nation-

\(^{43}\) House of Commons Debates (May 18, 1942), 2537-2538.
\(^{44}\) House of Commons Debates June 15, 1942), 3334-3335.
\(^{45}\) House of Commons Debates June 15, 1942),3343.
building again in 1944. General LaFleche reminded MPs that the aim of the branch was to help newcomers to Canadian citizenship become better Canadian citizens, but reorganization of the branch required additional funds.\textsuperscript{46} The House of Commons was divided into two camps on this issue. Those MPs opposed to a reorganization of the status quo used a combination of overt and covert racist arguments to oppose the government’s the post-war nation-building strategy. Those MPs who supported citizenship training for post-war nation-building used covert racist arguments to perpetuate a racist vision of Canada. In either case, the underlying ideology was that Canada must remain British in character and English-speaking.

Opposition to the reorganization of the NB and CCCC was rationalized on two major grounds. Concern over immigration was raised by those who supported the continuation of selective immigration and the myth of Canada’s British foundations was used to legitimize the perpetuation of dominant cultural norms. The speeches made by Mr. Reid and Mr. Wood are fine examples of how this worked. Mr. Reid maintained that unlike those immigrants from European countries, British immigrants were not new Canadians. When he left Scotland in 1909, he felt he was coming to another part of his country because his way of life and language were understood here. His complaint was that in the past too many (numbers game) people had come to Canada who insisted on “carry[ing] on as they did in the country they left,” speaking their languages and living in separate communities. This had been detrimental to national unity. However, rather than advocating citizenship education, Reid recommended a scanning system for immigration. He said “I for one would not permit any large number of people (numbers game) to take up permanent residence in this country if they could not be assimilated.”\textsuperscript{47} Mr. Wood also urged selective immigration. Canada had been too lenient with immigration and many had not accepted Canadian ideals. The result, he presumed, was that these immigrants must be unhappy. He suggested that in the interest of Canadians and immigrants (for their own good) immigrants should be selected more carefully, with special regard to their willingness to assimilate. In addition, Wood believed that those immigrants who advocated foreign philosophies of life did not contribute to Canadian citizenship. A certain standard of Canadian citizenship needed to be maintained. In his opinion, immigrants should accept Canadian ideals or “get out of the country.”\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{House of Commons Debates} (April 27, 1944),2395.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{House of Commons Debates} (April 27, 1944),2412-2413.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{House of Commons Debates} (April 27, 1944),2417-2418.
Mr. Church expressed opposition to the CCCC and declared it a waste of money. His rationalization was that there was no need for it when the war was nearly over (how he ever guessed we will never know). Church asserted that citizenship meant different things to different people. Some who came to Canada accepted all of the privileges but did nothing to defend the country in time of war (negative other presentation). Besides he did not understand why “these people” were admitted to the country unless they knew all about citizenship and such matters (negative other presentation). 49

Other MPs did not see selective immigration as the solution to the problem of national unity. As Mr. Hlynka said, “Let us, therefore, properly tackle the problem which we often call the ‘problem of unity.’ Well, you can tackle it only studying it...” 50 Some MPs observed that the problem of national unity was attributable to the smugness of some Canadians. Mr. Burton believed that citizenship education might be beneficial to both new Canadians and old. 51 Mr. Ross approved of the new agency as long as operated “the right way.” He noted that some immigrants suffered racial and religious prejudice. Unity would come from ironing out those prejudices and working in cooperation with educational institutions. However, Ross also insisted that unity depended on teaching the best, and not the worst of our history, and the end of “harping” on old grievances. 52 Old conflicts and ideas, stated Mrs. Nielsen, worked against national unity. 53

These MPs supported the new Citizenship Division as long as citizenship training was limited to the acculturalization of immigrants into the British-Canadian mold. The speech of Mr. Roebuck, shows most clearly how covert racist discourse worked to promote citizenship education while also promoting a racist conceptualization of Canada. Roebuck told the House of Commons that Canada did not have a dominant religion, dominant race, or nationality. Canada has many motherlands and tolerance has been part of our history (positive self presentation). In working for unity Canadians should refrain from bringing up divisions from the old land. He welcomed the new division and ended with assurances that Canada would be a great nation when we finally united into a homogenous people. 54

