MOVING BETWEEN OPPOSING WORLDS:

THE MORAL EXPERIENCES OF

WHITE, ANTI-RACISM EDUCATORS IN SASKATCHEWAN

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the moral experiences of White, anti-racism educators in Saskatchewan. As members of the dominant group, while at the same time being defenders of the rights of minority groups, the unique positioning of these individuals raises intriguing questions of moral experience. Although there is a large body of research regarding issues of racism, there is very little research focusing on the experiences of individuals working in the field of anti-racism; this research seeks to address this gap in the literature. Using a critical interpretive approach (Lock and Scheper-Hughes, 1990) grounded in the assumptions of constructionism, and relying upon Kleinman's (1995; 1999) theory of moral experience, I interviewed 12 self-identified White, anti-racism educators using an open-ended life-history interview followed by a semi-structured interview. The interview questions were inspired by the racism literature reviewed; my own experiences as a White woman negotiating my place in the study of racism; Kleinman's theory of moral experience; and a collection of secondary theories deemed potentially useful to understanding various dimensions of participants' experience. Four broad domains of moral experience are identified and explored in this research. First, participants' understandings of race, racism, and anti-racism are examined. Veyne's (1988) theory regarding the plurality of "programs of truths" is used to make sense of what might be read as contradictions in participants' constructions of these concepts. Second, the experience of actually *doing* anti-racism education is considered in terms of participants' descriptions of their involvements; which they frame alternately as educating Whites, 'helping' the racialized, and changing racist structures. Foucault's (1977, 1978) theory of power and de Certeau's notion of tactics (1984) prove relevant to understanding aspects of participants' experiences in this domain. Third, the relationships between Self and various Others (i.e., the White Other, the racialized Other, the anti-racism Other) are explored. Todorov's (1984) typology of the Other is used to make sense of these complex data. Finally, participants' descriptions of their experiences of Self (including past, present, and future Selves) are examined. Goffman's (1961) theory of moral career and Turner's (1995) theory of liminality are applied to understanding elements of participants' varied experiences of Self. In reviewing participants' accounts across these broad domains, I argue that their noted success and confidence in navigating a challenging moral landscape might be understood in terms of their skill in moving between dual worlds that operate according to distinct logics of morality. Potential applications for the field of anti-racism are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, my husband, and my sons:

Stan, Don, Shayn, Zachary and Nigel

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PART I: INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH

1. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

On May 4, 2006, I began my day as usual by sipping my cup of coffee and flipping through the local newspaper, the Star Phoenix. Two things struck me that morning as I read the paper. First, I noted that on the first 11 pages of the paper there were five unrelated stories about racism in Saskatoon. In one case, the results of a race relations survey conducted in the city were presented in which 76% of Aboriginal residents reported experiencing acts of racism directed against them. Another story focused on a complaint by an Aboriginal actor from Toronto who claimed to have been the victim of racial profiling by the police on his visit to the city. The paper also included an editorial by a "half-white and half-Saulteaux" writer describing her experiences of racism, and a letter to the editor which presented a response to allegations of racism by a local Member of Parliament. Finally, there was a story regarding a lawsuit filed against several members of the Saskatoon Police Service by Neil Stonechild's family.[1] The second thing that struck me as I read the local newspaper that morning was how unexceptional it was to have come upon so many stories dealing with racism in one day. Had I not been studying racism and attuned to noting references to it, I doubt I would have picked up on this recurring theme in the paper that day. Based simply on this anecdotal evidence, it seems that racism, or at least the perception of it, is a significant issue in Saskatchewan.

The subject in these stories, and others like them, tends to be either the 'victim' of racism (e.g., Neil Stonechild), individual perpetrators of racism (e.g., the Member of

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[1] Having been seen last in police custody, Neil Stonechild's frozen body was found on the outskirts of the city in 1990. The case led to numerous other allegations and investigations into police brutality against Aboriginal people in the city.

Parliament), or systems that are allegedly racist (e.g., the Saskatoon Police Service).

My research interest, however, is in a shadowy figure that does not feature prominently in these stories, yet plays a potentially critical role in them: the anti-racism educator. This individual might be viewed as navigating the spaces between individuals and groups in an effort to reduce or eliminate racism. In particular, I am interested in understanding the moral experiences of *White* anti-racism educators. Their racial identification with privilege and oppression, combined with their commitment to challenging White hegemony, suggests a fascinating intersection that raises many questions regarding moral experience.

In reviewing research literature in general, one might assume that the research process begins with the stating of a research question, since that is typically how research is presented. I have chosen to begin this research story at an earlier point in time by describing the birth of the research question itself; on some level it is also a story of my intellectual journey. Given that the focus of this research is on *experience*, it is perhaps appropriate to couch the research question itself within the context of the particular experiences out of which it was born.

1.1 The Birth of the Research Question

My introduction to the academic study of racism was as a student of social psychology. I learned about theories of prejudice and discrimination, but was never particularly drawn to this research; my primary interest lay in understanding and fostering cross-cultural interactions. Given this interest, I chose as a practicum to evaluate a mandatory cross-cultural awareness workshop that had been conducted within a large organization. As part of that research I observed the workshop, reviewed materials, interviewed past participants, and spoke extensively with the White woman in charge of developing and facilitating the sessions. Though labeled 'cross-cultural awareness,' the stated goal of the program was to address racism within the

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organization by changing White people's negative attitudes towards racialized people; presenting information about the cultural Other and producing evidence to challenge stereotypes were the primary strategies employed.

Several things stood out for me in that experience. First, I was struck by the anger and hostility voiced by many past participants at having had to participate in a workshop that they suggested positioned them as racists. Second, in my conversations with the White woman leading the workshops, I was struck both by the intense pressures she described in carrying out her work (e.g., dealing with an unsupportive upper management; facing angry, resistant participants; feeling political pressure to resign from her job so that a racialized person could be in her position), as well as her passion and ongoing commitment to it. The practicum experience piqued my interest in the topic of racism and anti-racism: Might there be more effective and less offensive ways to address racism in the workplace? Does race matter in choosing the 'face' of anti-racism in an organization? Why would anyone want to do so thankless a job?

Following this experience, I decided to enroll in several courses that purportedly dealt with issues of racism. In these courses I was exposed to distinct perspectives on racism and different moral stances regarding how it should be addressed. For example, in one course the focus was primarily on finding 'solutions' to racism that involved building partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples: The overriding message was one of hope and optimism. In a second course, this solutions-based approach was portrayed as "dangerous"; the White instructor who had proposed it was criticized both for holding this view and, it was argued, for teaching a course that ought to be taught by a racialized person. In this second class we were taught instead that racism must be understood from a power relations perspective and asked to critically assess what it means to be White and privileged. The climate of the various classes I took also differed considerably. Certain instructors would encourage

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discussion and debate; in other cases, questions raised by White students were interpreted as evidence of resistance and an unwillingness to relinquish White privilege. In some classes morality was framed in ambiguous terms; in other classes the tone was more dogmatic and absolute. While my feelings regarding these experiences varied considerably (e.g., feeling invigorated, unsettled, angry, inspired), the overriding feeling was one of confusion and uncertainty regarding my own place as a White woman interested in conducting research within the broad domain of racism and anti-racism.

I recall one day reflecting on these varied experiences: witnessing the challenges facing the woman in leading her organization's cross-cultural awareness workshops; hearing anti-racism educators criticize other anti-racism educators both for utilizing a different approach to fighting racism and for holding positions that 'ought' to be held by racialized people; and dealing with my own uncertainty and unease regarding my positioning as a White researcher. It seemed that the world of anti-racism was rife with moral tensions, a potentially treacherous space to negotiate, and one in which White people faced unique challenges in attempting to do so. I found myself simultaneously drawn to, and repulsed by, the thought of conducting research in this field. It was in that moment of reflection that I realized I had stumbled upon my research question: What are the moral experiences of White, anti-racism educators in Saskatchewan?

Prior to reviewing literature relevant to my research question, a few clarifications regarding the focus of my study and my choice of terminology are required. First, my exclusive focus on the experiences of *White* people in this research requires comment. I am certainly not suggesting that the challenges facing White people in carrying out anti-racism work are either greater than those facing racialized people or that they are more worthy of research attention. Indeed, I would suspect that

racialized people face more intense stresses and challenges working in this field than do White people in many regards; the topic of their experience certainly warrants research attention. I also assume that there may be many commonalities among all people involved in anti-racism work. However, the choice to focus specifically on White people is a product of my own moral navigation. That is, in attempting to find a research space that I could feel comfortable occupying, I chose to shift the White researcher's gaze from its usual target in racism research, the racialized Other, to members of the dominant group.

Second, my use of the word 'racialized' throughout this thesis to refer to people who do not identify as White (or who are constructed as 'not White' by the dominant group, depending upon the context) requires explanation. The search for terminology that might unanimously be understood as (1) in keeping with a social constructionist, non-essentialist understanding of race; (2) challenging the notion of whiteness as a neutral, non-racial category; and (3) broad enough to encompass all groups considered to be 'non-White,' has proven challenging. Indeed, the constructionist assumption that meaning does not reside inherently in an object is evidenced in the intensive battles being fought in anti-racism circles over the meanings attributed to various labels. For example, in conducting an internet search, I stumbled upon many sites in which terms such as "visible minority," people of colour," and "non-White" were alternately embraced and reviled; the meanings associated with them differing sharply.

Recognizing the absence of a universally shared label, I have opted to use the term 'racialized' to refer to people considered to be other than White in our society; this choice in language is in keeping with a recent and widespread trend in anti-racism literature (for example, see Gilborn, 2006; Gustafson, 2007; Hubbard, 2005; Lawrence & Dua, 2006). Proponents of this choice of terminology suggest that it supports a social constructionist view of race, and that it avoids the essentialist flavour of terms such as

"people of colour" and "visible minority." For example, a Ontario Human Rights

Commission's policy handbook states the following:

> When it is necessary to describe people collectively, the term "racialized person" or "racialized group" is preferred over "racial minority", "visible minority", "person of colour" or "non-White" as it expresses race as a social construct rather than as a description based on perceived biological traits. Furthermore, these other terms treat "White" as the norm to which racialized persons are to be compared and have a tendency to group all racialized persons in one category, as if they are all the same. (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2005, pp. 9-10)

Noting that labeling the dominant group as 'White' might be read as an essentializing

move, the Commission justifies and qualifies its use as follows: "The terms 'Black' and

'White' are widely used to describe individuals…. While at this time, these terms are

not viewed by most as inappropriate, nevertheless, it is important to remember that

they refer to racialized characteristics" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2005, p.

10). Similarly, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, a national organization

established to combat racism in Canada, recommends the use of the "racialized

individual(s)/groups or even racial minorities," on the basis that "These terms underline

the social construct of race, that race is a part of everyone's life and part of all

societies. Further these terminologies more accurately reflect the power (economic,

social, political and cultural) relationship that is implicit in racism and racial

discrimination, and that ranks groups based on their race" ("CRRF's response," n.d.). It

bears noting that none of the writers referenced here suggest that White people are not

also racialized; indeed most suggest either explicitly or implicitly that we are all racially

produced. However, they argue that highlighting the racialization of non-White people

in this manner serves to recognize the differential impact of racialization on those who

are produced as White as compared to those who are produced as racially Other to

Whites.