49 House of Commons Debates (April 27, 1944), 2398-2399.
50 House of Commons Debates (April 27, 1944), 2400.
51 House of Commons Debates (April 27, 1944), 2400-2401.
52 House of Commons Debates (April 27, 1944), 2409.
53 House of Commons Debates (April 27, 1944), 2410.
54 House of Commons Debates (April 27, 1944), 2421.
According to van Dijk, elites do not see themselves as perpetrators of racism, but as moral leaders. On May 27, 1942, Thorson submitted to the House the names and qualifications of the members of the CCCC: Professor of History George Simpson, chair; foreign diplomat Tracy Phillips, advisor; Professor H.F. Angus; Honourable C.H. Blakeney, Minister of Education of New Brunswick; Major J.S.A. Bois; Professor Jean Bruchesi, author and educationalist; Mr. D. Cameron, Director of Extension Work at the University of Alberta; Mr. Robert England; Mr. J. Murray Gibbon, author; Professor Watson Kirkconnell; and Mrs. O.D. Skelton, author and educationalist. These elites worked to build the post-war nation-building infrastructure and succeeded. In 1944, Frank Fodds of the Citizenship Division declared: "Through constant contact with ethnic groups and their organizations, it has been possible to discourage them [ethnic Canadians] from quarreling amongst themselves over European issues and to persuade them that their main objective should be to further their establishment in Canada." Van Dijk also writes that if the social mind is formed by public discourse, and if public discourse is largely controlled by elite groups, than it warrants searching for some of the roots of racism among elite groups. MPs manufactured consent for the Citizenship Act and citizenship training through their public discourse. Both these groups of elites saw post-war nation-building in terms of the reproduction of the status quo and this influenced the shape of Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction.

**ESL and Post-War Nation-Building**

The first experiment in citizenship training took place in 1946 in Welland and Kikland Lake. The discourse which had been used by political elites to describe the aims of citizenship education were echoed in the annual reports of the Ontario Department of Education. In subsequent years the department wrote that the citizenship program was a "conscious united effort toward producing better citizens," designed to give immigrants "essential information about Canada and our way of life," and in preparation for the citizenship. A handbook for immigrants urged them to learn one of the official languages as soon as possible. This book told

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55 van Dijk, 9.
56 *House of Commons Debates* (May 27, 1942), 2806.
57 Pal, 423.
58 van Dijk, 11.
its readers that language and citizenship classes taught such aspects of Canada as its customs, history, geography and government.\textsuperscript{62} However the Canadian Citizenship Council (CCC), a branch of government, warned that different immigrant groups faced different integration problems. Their ability to integrate into Canada society depended on their country of origin.\textsuperscript{63}

What did immigrants to Canada learn in Basic ESL/Citizenship classes? Making ESL a strategy for nation-building required that ESL be reduced to little more than cultural literacy. Consequently, ESL was limited to the perpetuation of the dominant culture, values and way of life. In addition, the history of Canada that immigrants were taught omitted the conflicts and struggles that went into building the nation while simultaneously creating a racist vision of Canada. There is no question that Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction was a tool for the "Canadianization" of immigrants. Canada would be united as long as immigrants had been molded into the dominant cultural norms and spoke basic English.

The introduction of federally-funded Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction was meant to concur with a new Canadian myth: one is which Canada was perceived and Canadians perceived themselves as united and growing. Canada did grow, as did the non-English speaking segment of the population. ESL programs could not keep up with the demand and despite the passage of time, the policy of federally-funded ESL has remained relatively the same. ESL continues to be limited to the basic level as preparation for citizenship. In the 1990s ESL is as much a tool for nation-building as it was when it was first introduced. In addition, political elites continue to use covert racist rhetoric to perpetuate a racist vision of Canada.