1.2 <u>Framing the Literature Review</u>

While this research question clearly has significance for me on a personal level, it also has important, broader academic significance because it addresses a gap that exists in the literature. Despite the considerable research attention focused on issues of racism and anti-racism, there is very little research that directly explores the experiences of individuals working in this domain. While little may be known directly about the experiences of this population, it is possible to extrapolate from the literature on racism and anti-racism what being a White anti-racism educator *may* mean in terms of moral experience.

To this end, I review two large bodies of research grouped loosely according to shared epistemological assumptions (i.e., objectivist and constructionist) that suggest two distinct ways in which we might conceptualize the experiences of White, anti-racism educators. First, I review the theories and research regarding race and racism produced primarily within the realm of social psychology and based upon objectivist assumptions. In reviewing this body of literature, I consider the anti-racism approaches that are associated with this conceptualization of racism and explore the portrait of White anti-racism educators that is produced. Second, I review a more diverse literature that includes writings from various disciplinary perspectives, loosely held together by a stated adherence to constructionist assumptions. Once again, theories and research regarding racism and anti-racism are reviewed, and the approaches to anti-racism that are inspired by this body of research are explored. The image of White, anti-racism educators that is produced in this literature, and the depiction of the world in which these individuals appear to reside, lie in stark contrast to the portrait produced by social psychological research. I conclude by suggesting how these two distinct portraits may inform the present study. Given that the structure of the literature review is based upon a distinction between objectivist and constructionist epistemologies, a

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brief defining of these terms is in order before delving into the literature review as outlined above.

Objectivism assumes that "things exist as *meaningful* entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects" (Crotty, 1998, p. 5). In this view, objective truth (including constructs such as values, attitudes, and beliefs objectified in the people under study) can presumably be discovered if the right steps are followed (i.e., as outlined by the scientific process). Deeply wedded to post-positivism and the scientific approach, mainstream psychology in North America has traditionally embraced the objectivist assumptions upon which science is based.[2] Indeed, the dominance of the objectivist stance is apparent in the common sense status its assumptions have attained in the discipline.

In contrast to objectivism, constructionism (alternately referred to as social constructionism in the literature) challenges the notion that truth and meaning reside in objects independent of any consciousness (Crotty, 1998). Proponents of constructionism suggest instead that "Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed" (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). That is, the world and objects in it are indeterminate: "They may be pregnant with potential meaning, but actual meaning emerges only when consciousness engages with them" (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). This idea is similar to the concept of intentionality, which suggests a "radical interdependence of subject and world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 45). Yet the process of meaning-making is not a purely individual endeavor; the interpretive strategies we use to construct meaning have social or cultural origins (Crotty, 1998). Thus, according

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[2] As post-positivism is essentialist and objectivist by definition, and since post-positivism is the primary expression of objectivism in psychology (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000), both terms will be used throughout the thesis to refer to the 'traditional approach' to research in psychology.

to this view, all meaningful reality is socially constructed; it is collectively generated and transmitted.

1.3 <u>Objectivist Approaches to the Study of Racism and the Practice of Anti-Racism</u>

Objectivist assumptions are evident in the dominant understanding and use of the concept 'race' in North American psychology. Ironically, while genetic and biological research thoroughly entrenched in objectivist assumptions has effectively debunked essentialist notions of racial distinctions (Gould, 1996), psychology as a discipline in North America has been reluctant to completely reject the reification of race (see Beutler, Brown, Crothers, Booker & Seabrook, 1996; Helms, Jernigan & Mascher, 2005). In fact, race continues to be used as an explanatory concept for human behaviour despite a resolution that was passed nearly twenty years ago by the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological that opposed this practice (Yee, 1983, as cited in Helms, Jernigan & Mascher, 2005). While other related disciplines in the social sciences including sociology and anthropology have embraced social constructionist understandings of race, psychology remains divided in this regard (Fish, 1995; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). There is evidence of a lively, albeit limited, debate in the psychological literature regarding the validity of race as a construct, with proponents of social constructionist understandings (e.g., Cooper, 2005; Sternberg, Grigorenko & Kidd, 2005) challenging those who assume biologically based racial distinctions exist (e.g., Jensen, 1995; Levin, 1995; Rushton, 1992, 1995, 1997). However, the unspoken general consensus in the literature seems to be that race is a valid, biologically-grounded basis for distinction. In fact, what Gould (1996) notes as the resurgence of biological determinism in the 1990s may be apparent in the growing popularity of streams such as genetic and evolutionary psychology (for example, see research such as Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Rowe, 2005; Rushton, 1992).

While there is some debate over the meaning of race in the psychological literature in North America, in my academic experience the debate has been largely nonexistent. It seems assumed that the categorization of people into racial groupings is largely unproblematic given that these categories reflect 'natural' differences among peoples on some level; and that the process of identifying and classifying individuals based upon racial distinctions can be accomplished in an objective manner outside of the realm of power relations. While the concept of race itself is seldom interrogated in psychology, what is more likely to be considered problematic, even racist, is to assume that these 'natural' differences reflect psychological or intellectual differences (Guthrie, 1998). Guillaumin (1995) suggests that given the ambiguity and potentially racist implications of the construct, researchers tend to avoid the word 'race' in favour of more generic terms such as 'difference,' while referring to the same construct.

Within the context of this particular epistemological framework, social psychological research on racism can be further explored. Wetherell and Potter's (1992) work has greatly influenced both the structure and the content of this section. As the basis for presenting their research on racism in New Zealand, they offer an overview of traditional approaches to racism research in social psychology. Their review reflects my understandings based on my years of study in psychology and the readings I have done on the topic of racism. In the following three sub-sections, common approaches to studying racism in psychology are briefly summarized. These approaches include the social cognitive approach, social identity theory, and Adorno's motivational/authoritarian approach.

1.3.1 <u>The Social Cognitive Approach</u>[3]

      In the social cognitive tradition, racism is defined narrowly as prejudice and is viewed primarily as a problem with perception at the level of the individual: "The problem of racism thus becomes reduced to a question of bias signalling deviation from an ideal of clear and unimpeded perception" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 36). Accordingly, normal cognitive processes involved in thinking, memory, and perception are believed to be at the root of racism (Brown, 1995). Because normal cognitive processes are assumed to be involved, everyone is viewed as susceptible to obscured perception; thus, there is a tendency not to blame the racist. In fact, racism is portrayed largely as an undesirable by-product of healthy cognitive functioning (Billig, 1985; 1988). The argument goes as follows: We are constantly being bombarded with stimuli and information and do not have the cognitive capacity to process everything. The analogy typically used to illustrate this concept is of a computer hard drive that has limited space to store information. In order to handle all this information, we group incoming data into categories based on perceived commonalities. Hamilton and Trolier (1986) argue that this process is both necessary and useful, provided that the categories reflect 'actual' similarities.

      However, it is reasoned that there are negative and unexpected consequences of this categorization process. Hamilton & Trolier (1986) summarize several consequences that they suggest are well documented in the literature. First, we tend to "perceive members of the same category as being more similar to each other, and members of different categories as being more dissimilar, than when those persons are viewed as an aggregate of individuals" (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986, p. 129). Research suggests that this perception holds even when individuals are randomly assigned to

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[3] In addition to Wetherell and Potter's (1992) work, I rely on Hamilton and Trolier's (1986) review of the social cognitive approach.

groups. A second consequence of this categorization process is that we tend to organize and store information based on "prominent social categories…rather than in terms of the individual stimulus persons" we observe (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986, p. 130). The effects of this process are particularly pronounced when the perceiver is a group member and an in-group/out-group categorization is made.

Hamilton and Trolier (1986) review research to show how the in-group and out-group categorization affects perception and behaviour. This literature has a familiar sound to it, seemingly having attained the status of common sense in North America. For example, while differentiation between in-group and out-group members results in members overestimating the similarity of in-group members, the out-group is viewed as even more homogenous. Out-group members are also judged to be more extreme in terms of their psychological characteristics. In line with the general preference for in-group members, researchers claim there is better memory retention for negative out-group behaviours than for similar behaviours by in-group members, and that overall the in-group is perceived in a more positive light.

According to social cognitive researchers, these in-group and out-group effects can be understood as a useful organizational system backfiring on us. For example, in the case of racism in Canada, visible minorities become an out-group for White Canadians. Misperceptions of the out-group lead to stereotypes which develop from social categories becoming associated with particular beliefs, ideas or value judgments. In fact, social cognitive theory suggests that how we process information may be enough in itself to generate a negative view of a group. For example, in illusory correlation studies "pieces of information which are vivid, unusual and thus salient in some way may be associated together or become correlated in people's minds" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 38). Thus, if one rarely has contact with Aboriginal people and one day happens to see an Aboriginal person commit a crime or do something

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socially unacceptable, a racist stereotype may form. Proponents of this position argue that we cognitively organize material in a hierarchical fashion, breaking social groups down into sub-groups that are then broken down into further sub-groups (e.g., by race, class, or age).

Given this perspective on racism, how ought it to be challenged? Not surprisingly, Hamilton and Trolier (1986), suggest the problem must be tackled at a cognitive level through some form of education. They offer several suggestions. First, the accumulation of disconfirming information will slowly allow for schemas to be modified. For example, if individuals hold stereotypes of Aboriginal people as lazy and unmotivated, it would be beneficial to provide them with examples of Aboriginal 'success stories' that challenge this stereotype. This process of schema modification can be a gradual one in which disconfirming evidence slowly accumulates, or it can be a conversion-type experience. Second, steps need to be taken to encourage the fragmentation of cognitive structures, thereby forcing an increasing number of sub-divisions of categories. The rationale is that the more complexity there is in the organization of material, the less likely an individual is to fall back on broad categorical distinctions that support stereotypes.

1.3.2 <u>Social Identity Theory</u>

The focus of Social Identity Theory (SIT) research is on explaining intergroup conflict in terms of the psychological and social processes that influence its development (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). These processes are believed to be universal and simply express themselves differently in different situations. Racism, in this framework, is considered only one such manifestation in which race becomes the salient and defining aspect of groups.

SIT builds upon the social cognitive approach, accepting the cognitive basis for prejudice and stereotypes, but adding a social element in the conceptualization of

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ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is seen as the result of aligning oneself with a particular group, and is related to racism in "explaining how preference for one's own ethnic and racial group is connected to a chain of discriminatory consequences" (Wetherell and Potter,1992, p. 43). With the introduction of 'ethnocentrism,' the definition of racism comes to include not only stereotypes but any behaviours and practices that could be seen to benefit one's own group. In this way, SIT brings together the focus on individual cognitive processes and the social realm in which individuals interact.