\textsuperscript{63} Canada, Canadian Citizenship Council, \textit{From Immigrant to Citizen: 1949} (Ottawa: Canadian Citizenship Council, 1949), 23.
Chapter Four

ESL and Nation-Building in the 1990s

This thesis began as a study of the federally-funded ESL programs introduced in 1992 under the Mulroney government. Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) and Labour Market Language Training (LMLT) were denounced by ESL practitioners, grass roots organizations, and others involved in the field of ESL as inadequate in regards to levels of instruction and structurally inaccessible. They claimed that the programs did not help immigrants meet their economic needs. Clearly inadequate and inaccessible ESL contributes to the marginalization of immigrants in the lowest sectors of the labour market of Canada. Fluency in ESL is often used as a condition for employment. Critics responded to the problems in LINC and LMLT by offering the government problem-solving solutions. This approach worked to address practical problems but it could not explain why ESL programs were structured the way they were: why ESL was limited to basic ESL in preparation for citizenship and focused on providing immigrants with knowledge of “our” culture, values and way of life. In other words, critics wanted to deal with the symptoms of ESL programming but neglected their roots in policy and ideology. In the process of investigating the Mulroney government’s ESL policy I found that ESL was closely connected to immigration policy and to the preservation of Canada as white and Anglo-Saxon. This is how I came to associate ESL with nation-building. More importantly, I found that federal policy papers used covert racist arguments to defend ESL and immigration policy. In this chapter, I examine LINC and LMLT in order to argue that ESL remains a strategy for nation-building.

Federally-Funded ESL in the 1990s

The Conservative government of Brian Mulroney was first elected in 1984 and re-elected in 1988. In 1990, Barbara McDougall took over as Minister for Employment and Immigration and under her direction Canada introduced the first ever long-term immigration plan. This plan made provisions for the creation of Federal Integration Strategy which included a new ESL policy. In 1993, a notice from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration declared that "The new policy on immigrant
language training ensures that more immigrants have access to the best possible training."  

1 LMLT provided specialized or advanced language training oriented to labour market needs: training needed to acquire skills or to use existing skills which are in demand in the local labour market.  

2 LMLT was limited in availability. On the other hand, LINC provided basic communications skills and included an emphasis on "orienting newcomers to Canadian society and to the rights and responsibilities inherent in membership in our society."  

3 LINC supplied ESL in preparation for LMLT and was more widely available.

The state's enthusiasm for LINC and LMLT was insufficient to allay the largely negative reception the programs received. First, ESL teachers associations, community groups, grass roots organizations and others claimed that they were taken by surprise when the programs were introduced. They resented that they had not been given the opportunity to participate in the consultation process leading to the implementation of the programs. For example, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), an umbrella organization representing other agencies serving immigrants, resented that it and its members had not been invited by the government to discuss the problems in ESL programming.  

Secondly, they argued that the problems in previous federally-funded ESL programs had not been addressed with LINC and LMLT.

LINC did little to alleviate some of the problems plaguing ESL programs of the past. For instance, there were still time limits on immigrants' eligibility to ESL. LINC was limited to the first few years after arrival in Canada. This affected immigrants who postponed their ESL instruction for family or financial reasons. Immigrants who acquired citizenship were also disqualified from attending LINC.  

In its own defence, the government argued that LINC was an immigrant integration program and that by the time immigrants become citizens they had a working knowledge of English and no longer needed to be oriented to Canada through LINC.  

The training allowances which had existed prior to 1992 were abolished in LINC. This raised questions as to the affordability of second language training for immigrants but the government responded by claiming that immigrants must rely on their

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5 Barbara Anderson and Judi Johnny to Bernard Valcourt, March 20, 1992.
7 Canadian Council for Refugees, "CCR Condemns 27 Million Dollar Cut in Language Training Allowances."
sponsors for financial support during their ESL instruction rather than the state. The new assessment test (A-LINC) also came under attack because it was believed to be culturally biased. The geographical location of test centres became a major problem for immigrants, as well because the centres were not easily accessible by public transit. A group of mothers deplored the fact that their day-care had been reduced from full day down to two and a half hours per day. The time of ESL instruction was also considerably cut. The 600 hour or 24 week limit on LINC instruction was insufficient for immigrants to learn the English language well enough to either continue studying at a higher level or obtain well-paying jobs.