According to Wetherell and Potter (1992), SIT relies on the distinction between two types of social interaction. The first involves interactions that are interpersonal in nature. In this case, individual characteristics are salient and differences are viewed at an individual level where the language of 'personality' may be used. At this level issues of personal identity are at play. The second type of social interaction is conceptualized as occurring at a group level. A shift occurs in which the group and social categories replace the individual as the primary unit of analysis, and social identity replaces personal identity as the primary measure of identity. As Wetherell and Potter (1992, p. 44) explain it, "When groups are involved and social identity is invoked, it is assumed the psychology of the individual will then become restructured on a number of fronts."

This shift from an individual to a group focus is explained as a "re-orientation of the psychological field" in which "objects of perception, other people, begin to appear in different lights…at group rather than interindividual levels" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 44). According to proponents of SIT, this shift is understood as follows. The cognitive processes involved in categorization outlined previously would come into play (e.g., differences between groups become exaggerated and assumptions of in-group similarity are inflated). As a result of these processes, people become "depersonalized," seeing themselves increasingly as "interchangeable with or equivalent to the other members of their group" (Wetherell & Potter,1992, p. 44). In this

process, differences at an individual level are ignored as people begin to see themselves as sharing their group's characteristics, norms, values, beliefs, etc. A cyclical process then comes into play; as individuals assume group characteristics the group is continually reproduced. Finally, personal self-esteem becomes linked to the well-being of the group so that individuals are motivated to view their group in a positive light and to place their group above other groups. Therefore, racist discourse should be most apparent when social identities are activated and individuals are positioned in such a way that group membership is most salient (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

1.3.3 The Motivational/Authoritarian Approach

The motivational/authoritarian approach is based in large part upon Adorno's early research regarding the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkell, Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford, 1950). Adorno and his colleagues' interest lay in exploring links between individuals' political ideologies and their character structures, arguing that there is a "close correlation between a number of deep-rooted personality traits, and overt prejudice" (Adorno et al., 1950, p. vi). Specifically, the aim of their research was to "identify regularities in the character structures and the psychic history of those who seemed drawn to authoritarian doctrines and discover an authoritarian personality for an authoritarian ideology" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 50). Adorno et al. (1950) state that their concern is with the "*potentially fascistic* individual, one whose structure is such as to render him particularly susceptible to anti-democratic propaganda" (p. 1). A character profile of this individual suggests "he is at the same time enlightened and superstitious, proud to be an individualist and in constant fear of not being like all the others, jealous of his independence and inclined to submit blindly to power and authority" (Adorno et al., 1950,p. ix). An adherence to authoritarian doctrines, in combination with a particular beliefs regarding family and religion, for example, are

seen to form the basis for racist ideas. As Adorno et al. put it, "the political, economic, and social convictions of an individual often form a broad and coherent pattern, as if bound together by a 'mentality' or 'spirit,' and that this pattern is an expression of deep-lying trends in his personality" (p. 1). Adorno et al.'s theoretical framework places a heavy emphasis on the role of socialization processes in forming the authoritarian personality (i.e., parent-child relationships and forces of capitalism in particular). As with the other approaches, education is put forward as the best way to address the problems of prejudice and racism: "Eradication means re-education, scientifically planned on the basis of understanding scientifically arrived at. And education in a strict sense is by its nature personal and psychological" (Adorno, 1950, p. vii).

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The key assumptions in the three psychological theories presented above can be broadly summarized as follows: First, identifying and classifying individuals based upon racial distinctions can presumably be done in an objective and factual manner given the essentialist view of race. Second, within cognitive and SIT traditions, racism is viewed in terms of distorted perceptions, a universal and unavoidable by-product of normal cognitive functioning. As such, racism can be understood largely outside the realm of power relations. Since the origins of racism are assumed to reside primarily at the level of cognitive processes, the individual is taken to be the logical starting point and primary focus in addressing racism. Finally, since language is viewed as reflective rather than constitutive, racist language can be understood to reflect underlying racist beliefs or attitudes, while liberal discourse is interpreted as suggesting non-racist, egalitarian beliefs or attitudes (e.g., see Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986).

1.3.4 <u>Anti-racism Approaches Associated with Social Psychological Theories</u>

Each of the theoretical approaches outlined above proposes education as the primary tool for addressing racism. In this section, I review common educational

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strategies that are described in the literature and that are in keeping with an objectivist position. In so doing, my aim is not to offer an exhaustive review, but rather to consider a representative sampling in order to illustrate how theory may be translated into anti-racism practice.

To this end, I rely on Petersen, Walker, and Wise's (2005) review of anti-racism strategies and the relative effectiveness of each (typically measured in terms of pre- and post- workshop scores on measures of prejudice, or general evaluations of satisfaction reported by workshop participants).[4] Note how the assumptions of objectivism are evident in how they situate their review: First, they clarify that in the literature they review the terms 'prejudice' and 'racism' are typically used interchangeably. Second, they suggest that anti-racist strategies involve "eliminating (or at the very least modifying) racist beliefs and/or behaviours" (p. 21). Finally, they point out that the strategies they review focus on addressing racism either at the individual level or at the interpersonal level.

Pedersen, Walker, and Wise's (2005) review begins with a description of three common strategies for reducing racism at the level of the individual. The first strategy involves *providing specific information regarding racial and cultural issues*. The logic here is that in challenging 'false beliefs' about other groups, stereotypes, and then prejudice can be reduced. Based on their description, this seems to be the approach used in the cross-cultural awareness training workshop I evaluated, and is similar both to what Lynch (1997) refers to as the pragmatic approach and the cultural diversity

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[4] While they do not limit themselves to psychological data bases in gathering their sources, the articles they review are all in keeping with the objectivist approaches outlined above and tend to be drawn from psychological journals. The hegemony of objectivism in the discipline of psychology is apparent in noting that they are able to offer a broad review of anti-racism approaches without any mention of the many anti-racism approaches inspired by constructionist research.

approach. This approach warrants particular attention given its widespread use in a variety of settings and its growing popularity (Lynch, 1997; Roman, 1993).

Lynch contrasts the "pragmatic" approach with the "moral" approach to addressing racism and difference in North America, and in so doing, offers an interesting perspective on the birth and growth of the diversity approach in North America. In reviewing the diversity movement in America, Lynch suggests that the civil rights movement following the Second World War provided the basis for moral arguments for diversity that resulted in affirmative action programs. These programs were based on the recognition of power differentials among specified groups and sought to address inequalities at that level. According to Lynch, throughout the 1980s there was increasing discomfort with affirmative action programs that led to a significant backlash against them in the 1990s. Somewhat cynically, Lynch suggests that many leaders in the diversity field saw that it was time to "jump ship," and a new strategy emerged. Abandoning moral arguments for diversity, new programs were developed and marketed based upon broader understandings of difference. These new programs argued for the bottom line advantages of diversity for the business community and were inherently less threatening to White people.[5]

The increasing popularity of more 'user friendly' approaches to dealing with diversity is evident in the business literature on diversity. In reviewing diversity statements and initiatives for companies considered leaders in diversity (as listed by Fortune magazine), both the moral and the pragmatic discourses referred to by Lynch (1997) are evident; however, the pragmatic, bottom-line approach to diversity is

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[5] Interestingly, although the bottom line approach to diversity is heralded as a successful approach by many diversity leaders and CEOs, I was unable to locate any clear, agreed-upon definitions or indicators of success or research that actually measured the effects of diversity on companies' bottom lines. Furthermore, research that points to increased conflict and stress for highly diverse work groups (e.g., Hopkin, 1997; Knouse & Dansby, 1999; Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999; O'Reilly, Caldwell & Barnett, 1989) is not addressed in this literature.

prominent. Touted as more effective than affirmative action initiatives, Richard and

Kirby (1997, 1999) argue that employees are more supportive of diversity initiatives

when those initiatives are based upon clear business goals. There appears to be a

concerted effort by diversity proponents to keep their message upbeat and positive, as

is evident in Elkington's (1999) warning to his colleagues not to link their diversity

initiatives to affirmative action and to emphasize the benefits of diversity to all

employees. To this end, factors such as learning styles, marital status, and family

considerations are included under the banner of diversity alongside race, gender,

sexual orientation and physical ability. It is perhaps no surprise that educational

approaches highlighting cultural difference and diversity tend to be viewed as more

palatable to Whites, given that the celebration of diversity does not require an analysis

of power relations that situates White people in positions of dominance (Roman, 1993).

One of the most commonly reported diversity initiatives in the literature is the

diversity workshop. The typically stated goal of the workshop is to increase

participants' ability to see others' perspectives by increasing participants' awareness

of, and respect for, differences among groups (e.g., cultural or gender differences).

However, in practice this may easily translate into furthering stereotypes and

essentializing difference. For example, Poole (1997), an apparently respected diversity

consultant who is cited regularly in the literature, argues that increased awareness and

acceptance of gender differences in communication styles is necessary. She then

offers shockingly stereotypical portrayals of men and women that she puts forward as

simple facts. Cultural differences also tend to be presented in stereotypical, essentialist

terms that reduce cultural awareness to a list of specific 'do's' and 'don'ts.

The second anti-racism strategy that Petersen, Walker, and Wise (2005)

identify in the social psychological literature requires the *creation of dissonance*. In this

approach, attempts are made by the facilitator to create psychological discomfort in

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individuals in the hopes that this will reduce prejudice. Specifically, discrepancies between individuals' beliefs (i.e., stated egalitarian beliefs versus expressions of prejudice) are highlighted by workshop facilitators in the hope this discomfort will result in the rejection of prejudiced positions.

A final individual-level strategy described by Petersen, Walker, and Wise (2005) involves attempts to *increase empathy for the racialized Other.* This strategy is based upon a supposed inverse relationship between prejudice and empathy for the Other. The reasoning suggests that if empathy can be invoked, racism will necessarily be reduced.

In addition to these three anti-racism strategies that focus on racism at the level of the individual, Pederson, Walker, and Wise (2005) review common "interpersonal" and "intergroup" strategies for reducing racism. First, the strategy of *intergroup contact* is based on the belief that intergroup tensions can be reduced through increased contact between groups *if* certain conditions are met; however, if these conditions are not met, tensions could be exacerbated. A second strategy involves *providing consensus information*. The logic of this approach is as follows: Racist people tend to believe that most people share their views, and this belief serves to strengthen their racist beliefs. Thus, if different consensus information is offered to challenge their assumptions, prejudice can be reduced. Third, proponents of the *engaging people in dialogue* strategy argue that by engaging people in dialogue (i.e., talking 'with' rather than talking 'at' people), individuals will be more receptive to exploring issues of prejudice.

In their conclusion, Pederson, Walker, and Wise (2005) briefly note several points that they suggest must be taken into account in choosing and implementing a particular anti-racism strategy. First, they point out anti-racism efforts may bring about resistance if people feel they have something to lose. Second, they note in passing that

particular contexts should be taken into account in choosing a strategy. Third, they explain that racial prejudice may be tied to other structures such as class. Thus, according to the rationale they offer, it may not be that White people don't like Black people because they are Black, but rather because they are poor and of a lower class. While briefly noted, none of these points is explored in any depth and the general impression I am left with in reading the review is that racism can be understood with little consideration of contexts or understandings of power relations, and that it can be addressed in a fairly standardized manner across situations.

1.3.5 <u>Images of White, Anti-Racism Educators</u>

What does this body of literature suggest about the moral experiences of White, anti-racism educators? The short answer to this question is very little. If the researchers were to identify themselves as White and/or anti-racism educators and interject their personal voice into their writing, it might be possible to get at least an indirect sense of their experience working in this field. However, given the positivist tradition of presenting research findings as objective truth and positioning the researcher-Self as a neutral, uninvolved scientist, few clues are available to suggest either the positioning or the experiences of the writers themselves. Still, in probing the assumptions underlying this research an *image* of White, anti-racism educators, whether intended or not, is produced within this discourse.

The image that emerges is of a somewhat detached, objective expert, able to distinguish accurately between 'true' and 'distorted' perceptions in order to assess and address racism in others. Seemingly speaking from 'nowhere' (i.e., an undefined position of authority), these educators pass on 'truth' and 'knowledge' in order to raise less informed individuals to higher positions of self awareness through a process that is portrayed as neither morally ambiguous nor emotionally taxing. The racial identification of the anti-racism educator is presumably irrelevant, since race is a biological given

and racism occurs outside the realm of broader systems of power relations. One might also construct these individuals as altruistic, selflessly helping those who suffer from the effects of racism; individuals who are clearly not personally implicated in systems of racism themselves. Furthermore, the world of anti-racism portrayed has the sterile feel of a scientist's lab; it is a world governed by laws of reason and logic, in which behaviour can be understood, predicted, and altered without reference to the contexts in which it occurs. Still, a close reading of the literature suggests possible cracks in this tidy picture of the anti-racism educator. For example, the apparent concern to accommodate White people with approaches that are more palatable to them, combined with Lynch's (1997) reference to the career ambitions of anti-racism educators who jump ship, hint that there may be something more at stake for these individuals, and suggests that unease or even fear may be a part of their experience.

What is *not* said, what is *not* known - the inhuman feeling of the image that emerges within this discourse and the absence of any direct discussion of experience - makes the question of the moral experiences of White, anti-racism educators particularly intriguing. To what extent is the image I describe simply a caricature, a by-product of scientific discourse? What is the relationship between the cold portrait that emerges in the writings of these educators and researchers, and their actual lived experience? Do these educators experience challenges, successes, and moral dilemmas; if so, what do they look like? Rather than suggesting an absence of research potential, the silence in this literature regarding White, anti-racism educators suggests a particularly rich domain for exploration.

1.4 Constructionist Approaches to Studying Racism and Practicing Anti-Racism

There are striking differences between the body of research reviewed above and the literature on racism written from a constructionist perspective. In contrast to the relative homogeneity of objectivist writings, the constructionist-based literature includes

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a more diverse collection of writings, reflecting a wide range of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. While diverse in this regard, the writers broadly share a critical approach to research as suggested in their identification with post-structuralist, post-modernist, post-colonial, and/or feminist stances. Contributors to this literature include social activists, anti-racism educators and academic researchers from a variety of disciplines including sociology, anthropology, education, and psychology. It is possible to identify this diversity in part because these writers reject the objectivist ideal of presenting ideas in a detached and ungrounded voice, choosing rather to position themselves more intentionally in their research, at times interweaving their personal stories and experiences into their writing.

What further binds these writings together as a cohesive body is both a stated constructionist position on race, racism, and anti-racism, and a rejection of objectivist assumptions. In an attempt to understand better constructionist perspectives in this domain, I have organized the following review into five broad sections. As a starting point, I present a constructionist understanding of key concepts as put forward by Guillaumin (1995). Second, I offer a critique of objectivist positions on race and racism from a decidedly constructionist perspective. This reactionary approach to discussing constructionist ideas is deemed particularly appropriate given that many constructionist writers I encountered define their positions not in a vacuum, but in relation to objectivist positions. Thus, in addition to clarifying constructionist understandings, this section illustrates the critical approach towards common sense understandings that is so central to much constructionist research. Third, I explore a body of research regarding whiteness and racism grounded in constructionist assumptions and directly relevant to my research question. Fourth, parallel to my review of objectivist research, I examine anti-racism approaches that are in keeping with constructionist understandings of

racism. Finally, I consider what this review suggests regarding the moral experiences of White, anti-racism educators.

1.4.1 Constructionist Understandings of Race and Racism

Rather than reflecting a neutral base from which racism can emerge, constructionists argue that the notion of race itself is a social construction and "a specific product of racist ideology" (Guillaumin, 1995, p. 32). However, a rejection of race in any essentialist sense does not imply a denial of its social reality. In a move that may sound contradictory at first, the same writers who reject race as a valid basis for distinguishing among people argue passionately that the lived reality of race must be recognized. Discussing the use of race in Nazi Germany and in the daily lives of racialized minorities, Guillaumin (1995) explains, "No, race does not exist. And yet it does. Not in the way that people think; but it remains the most tangible, real and brutal of realities" (p. 107).

Guillaumin (1995) and Foucault (1978), among others, explore the historical and social contexts within which race came to be understood as 'natural' in western societies, and in so doing challenge the common sense status it has attained. I offer a necessarily brief summary of Guillaumin's perspective on the social construction of race, not as a definitive or universally relevant statement regarding the emergence of race, but rather as one interpretation that is specifically relevant to European-influenced societies.

Guillaumin (1995) explains that the notions of race and racism as we know them today are relatively modern concepts, the origins of which can be found in the early 19th century.[6] Guillaumin (1995) explains that the 19th century was a time of

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[6] Guillaumin (1995) explains that while the word 'race' itself dates back further than the 19th century, its meaning was distinct from our current understanding of it. Still, the dominant position of the human sciences today is that racism has always existed, but was only recognized and theorized as such in the 19th century (Guillaumin, 1995). This confusion seems

phenomenal change for the western world. The industrial revolution and the growth of

colonization resulted in socioeconomic changes for every class. Prior to this time, the

aristocracy had developed and maintained itself as a distinct class and justified its

privilege on the basis of blood (i.e., ancestry). The industrial revolution saw the

production not only of the bourgeoisie but also of the proletariat class. The proletariat

represented the new wage earners, peasants now living and working in an urban

setting. Unlike the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie could not rely on notions of genealogy

to reproduce itself or justify its newfound privileges. Thus, the bourgeoisie became

preoccupied with heredity as a technique for class reproduction and for asserting

nation supremacy; as is evident in the corresponding preoccupation with biological,

medical, and eugenic explanations. As Foucault (1978) explains, the aristocracy's

blood became the bourgeoisie's sex. According to Guillaumin, it is in this context that

the notion of race can be seen to emerge; it emerges not as a means by which to

oppress or control the Other, but as a tool the bourgeoisie could use to set itself apart

from the proletariat, to reproduce itself and to justify its position of privilege. Based on

this understanding of race, racism then is the "generalizing definition and valuation of

biological differences, whether real or imaginary, to the advantage of the one defining

and deploying them, and to the detriment of the one subjected to that act of definition"

(Memmi, 2000, p. 184). Thus, in direct contrast to approaches that situate racism within

to be due to different understandings of what is meant by racism. That is, Memmi (2000)
concedes that there has always been suspicion of strangers; Kristeva (1991) supplies a
fascinating review of the meanings of 'foreigner' throughout the ages beginning with Greek
mythology; and Guillaumin (1995, p. 30) accepts that "hatred, exclusion, hostility, aggression
and genocide are anything but modern phenomena." However, all of these writers insist that
these phenomena are not the same as racism. Guillaumin further argues that aggression is too
easily confused with racism:

> Aggressivity often connotes racism, but does not denote it. It is neither a sufficient
> condition…nor a necessary one… Racism is a specific symbolic system operating
> inside the system of power relations of a particular type of society. It is a signifying
> system whose key characteristic is the irreversibility which it confers on such a society's
> reading of reality, the crystallization of social actors and their practices into essences.
> (Guillaumin, 1995, p. 30)

the individual and at the level of attitudes, constructionist theorists focus more on issues of power differential at societal, systemic and structural levels.

Given constructionist theorists' heavy reliance on Foucauldian understandings of power relations, a brief review of this conceptualization of power is in order. Foucault (1977, 1978) challenges a unidirectional, top-down, essentialized and oppressive view of power. First, he attacks the view of power as residing within an individual or a group in society and manifesting itself in a downward direction. Rather, Foucault suggests that power is "produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (1978, p. 93). Furthermore, Foucault suggests that power circulates and "we are all, to some degree, caught up in its circulation – oppressors and oppressed…" (Hall, 2001, p. 77). In arguing this point, Foucault shifts the focus from the traditional emphasis on "grand overall strategies of power, towards the many, localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates"; showing that "power relations permeate all levels of social existence" (Hall, 2001, p. 77), such as the family and the workplace. Thus, power can only be understood within the contexts in which it operates.

Second, Foucault dismisses the traditional approach that views power strictly in negative and oppressive terms. "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power only in negative terms: it 'excludes,' it 'represses,' it 'censors,' it 'abstracts,' it 'masks,' it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Foucault, 1977, p. 194). This understanding of power as generative can be seen throughout much of the research that is reviewed below.

1.4.2 A Constructionist Critique to Objectivist-Based Research on Racism

Having previously presented objectivist understandings of race and racism, I now consider those same positions as they appear through a constructionist lens. In

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reading the following critique, note in particular the rejection of essentialism and the

critical attention paid to the unspoken *implications* of particular objectivist positions, as

they are strong themes in constructionist writings on racism.

Constructionist researchers (e.g., Condor, 1988; Wetherell and Potter, 1992)

argue that social cognitive, SIT, and motivational/authoritarian theories are not simply

ineffective yet harmless ways to conceptualize racism; rather they suggest they are

potentially damaging and can be read as inadvertently racist. For example, they argue

that the assumptions of the social cognition approach (and SIT by extension) can be

interpreted as supporting the racism they intend to renounce. The rationale behind this

conclusion goes as follows: First, racial categorization is accepted unquestioningly as

valid and reflective of natural distinctions among people (Condor, 1988). Given the way

information is cognitively processed, racial prejudice is a regrettable though natural

outcome. Furthermore, illusory correlation research suggests that stereotyping is

similarly unavoidable, while the logic behind illusory correlation research is that

negative stereotypes result from minority groups behaving in "undesirable and

unacceptable ways (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 42). One way to combat stereotyping

is to address it at a cognitive level by presenting disconfirming evidence. Therefore, it

follows logically that minority groups, responsible for causing racism, are also

responsible for providing the disconfirming evidence to combat it. Using their research

in New Zealand to illustrate this reasoning, Wetherell & Potter (1992) explain that

members of the White majority

> ...might be able to 'book-keep' more effectively, be 'converted,' or generate a
> larger range of 'positive prototypes,' if only Maori people would pull their socks
> up and offer more positive and 'disconfirming' images of their group. The
> argument implies that if there were better Maori role models on offer then white
> cognitions might be able to run in a more benign direction. If 'reality' was
> otherwise, there would be more 'evidence' available which contradicts

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stereotypic schema, and Pakeha New Zealanders might come to perceive
Maori New Zealanders in a truly benevolent fashion. (p. 42)[7]

These assumptions position the White majority as blameless victims of cognitive processes, while positioning visible minority groups as responsible for any negative stereotypes held of them. Henriques (1984, as quoted in Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 42) points out "The black person becomes the cause of racism whereas the white person's prejudice is seen as a natural effect of their information processing mechanisms. (This works as a subtle double exoneration of white racism, no doubt all the more effective because it is not conscious.)"