There were problems with LMLT as well. LMLT was meant to be preceded by LINC training. However, there was a wide educational gap between the two programs. Consequently completion of LINC did not prepare learners for the assessment test leading to LMLT. LMLT was also restricted to immigrants who had occupational skills, or the potential to acquire occupational skills that were needed in the local labour market. This provision discriminated against those who were judged otherwise. In particular, it discriminated against women who possess skills which may not be in demand but who are nevertheless striving to enter the labour force. Unlike immigrants enrolled in LINC, immigrants registered in LMLT did receive an allowance. However, the chances of being accepted into LMLT and securing a subsidy were small. LMLT received 20% of all the federal funds dedicated to language training and as such the subsidies were limited. Finally, LMLT provided even less hours of training than LINC; 12 weeks or 300 hours. Immigrants accepted into LMLT could only be enrolled in one of the three levels of instruction.

The failings of LINC and LMLT prompted ESL practitioners, grassroots organizations, and others to suggest to the government ways to improve upon the programs. For instance, a group of government representatives, ESL professional, and non-government organizations (NGO's) worked together to design an alternate test to the A-LINC assessment test. This new test was recommended for adoption by the federal government. OCASI also made an effort to correct the deficiencies of

8 Canada Employment and Immigration, Questions and Answers on the New Immigrant Language Policy. 3.
9 OCASI, "LINC: A Community Response" (July 1992), 7.
11 The women, ESL students, newcomers and mothers of the Shirley Street P.S. Adult ESL program, Toronto to ACTEW, July 26, 1993.
12 Joan Baril to ACTEW, Feb. 11, 1992.
17 Baril, 26.
LINC and LMLT by presenting the Manager of the LINC Delivery Unit in Metro Toronto with a report outlining ways to improve the programs. A plea for future consultations between the state and stake holders made the top of OCASI's list of recommendations. This problem-solving approach typified the general response of ESL professionals, academics, and NGO's to previous programs. In chapter two, I mentioned that in 1981 TESL Canada had submitted to the government a report describing some of the major problems in ESL and listing solutions. The problems raised and the solutions recommended by TESL Canada were echoed by OCASI a decade later. The problem with this approach is that patchwork solutions provide only temporary relief to problems before a new program is introduced. By only seeking problem-solving solutions, ESL critics neglected the policy behind the programs. In addition, the problem-solving approach fails to take into account the interconnection between ESL and the idea of nation-building.

LINC and LMLT were part of a nation-building strategy for the 1990s because they constituted the last stage in the process of making Canadian citizens. The plans for the implementation of LINC and LMLT began in 1989 when the Department of Health and Welfare reported on the economic and demographic needs of the nation. This department found that Canada's population was at below-replacement levels. Without continued immigration the population would grow and reach a peak of 28 million in 2011. Thereafter a slow decline would ensue so that by 2086 Canada's population would be 25 million, the same as in 1986. The report concluded by stressing the economic contribution of immigrants to Canada. The average income of immigrants was above the national average and so was their educational level. Canada needed more immigrants.

In 1990, Barbara McDougall introduced the Five Year Immigration Plan in response to Health and Welfare report. The shift from short to long-term immigration planning was described by McDougall as a way to balance the needs of Canada with those of immigrants. The consultations leading up to the five-year plan had an impact on her. She wrote that Canadians supported greater immigration under certain conditions. As a result, McDougall would increase immigration but also ensure that immigration levels did not exceed Canada's ability to accommodate immigrants. She also felt that the Canadian government must make greater efforts to support the integration of immigrants.