Clearly, these writers are not accusing social cognition researchers of intentional racism, nor are they questioning their motives or the sincerity with which they are fighting racism[8]. Condor (1988) explains that in drawing upon mainstream discourses that are available to them, these researchers "simply fail to appreciate the implications of what they say" (p. 86). However, "what matters ultimately is not whether social psychologists mean to make racist statements, but that it is all too easy to read racism into their accounts" (Condor, 1988, p. 86). The common assumption that good motives and liberal views automatically exclude one from scrutiny in relation to systems of racism is pointed out as yet another way in which this body of research inadvertently supports racial inequality. That is, if racism research is primarily preoccupied with cognitive measures of prejudice and focuses on 'racist' individuals, broader systems of oppression and privilege remain unexplored and 'invisible'.

Constructionist writers also aim sharp criticism at anti-racism approaches that focus on increasing cultural understanding at the expense of exposing systems of

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[7] The relevance of this quote to Canadian society is made clear by simply replacing 'Maori' with 'Aboriginal' and 'Pakeha' with 'Euro-Canadians'.
[8] Still, it bears noting that psychology as a discipline is certainly guilty of more overt forms of racism as well. See Gould (1996) and Guthrie (1998) for scathing historical reviews of how psychological research has actively oppressed non-White groups throughout the ages.

oppression and privilege. Critics of these 'cultural difference' approaches argue that

while cultural awareness and sensitivity education may have an appropriate place in

our society, they are inadequate for addressing issues of structural racism that cannot

be understood outside of a historical context, nor separated from analyses of power

relations (Blackmore, 2006; Lentin, 2005; Lentin, 2004; Razack, 1998). Furthermore,

they argue that an effect of relying solely upon cultural explanations of difference can

be to further increase the oppression of racialized Others (Bangar & McDermott, 1989;

Légaré, 1995; McConaghy, 2000; Roman, 1993; Sleeter, 1993).[9] Wetherell and Potter

(1992) explain this logic as follows:

> …[C]ulture has this aura of niceness, of progressiveness and
> humanitarianism. It covers over the messy business of domination
> and uneven development through advocacy of respect and tolerance
> for differences. Colonial history can be reconstructed as a story of
> clashing values, the modern against the traditional, as opposed to a story of
> conflicting interests, power relations and exploitation. There is an inevitability
> and acceptability in the notion of 'culture contact' not found in the rhetoric of
> annexation, conquest and oppression. (p. 137)

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[9]Given the widespread reliance upon cultural explanations and approaches to difference in our society, an example of their potentially oppressive effects as outlined from a constructionist perspective is warranted. Wetherell and Potter (1992) carried out interviews with Pakeha (i.e., White New Zealanders) and found a heavy reliance on the discourse of culture (i.e., culture in the folklore sense of the word) when discussing Pakeha-Maori relations. Two strands of culture discourse were identified; Culture as Heritage, and Culture as Therapy. In both cases 'culture' was identified with the Other, while Pakeha space was designated as neutral and normative. When the Culture as Heritage repertoire was drawn upon, culture was portrayed as traditional, ancient and unchanging. In this discourse, Maori were given the subject position of museum keepers. In freezing culture in this way, Maori voices of protest could be effectively silenced and discredited. As politics were seen to muddy the purity of the ancient culture, a 'true' Maori would presumably not venture into the political realm. In the Culture as Therapy repertoire, culture was viewed as a psychological need for the Maori people. Modern, urban Maori were presented as lost and aimless whereas 'proper' Maori were embedded in their culture and showed a strong sense of cultural identity. From this perspective, the solution to Maori social problems is relatively straightforward and simply requires that they reconnect with their culture. This repertoire is also effective in silencing and discrediting Maori protest as it could be interpreted as a sign of their weakness and lack of cultural connection. While culture represents a source of burden and duty for the Maori in this discourse, culture is a potential playground for the Pakeha who are encouraged to sample culture "as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling" (hooks, 1992, p. 21). Pakeha, who have 'civilization' rather than a culture of their own, can choose culture, whereas Maori rejection of culture is a sign of abnormality. The subject position available to Pakeha then is to provide leadership and guidance, to encourage the Maori to return to their culture and in so doing revive themselves.

1.4.3 <u>Interrogating Whiteness</u>

As noted in the critique above, constructionist positions on race and racism are presented at times in reactionary terms, framed as what they are *not* (e.g., they are *not* positivist). However, constructionist-based research is not limited to debunking objectivist claims or pointing out the harmful implications of them. There are large bodies of research that explore domains that are specifically inspired by constructionist assumptions and are largely ignored in objectivist research. One body of research that is particularly relevant to this study explores meanings of whiteness as it relates to racism.

<u>The Unstated Norm.</u> While the notion of race may have emerged in part as a technique for distinguishing the bourgeoisie Self from the Other, in our society today race tends to be equated with the Other. Guillaumin (1995) explains that the historical auto-referential system that identified race with Self (i.e., a means by which those with institutional power distinguished themselves from the lesser Other), has been replaced by an altero-referential system that is centered on the Other. Whereas in the old system, race was identified with power, today race is associated with a lack of power. Guillaumin argues that in the current system, the dominant group is always outside the frame of reference and not referred to specifically as a group. For example, in Guillaumin's France (as in Canada) the terms White and Christian are used primarily as adjectives and represent the unspoken norm, while Black and Jew have become nouns and designate identifiable groups:

> Ultimately it shows a complete failure to recognize and define any Self group at all. It offers its own completely adequate explanation of lived experience, one that is literally so blindingly obvious that it prevents its proponents from also seeing, specifying and designating themselves as a race at the same time when they are busy designating Others as belonging to one. We have moved as far as it is possible to go from aristocratism, where the Self group alone had the right to such a definition. This type of racism is characterized by blindness about oneself as much as by an obsession with the Other, two traits which it unites into a single system. (Guillaumin, 1995, p. 52)

This apparent preoccupation with Other to the exclusion of Self can be seen in psychological research in North America. The researcher's gaze is typically focused on the racialized Other and probes questions such as what do 'they' perceive as racism (e.g., McNeilly, Anderson, Robinson, McManus, Armstead & Clark, 1996; Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis & Pietrzak, 2002); how do 'they' cope with this 'perceived' racism (e.g., Mellor, 2004; Noh & Kaspar, 2003); what is the relationship between mental illness and 'their' experiences of racism (e.g., Cassidy, O'Connor, Howe & Warden, 2004; Chakraborty & McKenzie, 2002; Fischer & Shaw, 1999); how can mental health services better address 'their' needs (Dana, 2002); how do 'they' maintain a sense of identity in the midst of the dominant culture and in light of their perceived racism (e.g., Phinney, 1990; Utsey, Chae, Brown & Kelly, 2002); and how can the effects of racism on 'them' be objectively and reliably measured (e.g., Green, 1995; Liang, Li, & Kim, 2004; Loo, Fairbank, Scurfield, Ruch, King, Adams & Chemtob, 2001). A silent evaluative thread runs through this research in which the Other is measured against unidentified yet presumably objective, neutral (i.e., White) criteria.

From a constructionist perspective, critical questions are raised by this research, such as what constitutes 'normal' coping? At what point does one's perception of racism become 'valid' (i.e., correlate highly enough with the researcher's 'objective' measure of racism)? When does one's coping style cross the line into 'mental illness'? The portraits of the racialized Other that emerge from this research certainly contribute to our understandings, but perhaps not in the manner intended by these researchers. Rather than offering objective insights into the workings of the Other, portraits such as these may reveal more about the forces that allowed these particular constructions to emerge and gain the status of knowledge (Fanon, 1967; Francis, 1992; Memmi, 1965; Razack, 1998; Said, 1978). These portraits are best

understood as White constructions of the Other (Razack, 1998). According to

McConaghy (2000), it is imperative that we "understand how knowledge and power

relations are implicated in the discursive construction of the indigenous subject. Only

then will other possibilities, other ways of 'knowing' and 'imagining' be able to emerge,

circulate and be considered" (p. ix).

Thus, the White preoccupation with the figure of the racialized Other in its many

forms in our society can be seen to elevate whiteness to the status of unquestioned

norm and presumably neutral basis for comparison. The focus on this Other typically

expresses itself both in a hatred for the Other (i.e., the bad savage) and in a 'love' for

the Other (i.e., the noble savage). In the latter case, the Other may be the exotic, the

unknown, the curiosity. As hooks (1992) states, "ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning

that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (p. 21). Schick (2000a)

identifies this desire for Aboriginal people in White pre-service teachers' longing for

pre-colonial traditional Aboriginal culture. Rosaldo (1989) suggests that this

"imperialist nostalgia" typically fosters cultural appropriation in the name of cultural

appreciation. However, whether hated or desired, the obsession with the form of the

racialized Other objectifies the Other, prompting Fanon (1967) to comment: "The man

who adores the Negro is as 'sick' as the man who abominates him" (p. 67). The

fascination with the Other sees whiteness emerge as the unstated norm, a value-free

standard against which the Other is both positively and negatively evaluated (Battiste,

Bell & Findlay, 2002; Castagna & Dei, 2000; Frankenburg, 1996; McIntyre, 2000;

Schick, 2000a; Roman, 1993; Sleeter, 1993; Weiss, Proweller, & Centrie, 1997).

Post-colonialist and post-structuralist writers (e.g., Gorski, 2003; McConaghy,

2000; Razack,1998) have been vocal in challenging this White obsession with the

racialized Other, arguing that the gaze of the dominant group needs to shift from the

Other to the Self. In shifting the focus, meanings of whiteness and its privileged status

become the object of study and interrogation (McConaghy, 2000). Different research questions become possible with this change in focus. For example, how is whiteness produced? What are its meanings? What are the processes by which whiteness has come to be accepted as the norm? What is at stake for White people in recognizing their privilege? Thus, rather than asking the typical psychological questions identified earlier that focus on the racialized Other and position the dominant group as outside the scope of investigation, the dominant group itself becomes the primary focus of investigation.

      <u>Shades of White</u>. Beginning with the assumption that whiteness constitutes privilege, researchers argue that whiteness can be seen to exist in varying shades. Factors influencing one's particular shade of White can be understood to have both "local and global resonances" (Frankenburg, 1996, p. 7). At a more global level, whiteness is enhanced through additional identifications with other dominant identities (e.g., heterosexuality and able-bodiedness). These "interlocking systems of oppression" are seen to produce different degrees of privilege and oppression (Razack, 1998). Degrees of whiteness are also influenced by local norms. For example, the meaning and associated privilege of being Protestant or Catholic will vary according to the local context. Drawing on her own experiences, Frankenburg (1996) reflects on how she came to be produced as a White woman:

> How was I racialized? How was I made white? I was made white, in the same moment that the effort was made to teach me to be English (not British), to be of the north, of the suburbs, to be lower-middle-class, to be Church of England, to be polically conservative, to be (of course) heterosexual. To be white. Without ever naming it, to be white. To be English. There is at least one "not that" as counterpart to each of these characteristics. And each has a set of histories and practices embedded in it. (p. 8)

While Frankenburg's (1996) account suggests a passive subject being acted upon, other authors explore the notion of what it means to actively take steps towards whitening oneself (e.g., Fanon, 1967; Roediger, 1991; Schick, 2000a). For example,

Fanon (1967) considers the relationship between a dominant language and achieving whiteness:

> The Negroe…will be proportionally whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct relation to his mastery of the French language…. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (p. 18)

Roediger (1991) offers another example in his analysis of Irish-Americans' attempts to identify with the dominant group in the 19th century by presenting themselves as White. During this time period, Roediger suggests the Irish lived and worked alongside African-Americans in relative poverty and faced high levels of discrimination, as is evidenced in the name given them: "nigger, inside out" (p. 133). Roediger argues that in recognizing the benefits of whiteness, Irish workers took definite steps to align themselves with dominant groups based on skin colour in order to distance themselves from their former Black friends and neighbours. For instance, Irish-Americans became a loud voice against anti-slavery and instigated violence against the Black community. Schick (2000a) summarizes the logic behind these attempts at whitening in stating, "vertical alliance with white skin privilege…(is) more appealing than any horizontal solidarity with the 'other' across ethnic or class lines" (p. 96).

Privilege and Complicity. Many of the above writers suggest that the invisibility and assumed neutrality of whiteness in our society tends to blind the dominant group to its position of privilege, and they point out that this invisibility serves a useful purpose. As Memmi (2000) explains: "oppression needs disguises for itself as well; it is not always possible to assent to privilege with an easy conscience" (p. 60). While factors such as gender, socio-economic status and sexual orientation do differentially influence one's access to privilege, it is argued that whiteness is a powerful source of privilege in our society. Writing from the perspective of the colonized, Memmi (2000) states that "If the privileges of the masters of colonization are striking, the lesser

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privileges of the small colonizer, even the smallest, are very numerous (p. 198).

Memmi goes on to offer examples of differences in privilege, such as the comparative

leniency afforded the colonizer by the justice system. As a White woman (i.e., a

'colonizer'), McIntosh (1988) explores the many forms that White privilege takes in her

own life, such as never being asked to speak on behalf of all the people of her racial

group; being able to take a job with an affirmative action employer without having her

co-workers suspecting she got it because of her race; and being able to buy flesh-

coloured bandages that actually match her skin colour. McIntosh concludes: "I have

come to see White privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can

count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White

privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps,

passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (p. 165).

Other writers (e.g., Frankenburg, 1996; Olsson, 1996/97; Roman, 1993;

Thomas, 1994) identify the privilege of choice that Whites enjoy in regard to addressing

racism. They point out that while Aboriginal people and people of colour have no

choice but to deal with racism, White people are able to choose whether or not they

wish to deal with it. Thomas (1994) argues that privilege is also apparent in the

consequences for White people, as compared to people of colour, who choose to

actively fight racism. She explains that White people involved in anti-racism work are

typically admired for fighting a battle that presumably is not theirs to fight, and they may

be rewarded with job promotions for their efforts; Aboriginal people and people of

colour who similarly speak out against racism are treated with suspicion or outright

hostility, and are assumed to lack objectivity.

According to Roman (1993) and McIntosh (1988), the unquestioning enjoyment

of unearned privilege that necessarily relies upon the oppression of others for its very

existence, implies complicity of Whites in the operation of racism regardless of motive

or intent. Thomas (1994) further argues that awareness of privilege does not diminish one's complicity, and that inaction in addressing the structural inequalities unfairly benefiting Whites is to support them. Relying upon the Foucauldian (1977) view that power operates most effectively when it is concealed, Razack (1998) argues that the first step towards disrupting this power is to make its operation visible. Once it is named, she argues, the structures and processes that lead to privilege for some and oppression for others can be challenged. "As long as we see ourselves not implicated in relations of power, as innocent, we cannot begin to walk the path of social justice and to thread our way through the complexities of power relations" (Razack, 1998, p. 22).

1.4.4 Addressing Racism through Education

To recap, based on the positions put forward above, racism is best understood from a power relations perspective, as a system in which whiteness differentially confers privilege upon one group and oppresses another. This position suggests different possibilities for addressing racism through education than those inspired by objectivist-based theories. Approaches that adhere to constructionist understandings of racism tend to address it under a broader banner of anti-oppressive education, alongside classism, sexism, and heterosexim. Kumashiro (2000) offers a framework for understanding the most common approaches to anti-oppressive education. While his focus is specifically on approaches used in the school system, the literature suggests that these approaches are drawn upon in other contexts as well.

The four approaches Kumashiro (2000) discusses include: (1) Education for the Other; (2) Education About the Other; (3) Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering; (4) Education that Changes Students and Society. The focus in Education for the Other is on improving the experiences of students who are Other by recognizing oppression in the school environment and working to address better the diverse needs

of all students. In emphasizing Education About the Other, the status quo in school curriculum is the focus of critical analysis given its primary focus on 'normal' populations and distorted and misleading presentations of otherness. To remedy this problem, students are taught about the Other by including specific units on the Other in school curriculum and integrating otherness throughout the existing curriculum. Kumashiro points out the danger of essentializing otherness in this approach and argues that, in order to be effective, the focus on Other must be used to disrupt knowledge rather than merely complement existing knowledge (as he suggests is often the case in the cross-cultural awareness approaches described previously). Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering focuses on identifying processes by which students are either normalized (i.e., privileged) or othered (i.e., denigrated and marginalized), with a goal of transforming hegemonic structures and systems. Dominant group members are challenged to recognize their privilege and their complicity in systems of oppression. Finally, in Education that Changes Students and Society, attention is focused on discursive sources of oppression. The argument presented is that through interrogating the discourses that structure our thoughts and produce knowledge, oppression can be challenged.

Resistance and Guilt. Kumashiro (2000) notes that with the possible exception of Education for the Other, the approaches outlined above are potentially highly threatening to dominant group members. For those whose whiteness and privilege are largely unrecognized, there may be much at stake in naming their whiteness, identifying the unearned privilege it confers upon them, and recognizing their complicity within the broader system of power relations that serves to oppress certain groups. White resistance and guilt are two common responses to recognizing privilege that are reported by anti-racism educators in the literature. Prior to considering these reactions,

it may be useful to briefly note what researchers suggest is generally at stake for White people in acknowledging their privilege and dominance.

A common theme in the literature is the White desire for reaffirmation of innocence and goodness (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Heron, 1999; Kumashiro, 2000; McIntyre, 2000; Razack, 1993; Schick, 2000a; Schick, 2000c), a position easily attainable through a discourse of culture. As Wetherell and Potter (1992, p. 135) explain, "Culture discourse…is about being 'sensitive,' 'tolerant,' being sufficiently magnanimous and enlightened, to 'respect difference' and 'appreciate' Others. A very different knowledge/power axis operates here in comparison to race…. Unlike the racist, the culture buff is understood as generous, progressive, committed to harmony and imbued with good-will." What may be at stake for the liberal-minded White person encountering anti-racism from a power-relations perspective is that sense of unquestioned innocence and goodness.

Researchers working in a variety of different contexts draw similar conclusions regarding what is at stake for White people in recognizing systems of racial oppression. In a scathing review of the University of British Columbia's handling of complaints of systemically sexist and racist practices in the political studies department, McIntyre (2000) explores how "studied ignorance about the fundamentals of equality and inequality in higher education" (p. 148) by academics "enables and entrenches the freedom of the systematically privileged to dissociate themselves from, and presume themselves innocent of, the cumulative appropriations and dispossessions that define systemic relations of domination" (p. 159). Similarly, in her research with pre-service teachers at the University of Saskatchewan wishing to teach Aboriginal children, Schick (2000a) concludes that their "desire is to accomplish a respectable, white, liberal, self-image and to present themselves in a positive light" (p. 85). She explains that this is only possible through their ongoing and willed ignorance of power relations

that implicate themselves in systems of oppression. In a study of White women's experience as development workers, Heron (1999) argues that their experiences allow them to position themselves as good, autonomous and competent through their interactions with Third World people and through their efforts to 'help' them. She concludes that "…white, bourgeois subjects think of ourselves in fundamentally moral terms…unitary subjectivity makes it imperative that our behaviours, and more so our life choices, need to be interpreted as innocent in order to secure and protect our self-conceptions as moral. The period posed by a potential loss of this view of Self is detectable through our relentless efforts to preserve it" (p. 100).

If indeed anti-racism education is seen to threaten the prevailing sense of innocence and goodness, it is not surprising that it can evoke strong emotional responses of resistance and guilt. The notion of resistance is commonly referred to in the literature and described largely as an unavoidable White response to this form of education (e.g., Aveling, 2006; 2002; Bishop, 1994; Dua & Lawrence, 2000; McIntyre, 2000; Olsson, 1996/97; Sleeter, 1993; Schick, 2000a; Schick, 2000c; Thomas, 1994). Some authors (e.g., Gaine, 2001; Schick 2000a) go so far as to suggest that resistance is a necessary step towards becoming anti-racist, as Schick (2000a) does in posing the question: "Are we doing our job if there is no resistance?" (p. 84).

White resistance is described as taking many forms. For example, researchers suggest that White claims of innocence and earned privilege are typically based upon several discursive strategies, such as highlighting good intentions (Schick, 2000a), drawing upon the discourses of culture, meritocracy and democracy (Wetherell & Potter, 1992), and relying upon legal discourses that privilege individual rights over group rights (McIntyre, 2000; Razack, 1998; Razack, 1993). Regardless of strategy, these authors argue that the cumulative effect is a denial of complicity in systems of oppression that allow White peoples' sense of goodness to remain intact.

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While portrayed as more benign than active resistance, the guilt that results from newly recognized inequality and unearned privilege is not described as a desirable outcome of anti-racist education (Bishop, 1994; Dua & Lawrence, 2000; Frankenburg, 1996; Norquay, 1993; Schick, 2000a; Schick, 2000b; Schick, 2000c). Anti-racism educators note that while guilt may lead to a commitment to address inequality, it may alternately lead to inaction due to its potentially paralyzing effects. Frankenburg (1996) describes her own experience with White guilt as "Shame, pain. An inordinate, almost bodily discomfort, perhaps that of twisting and turning to try to get away from, to resist, what was. What is" (p. 14.). Thomas (1994) suggests a balance must be found between claiming responsibility while not becoming overwhelmed with guilt. In a published letter to her daughters, she writes, "…remember that you are not responsible for wrongs committed before you were born, but you can't escape the legacy of those wrongs….you are responsible for what you do now" (p. 171). Bishop (1994) points out that ideally anti-racism education will result in new recruits joining the "ally group" (p. 94); allies are defined as individuals who acknowledge their privilege, accept their own position both as oppressed and oppressor in intersecting systems of power relations, and dedicate themselves to challenging oppression in its many forms.