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18 OCASI, LINC: A Community Response, i.
Integration was defined as "finding a place in Canadian society, about a sense of belonging, and about assuming the rights and responsibilities of being Canadian." The Federal Integration Strategy was brought in soon after the 1990 Employment and Immigration report. The strategy provided for a new ESL policy which promised to grant a range of more flexible options to a greater number of learners, regardless of their labour market intentions. The Federal Integration Strategy would improve ESL by instituting five changes: increasing the number of language training opportunities available to immigrants; providing more flexible training options; improve assessment and referrals; ensuring more timely assistance; making language training available to a broader range of immigrants; and increasing the number of immigrants receiving language training from 28 per cent to 45 per cent in 1995, the final year of the five year plan.

The inadequacy of the levels of instruction and the failure of the programs to meet the above goals caused the backlash against LINC and LMLT. For example, OCASI wrote that one of the long-term implications of the new ESL policy was the "ghettoization of immigrants in low paying and vulnerable sectors of the economy." However, LINC and LMLT were not geared to providing immigrants with the linguistic tools to meet their economic needs. The Federal Integration Strategy stated clearly that its goal was to "promote the full participation of immigrants in all aspects of Canadian life," and "helping newcomers adapt to and understand the values and customs of their adopted society." In addition, the 1990 report of the Department of Employment and Immigration stated that Canadians expected immigrants to adopt the principles, values and traditions which define our identity as a nation. In essence, the government was not interested in providing immigrants with fluency in ESL but with their acculturalization.

Critics of LINC and LMLT did not view of problems in the programs as stemming from a policy of nation-building because they did not examine the links between ESL, the Federal Integration

Strategy and the Five Year Immigration Plan. First, such an approach would have forced critics to look beyond problem-solving solutions to the ideological basis of federally-funded ESL. ESL is about identity and the reproduction of the dominant language and culture. Secondly, this approach would have caused critics to examine the historical relationship between the education and immigration of the “other” in Canadian nation-building. Selective immigration policies have been used for the exclusion of undesirable immigrants and the inclusion of those who are assimilable. Education has been used for the preservation and reproduction of the dominant culture and language. “Other” children were subjected to assimilationist policies in schools. For example, education played a major role in the “Canadianization” of Native and immigrant children. Federally-funded ESL has been vital to the “Canadianization” of adult “others.” Thirdly, critics would have been prompted to question the rhetorical arguments used by political elites to legitimize these interconnections.

**Covert Racist Discourse in the 1990s**

Nations are imagined because in the minds of its peoples lives the image of their communion.29 Few Canadians continue to see Canada as a dominion of Britain, but they are bound together in the belief that they and their government are open to immigration, generous and tolerant. The role of political elites has been to perpetuate national myths through their discursive practices. Government documents describing the Five Year Immigration Plan and the Federal Integration Strategy portrayed Canada as a tolerant nation willing to make changes in policy in order to accommodate the needs of immigrants. However, a close look at this political text/talk revealed that covert racist discourse was used to camouflage the continued application of racist policies in nation-building. Let us apply Van Dijk’s system for identifying and analyzing covert racist arguments to political discourse in the 1990s.

*Positive Self-Presentation:*

The Five Year Immigration Plan was the first long-term immigration plan in the history Canada. As a result the government needed to assure Canadians that nothing would change in the way that immigration was managed. Barbara McDougall wrote: “With this five-year plan, Canada will continue to have one of the most open and generous immigration policies in the world. It maintains

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29 Anderson. 6.
Canada's tradition of compassion and concern for those who look to Canada for a better life. Two years later, the ministry declared that “our” openness was something Canadians could point to with pride because no other nation accepted more immigrants than Canada. Canada was a land of great opportunity. The use of positive self-presentation in references to Canada's mythical history of openness worked to create an image for the present Canada. The purpose of this image is to act as a counter-argument against potential accusations of discrimination in immigration policy.