1.4.5 <u>An Alternate Portrait of White, Anti-Racism Educators</u>

In reflecting on the preceding review of constructionist-based research on racism, a portrait of the world of White, anti-racism educators emerges that differs radically from the picture previously described. The lab-like world inhabited by the detached and aloof scientist is replaced by a world in which whiteness matters, power struggles rage, moral dilemmas abound, and potential identity crises loom. While White researchers and educators interested in addressing racism from an objectivist perspective are able to position themselves a safe distance from messy issues of

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complicity, in this world such a positioning is not possible since whiteness is read to imply complicity.

In further contrast to the objectivist literature reviewed, this body of research offers more direct insights into the experiences of White people working in anti-racism. While not engaged directly in research regarding the experiences of White, anti-racism educators, many of the authors whose work I reviewed wove their own stories into their writings. The challenges and moral dilemmas they describe revolve primarily around issues of identity and issues related to the practice of *doing* anti-racism.

In the only research I found that directly explores the experiences of White people involved in anti-racism, Eichstedt (2001) investigates how these "activists" negotiate a "problematic" White identity. Eichstedt explains that in the field of anti-racism, whiteness has come to be viewed as a monolithic, essentialized, and highly negative identity. Commonly defined in terms of "prejudice plus power," (e.g., see Olsson, 1996/97, p. 17), racism is typically viewed as a uniquely White phenomenon in the literature she reviews. She points out that this essentialized and negative understanding of whiteness creates tensions for individuals who feel pressured to claim this conceptualization of whiteness despite their personal discomfort with it, or risk being accused of failing to take responsibility for racial inequities in our society. Eichstedt (2001) describes how her participants live with the constant conflict produced by simultaneously holding the view of whiteness as an inherently racist identity, while at the same time experiencing themselves as having multifaceted and flexible identities.

As Alcoff (2001) points out "This 'feeling white,' when coupled with a repudiation of White privilege, can disable a positive self-image as well as a felt connection to community and history, and generally can disorient identity formation" (p. 7). Eichstedt (2001) agrees and explains that one way in which her participants

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negotiate this problematic White identity is to first clearly identify themselves as oppressors. She suggests that they view this as a necessary step in claiming an anti-racism position and justifying their right to be involved in the fight, since it recognizes their own complicity in an unjust system. Indeed, this is a common theme in the literature, as many White writers (e.g., Frankenburg, 1996; Gorski, 2000; Kujawa-Holbrook, 2002; McIntosh, 1988) similarly describe the necessity of naming their White privilege and complicity. This process of coming to terms with a White oppressor identity is described as painful and intensely personal, as Frankenburg (1996) illustrates in speaking of her experience of "shame, pain…discomfort…trying to resist…terrified" (p. 14).[10]

In addition to dealing with issues around whiteness and identity, many other challenges and moral dilemmas related to carrying out the work of anti-racism were noted in the literature. Dua and Lawrence (2000) discuss the moral dilemma of choosing between writings produced by White versus racialized writers in their efforts to teach about oppression. They point out that the former are perceived as more credible to White students and therefore the ideas may be better accepted; however, they argue that to rely upon White writers supports the very hegemony they are seeking to challenge. Aveling (2002) questions whether it is better to allow students to explore issues of racism openly, even when what it said is blatantly racist; or whether she ought to silence these voices in the classroom, even if it means racism is less openly addressed. Other writers raise questions about the appropriateness of particular anti-racism educational methods. Razack (1993) and Srivastava & Francis (2006)

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[10] If whiteness suggests a negative identity, alternate identities of marginality offered to White anti-racists are hardly more positive. Bailey (1998) explains that "privilege-cognizant whites who refuse to animate expected whitely scripts and who are unfaithful to worldviews whites are expected to hold" are alternately referred to in the literature as "disembodied spectators," "outsiders-within," and "race traitors" (p. 27). She offers "traitorous identities" as her preferred term in describing these individuals.

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question the morality of asking racialized individuals share their personal stories in an effort to teach White people about the Other, while Murji (2006) examines whether the use of racial stereotypes in anti-racist campaigns are justified or whether they do more harm than good.

White, anti-racism educators further suggest that their work is personally exhausting and stressful (e.g., Frankenburg, 1996; Norquay, 1993; Olsson, 1996/97; Schick, 2000a) yet do not allow themselves the option of quitting (e.g., Olsson, 1996; Thomas, 1994).[11] They speak of their work with passion and conviction, and in many cases talk about the impact that anti-racism has on their lives beyond their formal anti-racism involvements. This is apparent in Olsson's (1996/97) published letter to her daughters regarding her vision for them in the fight against racism, and in Aanerud's (2007) description of what anti-racism means in relation to her mothering. Based on this body of literature, White, anti-racism educators can be viewed as negotiating a space riddled with moral dilemmas, uncertainties, challenges, and intense power struggles. This is described as a space in which much is at stake for everyone involved; furthermore, it is a space that is not bound by the limits of their specific anti-racist efforts. Clearly this is a rich domain to study in terms of moral experience.

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Two distinct portraits of White, anti-racism educators have been constructed in reviewing these two bodies of literature. While both portraits raise intriguing questions of moral experience – one primarily for what is *not* said, the other for what *is* said – the contrast between them is also interesting. For example, is the experience of anti-racism educators as varied and polarized as these images suggest? Which aspects of

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[11] Furthermore, in voicing their frustrations and challenges, these individuals risk the criticism of racialized writers such as Nopper (2003) who states in an angry open letter to White anti-racists on the Race Traitor website, "I am not interested in making White people, even those so-called good-hearted anti-racist whites, comfortable about their position in struggles that shape my life in ways that it will never shape theirs" (p. 3).

these different portraits resonate with the actual lived experience of White people

working in anti-racism in Saskatchewan? The dearth of research directly exploring the

experiences of White, anti-racism educators, combined with the intriguing questions

raised in reviewing the existing literature, speak to the importance of my research

question.

2. EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL POSITIONINGS

Having reviewed various approaches to the study of racism and anti-racism in the literature, in this chapter I clarify the epistemological and theoretical positioning of my own research. To that end, I have divided the chapter into three sections. First, Crotty's model (1998) is used to outline the epistemological grounding of my research. Second, I position my research in relation to relevant theoretical stances outlined in the literature review. Finally, I describe the particular theoretical model that guided the development of this research.

2.1 Epistemological Positioning

In approaching any research endeavor, Crotty (1998) suggests that four questions must be addressed (p. 2): (1) What *methods* do we propose to use? (2) What *methodology* governs our choice and use of methods? (3) What *theoretical perspective* lies behind the methodology in question? (4) What *epistemology* informs this theoretical perspective? Crotty argues that addressing these questions is not an abstract intellectual exercise, but rather it is critical if we wish to "ensure the soundness of our research and make its outcomes convincing" (p. 6). Explaining the practical implications further, Crotty states that "…at every point in our research – in our observing, our interpreting, our reporting, and everything else we do as researchers – we inject a host of assumptions….Without unpacking these assumptions and clarifying them, no one (including ourselves!) can really divine what our research has been or what it is now saying" (p. 17). Crotty suggests that these four elements are intricately related in that they inform each other. That is, methods grow out of a particular

methodology, which in turn is grounded in a particular theoretical perspective. The theoretical perspective is based on the broader epistemology.

Contrary to popular opinion in psychology (e.g., see Cresswell, 1998), Crotty (1998, p. 3) argues that there are very few rigid and direct links connecting particular epistemologies (i.e., "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective"), theoretical positions (i.e., "the philosophical stance informing the methodology"), methodologies (i.e., "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods") and methods (i.e., "the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyze data"). While he acknowledges a few restrictions between epistemology and theoretical perspective (e.g., the theoretical position of positivism is based upon an objectivist epistemology by definition), he argues that theoretical perspectives are not restricted to using particular methodologies, while various methodologies could rely on any methods suited to the purpose. Crotty suggests that researchers should focus on designing research that forms an organic whole, that is epistemologically consistent, and that 'makes sense'. Finally, while it may be appropriate to combine various methods in a particular research endeavor, it would be problematic, according to Crotty, to claim an epistemological position that is *at the same time* objectivist *and* constructionist (i.e., suggesting simultaneously that there is *no* objective meaning *and* that there *is* objective meaning). In carrying out this research, I have taken a constructionist position and have striven for consistency in this regard.

2.1.1. Implications of a Constructionist Stance: A Relativist Positioning

According to Crotty (1998), in order to attain consistency in constructionist research, a relativist stance is demanded in terms of the status attributed to the knowledge produced:

> …we should accept that social constructionism is relativist. What is said to be 'the way things are' is really just 'the sense we make of them'. Once this standpoint is embraced, we will obviously hold our understandings much more lightly and tentatively and far less dogmatically, seeing them as historically and culturally effected interpretations rather than eternal truths of some kind. (Crotty, 1998, p. 64)

Crotty explains that given the anti-essentialist focus of constructionism, researchers adhering to its assumptions develop 'interpretations' rather than seeking or claiming 'truths'. These interpretations are guided in part by the broad theoretical frameworks in operation (e.g., post-structuralism, interpretivism, etc.) as well as the more specific theoretical lenses through which the data are viewed.

While a relativist stance as outlined by Crotty (1998) may seem logical given the assumptions of constructionism, many researchers appear uncomfortable with claiming a relativist stance in their research and struggle with it on a moral level (e.g., Burr, 1998; Harré, 1998; Kvale, 1992). As Burr (1998) points out, a relativist stance in psychology has been criticized as dangerous and "has been attacked as morally relative and a-political" (p. 19). Furthermore, perceived contradictions between an epistemological stance in research and a general political stance in other domains of life appear to create tensions for individuals such as Willig (1998), who refers to her "problematic positioning as social constructionist academic and committed international socialist," and asks "how do I deal with this apparent contradiction?" (p. 91).

I see several issues here that need to be addressed. First, while philosophy and politics are clearly related, there needs to be a clearer distinction made between the two (Eagleton, 1990). As Potter (1998) states, "Political interventions should come from political argument and commitment – relativism is neither claiming nor excluding either of these things…. Politics does not fall out of principles, ideals, epistemologies or philosophies ready formed; rather it is, and has to be, worked up from these things" (p. 32). Second, the concern voiced by Willig (1998) regarding her 'contradictory'

positions, seems to be falling back on essentialist notions of a unitary and cohesive Self.[12] Gergen (1998) reminds us, "it is useful to separate speaker from speech – identity from discourse – and view the discourses of realism and constructionism as available to us all for situated purposes" (p. 153). While one's research stance cannot be *at the same time* constructionist and objectivist, there is no reason why a researcher cannot alternately claim different epistemological stances (Crotty, 1998). In the same way, like Shweder (1991), I see no reason why individuals cannot adopt a relativist stance in their research and a different stance (i.e., universalist or evolutionist) in other contexts of their lives. Finally, I am not suggesting that researchers be naïve regarding the potential uses of their research, but neither should they feel full moral responsibility for the many ways in which their research *might* be used to further others' political agendas. Researchers certainly have the responsibility for thinking through the ethical and moral issues relevant to their research and need to be aware of the role of power relations in informing their research and positioning. As Crotty argues, they can draw on theoretical frameworks that may provide more 'useful' interpretations in light of social issues, but in order for their findings to make sense, they cannot claim truth status in any objectivist sense for their interpretations:

> What constructionism drives home unambiguously is that there is *no* true or valid interpretation. There are useful interpretations, to be sure, and these stand over against interpretations that appear to serve no useful purpose; they contrast sharply with interpretations that prove oppressive. There are even interpretations that may be judged fulfilling and rewarding – in contradistinction to interpretations that impoverish human existence and stunt growth. 'Useful', 'liberating', 'fulfilling', 'rewarding' interpretations, yes. 'True' or 'valid' interpretations, no. (pp. 47-48)

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[12] It bears noting that while I use 'Self' in the singular throughout this thesis, I do not share this essentialist understanding of it as unitary and cohesive. Rather, I rely upon Singer's (1984) theoretical conceptualiztion of Self, which he describes as a multiplicity of Selves that vary by context. Singer's theory will be presented in greater detail within the context of discussing the Self and Other (i.e., see the introduction to Part IV).