Disclaimers and Denials of Racism:

The government claimed that enforcing deportations was difficult. Canada is open and generous in regards to immigration but “Canadians will not tolerate those who would abuse our openness and generosity.” This discursive strategy portrayed Canada as benevolent and as a victim. The implication is that the state has no choice but to take disciplinary action against abusers. It is not that Canada is racist, rather it must protect itself and its integrity by deporting immigrants.

Negative Other Presentation:

Of all the immigrant classes, refugees were most often depicted negatively in government policy papers. The government claimed that given the volume of refugee claims, it was essential that the system be protected against multiple refugee claims and multiple welfare applications. To prove this point, the government pointed to an individual who was found to be receiving 17 welfare cheques at the same time. Canada also had a responsibility to protect itself against those who violated “our” trust by engaging in criminal activity. Society is threatened by "potential criminals, spies, terrorists, and subversives." The government could only cite one example of welfare abuse, but this was enough to spread panic in a society that already has normalized the exclusion of refugees and immigrants of colour.

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32 Canada Employment and Immigration, Managing Immigration: A Framework for the 1990's, 1.
33 Canada Employment and Immigration, Managing Immigration: A Framework for the 1990's, i.
38 Canada Employment and Immigration, Managing Immigration: A Framework for the 1990's, 10.
Firm but Fair:

The “problem” of refugees was also manipulated to legitimize a reduction of other immigrant classes. The department claimed that changes in the family class were necessary to curtail excessive growth in view of the additional number of refugees Canada would receive.\(^{39}\) The government stated that to be fair to Canada and immigrants alike, Canada must strike a balance between our desire to respond generously to immigrants and our ability to respond to their needs effectively.\(^{40}\) Fairness was also facilitated by the introduction of designated and general occupational employment lists used for the selection of immigrants to fill job gaps.\(^{41}\) This paternalistic strategy plays on the notions of fairness. However, as Van Dijk says in these cases it is firmness, and not fairness, that is sought. These discursive practices are aimed to legitimize exclusions. There is no evidence that the cut backs to the family class were compensated with increases in the refugee class. Hence both categories of immigrants were restricted.

Vox Populi:

In this situation the government pretends to speak on behalf of Canadians. It was reported that “Canadians are concerned about the growing costs of immigration, and about increased processing delays for those who want to come to Canada.”\(^{42}\) Van Dijk claims that this strategy merely creates the image of a government listening to the people and that resentment, or in this case concern over immigration, arises from conservative elites rather than from the grass-roots level. This strategy is effective because it creates a state of mind among “the people.” That is Canadians cannot be concerned about the costs of immigration until they are told that they should be.

The Numbers Game:

Reference was frequently made to the international problem of refugees.\(^{43}\) Apparently, the costs of running immigration programs had risen because programs were not designed to handle the volumes of people applying to Canada.\(^{44}\) Some estimates suggested that there were 80 million people - three times the size of Canada’s population - moving from one country to another at any given

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\(^{41}\) Canada Employment and Immigration, Managing Immigration: A Framework for the 1990’s, 12.

\(^{42}\) Canada Employment and Immigration, Managing Immigration: A Framework for the 1990’s, 1.


\(^{44}\) Canada Employment and Immigration, Managing Immigration: A Framework for the 1990’s, 13.
By providing immigration figures in this way, the state succeeded in depicting the immigration and refugee situation as out of control. This then lends credence to the government's agenda of restricting immigration into Canada.

What is interesting about the Five Year Immigration Plan is that so many of the rhetorical practices for the exclusion of immigrants were much the same as those used in the past. For example, Prime Minister MacKenzie King argued for the limiting immigration according to the absorptive capacity of the nation. A similar argument was made in the 1990s when the Ministry of Employment and Immigration suggested that immigration levels were derived at by balancing the needs of the country with those of immigrants. In each case, the objective is to find grounds for the exclusion of immigrants. This would lead to believe that the formula for nation-building has not changed and that covert racist discourse continues play a role in immigration policy-making. In addition, the Federal Integration Strategy has carried on with the tradition of providing immigrants with Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction and acculturalization.

This thesis attempts to trace the origins of federally-funded ESL in Canada. It also argues that political discourse played a definitive role in the introduction of the classes as part of a post-war nation-building strategy. Nation-building continues today and is dependent on immigration and ESL policies for the perpetuation of the Canadian national myth. These policies work together to control and exclude. Immigration policy regulates who will enter the country and covert racist strategies are used to legitimize the exclusion of others from Canadian society. ESL policy also controls and excludes. First, lack of ESL regulates the lives of immigrants because it controls where they will work, live, go to school and so on. Secondly, it regulates their identities by “othering” their experiences as immigrants to Canada.

**Conclusion**

This thesis argues that federally-funded ESL in Canada was introduced in 1947 in response to a movement to promote national unity during the Second World War and in the post-war period. The question of how to unite Canadians was raised by political elites who insisted that Canada must protect itself from enemies within the country. These enemies were non-Anglo-Saxon Canadians who had in the past been excluded from Canada and marginalized in Canadian society. These were the outsiders

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whose homelands happened to be at war with Canada. The claim that non-Anglo immigrants were disloyal to Canada justified the government’s strategies for national unity. On one hand, DOCR was introduced as a means to deal with potential acts of treason. On the other hand, the government gave the Department of National War Services a licence to employ public education and propaganda in an effort to mobilize all Canadians, and in particular those of non-Anglo origin, behind the war. Bureaucrats worked behind the scenes to build an infrastructure supporting national unity via the Citizenship Act and Basic/ESL Citizenship instruction. In the public arena of the House of Commons, MPs debated the shape of Canadian Citizenship and the shape of postwar Canada. On either side of the political stage, political elites argued for a particular view of Canada. They conceived Basic ESL/Citizenship instruction as the tool for the inculcation of the dominant language and culture. The theory of ESL for nation-building necessitated searching for the roots of the programs. It required that I look beyond political discourses of national unity to the racist intent and meaning behind them. It also demanded an examination of the failings of dominant theories of ESL.

Today, political elites continue to view ESL the same way as did political elites fifty years ago. They continue to use the same covert racist arguments to legitimize the exclusion of racialized immigrants and the poor state of ESL instruction. In this sense the system for nation-building along racial and cultural lines continues undisturbed. I can only explain the contradiction between political rhetoric and the reality of racism by refusing to take the rhetoric at face value. When elites speak of ESL/Citizenship classes as a means to ensure the full participation of immigrants in Canadian society I know that they do not mean that immigrants will receive critical education in the emancipatory power of fluency in ESL. When elites speak of Canadians not wanting certain immigrants in Canada I know that they do not speak on my behalf.

This thesis aims to draw out the historical roots of federally-funded ESL, but it is also a call to critical analysis of Canadian society and nation-building. We cannot pretend to live in a democratic society when new citizens of Canada do not receive adequate ESL, and when those who speak English are marginalized because of their colour, gender, accent, foreign degrees and so on. We often dismiss inequalities as the result of individual failings and thus become conspirators in the process of marginalizing “others.” We must question how Canadian society is structured along class, racial and gender lines, not to mention other forms of “othering.” What might Canadian society and nation-building look like if those at the margins re/gained their voices? What might critical ESL pedagogy look like? If it borrowed from the theory of critical pedagogy, it would allow immigrants to set their own curriculum, speak with their voices, and re/write their own histories. The question is are
Canadians willing to accept this? Would Canadian society stand up to the challenge of re-ordering its "reality."

When I ask myself how ESL instruction contributes to nation-building in the classroom, three questions come to mind. First, how do ESL instructors use covert racist discourse to teach immigrants the values, norms and culture of the dominant cultural group in Canada; are they aware of their discursive practices? Secondly, do ESL instructors receive adequate training in anti-racist education? Thirdly, why is the education of children considered a right, but not the ESL education of adult immigrants? These are questions that I leave others to pursue.
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