2.2 <u>Positioning Myself in Relation to the Literature Reviewed</u>

Having positioned my research as a constructionist endeavor, I necessarily reject essentialist notions of race and social psychological explanations of racism in favour of a constructionist understanding of these concepts. However, aligning myself with a constructionist perspective obviously does not mean that I blindly endorse all of the theoretical perspectives put forward by researchers who similarly claim this epistemological stance. In an attempt to clarify my own position further, I note two key positions outlined in the literature that I view as inconsistent with a constructionist approach. My criticisms focus on the argument that racism is exclusively a White problem (i.e., that whiteness is *necessarily* the colour of dominance) and on the truth status some researchers seem to ascribe to their interpretations.

2.2.1 <u>Racism and Whiteness</u>

The assumption of whiteness as a place of privilege may be appropriate for understanding power relations in certain parts of the world; however, the unqualified assertion of some researchers that whiteness is *necessarily* and *universally* the colour of domination is, in my opinion, overly simplistic and smacks of ethnocentrism itself. Indeed, this narrow understanding of whiteness may be a product of what Bonnett and Carrington (1996) refer to as the "somewhat insular and provincial ... outlook and organization" of the anti-racism movement in western countries (p. 271). As Eichstedt (2001) points out, this view of whiteness too easily slips into essentialism in that it fails to recognize the extent to which whiteness is a multidimensional, fragmented, and contested identity. She further points out an unintended effect of essentializing whiteness: "…while White racial justice activists work to destabilize systems of racial inequality, they also reify one of the main nodes of racist/racialized dualistic thinking – the node of a homogenous, monolithic, and all-powerful whiteness" (p. 447).

Unqualified claims that only White people are capable of racism due to their unique access to institutional power (e.g., Olsson, 1996/97; Thobani, 1994) also suggests a rather narrow understanding of racism (Winant, 1998). In her interviews with White, anti-racism activists, Eichstedt (2001) reports that all of her participants defined racism as a combination of prejudice plus power. According to this view, while racialized people may be capable of prejudice, only White people can be racist since only they have access to institutional power. I would argue that this view of racism as exclusive to Whites can be read to have racist overtones itself by implying that White people are unique and distinct from other peoples. This view of racism contrasts with Foucault's (1978) understanding of power, in which power is not something that is possessed by an individual or group and manifested in a top-down fashion, but is rather a force that circulates and is context dependent. This position in no way denies that at a broad, societal level whiteness is the colour of privilege in many parts of the world. However, failing to qualify and contextualize this assumption may blind us to other significant formulations of racism in other national contexts (e.g., Japanese racism towards Koreans) or racism that is expressed between different groups of racialized Others within Canada. When asked whether there can be a racism of the dominated, Memmi (2000) answered "of course…toward those who are more impoverished" (p. 106). Memmi goes on to suggest that there can also be a racism of the "impoverished against the rich," but clarifies that it is "a racism that is in part reactive, though it obeys the same mechanisms of the other. … In confrontation with the dominant, the racism of the dominated remains at the level of opinion. *The racism of the poor is ordinarily a toothless racism* – except when it manifests itself against other poor people" (pp. 109-110). In pointing out the complexity of various power relations, Memmi avoids ethnocentric understandings of racism while at the same time

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recognizing the different levels of impact it may have on different individuals and groups.

While Memmi makes an important point, in the context of my research (i.e., Saskatchewan), whiteness certainly *is* privileged and the effects of racism perpetuated by the dominant White group is broadly devastating. Thus, while it is critical to note the contextual limitations of the concepts of whiteness and privilege and to be sensitive to varied expressions of racism, it is also important to note the relevance of these theories to this research given the particular context of my study.

2.2.2. <u>Truth Status vs. Interpretations</u>

In the sections of the literature review dealing specifically with White resistance and guilt, it is the sense of unquestioned certainty in the conclusions drawn that I reject in staking out my own position. Ironically, many of the writers whose work I reviewed draw upon constructionist-based theories to deconstruct and critique others' positions, yet they present their own conclusions in a manner that is reminiscent of objectivist truth claims rather than as interpretations (Mason, 2002). While many of these interpretations are rich and interesting, I am uncomfortable with this manner of presentation as it serves to stifle the production of other interpretations that could be useful to anti-racism theory and practice.

Specifically, while White resistance and guilt are undoubtedly useful concepts for understanding responses to anti-racism education, an overly rigid and sweeping application of these concepts may actually work to hide aspects of the complex operation of power by masking other potentially useful ways of understanding White peoples' reactions. For example, while it is assumed that the personal recognition of White privilege is a necessary step towards challenging White hegemony, the recognition of whiteness and privilege may have many other meanings. Suggesting

there is only one way to make sense of these experiences discourages alternative and

potentially useful interpretations from being considered.

As seen in the literature on resistance, the elevating of interpretations to the

status of truth is made possible, in part, by labelling challenges to these interpretations

as evidence of White resistance. What exactly constitutes resistance to these writers?

In reading works by authors such as Bishop (1994) and Schick (2000a), it seems that

any response not fully accepting of their portrayal of racism qualifies as resistance.

Thus, resistance becomes the only framework for interpreting disagreement or

questioning. For example, in Bishop's (1994) analysis, workshop participants are

categorized into one of three categories, only one of which is deemed acceptable:

Either they are "Backlashers" (i.e., resistant), "Guilty" (i.e., paralysed by guilt) or "Allies"

(i.e., in full agreement with her own position and understanding). Is all discomfort

necessarily a sign of unwillingness to explore honestly issues of privilege? Can my

questioning only be understood as an attempt to perform my dominance and discredit

marginalized voices of protest? While it is imperative that an awareness of power

relations and a recognition of differences in what is at stake permeate all discussions of

racism, I think we can benefit from open dialogue, in particular with those who share

common values and goals.[13]

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[13] It is my view that racism hurts everyone, albeit in different ways and to different extents, and thus many voices need to be heard in seeking solutions to it. In reviewing the literature I have been surprised to find so little discussion regarding the negative impact of racism on the dominant group. (Notable exceptions include Daes, 2000; Fanon, 1967; Findlay, 2000; McIntyre, 2000; Memmi, 2000; 1965; and Razack, 1998). I believe it is imperative for anti-racist educators to initiate dialogue regarding what is at stake not only for racialized people, but also for White individuals and for our society at large if racism is *not* challenged.

> …[C]olonization…dehumanizes even the most civilized man; that colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; that the colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as *an animal*, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform *himself* into an animal. It is this result, this boomerang effect of colonization that I wanted to point out. (Cèsaire, 2000, p. 41)

2.3 The Theoretical Model[14]

The stated purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the moral experiences of White, anti-racism educators. But what exactly does 'experience' mean? As Throop (2003) points out, despite its importance and centrality in anthropological research, there is a "lack of conceptual clarity" regarding the concept of experience (p. 220). He further notes a "growing dissatisfaction with the usage of the concept," based upon "differing perspectives on how the term should be conceived of and used in anthropology and the social sciences more generally" (p. 221). Given the diverse ways in which experience is conceived and the corresponding potential for confusion in my use of the concept, it is imperative that I specify the theoretical understanding of experience that guides this research to ensure that the interpretations I offer 'make sense'.

As a broad frame of reference, I situate this study of experience in the ethnographic tradition of Arthur Kleinman, Byron Good, Victor Turner, and Edward Bruner. Each of these researchers endorses a "meaning-centered" (Good, 1994, p. 52) approach to the study of human life, influenced by Geertz's cultural hermeneutics and based upon their understanding of experience as intersubjective. This constructionist view of experience is in direct contrast to the conceptualization of experience as "subjective, belonging to the 'dark grottos of the mind,' and therefore ultimately unknowable" (Good, 1994, p. 117). As Kleinman (1999) explains, experience is constructed in the social realm through interactions with others in one's local world. Otherwise stated, "We are born into the flow of palpable experience. Within its symbolic meanings and social interactions our senses form…." (Kleinman, 1999, p.

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[14] In psychology, 'theory' is typically understood as a critical element of scientific model, and more broadly associated with the objectivist goal of 'discovering reality'. In this research, I use 'theory' not in this objectivist sense, but rather as Turner (1995) does, simply "to assist in the organization of observations" (p. ix). Indeed, clearly relying upon theory helps the constructionist researcher to avoid falling back upon essentialist interpretations of concepts and data.

359). Thus, experience in this tradition is not understood in contrast to an external, objective world, but is a *product* of our interactions in a social world. As such, any understanding of experience requires a careful examination of its social context and of the signs that are exchanged and negotiated in the public sphere. Experience, while subjective in the sense that it is unique to the individual, is also collective in that it is shaped by public images and cultural forms. Therefore, an examination of the experiences of Euro-Canadians working in anti-racism is not an examination of their private 'internal world,' but focuses primarily on understanding the culturally shared meaning systems that shape their experience.

Having positioned my approach to the study of experience within a broad tradition, I offer now a more in-depth look at Kleinman's (1995; 1999) particular conceptualization of experience which he labels "moral experience," as it is the overarching theory that I relied upon to guide the development of this research.

2.3.1 Moral Experience

The concept of moral experience and its relevance to this research is perhaps best introduced and illustrated by recounting one individual's experiences in the field of anti-racism. To that end, I offer the following excerpt from an article written by Jeffrey Ring (2000), in which he discusses his experiences as a White, male, anti-racism "trainer":

> I vividly remember the intense fears I harboured when hired as the only white male faculty member in a multicultural clinical psychology training program. The position offered an incredibly rich opportunity to study and discuss racism and other forms of oppression…. On the other hand, colleagues and students questioning my professional legitimacy (and personal agenda) as a white man specializing in diversity and Latino/a mental health, constantly forced me to articulate my values and objectives, and to justify my role in the program. … I harboured a fearful fantasy in which I unintentionally made race-insensitive comments during a lecture to a racially mixed group of some 100 clinical psychology graduate students and faculty. In my fantasy, the group rose up in anger; unforgiven, I was fired from my job, my career hopes dashed along with

my very soul and whatever good intentions had initially led me to pursue such a position. (Ring, 2000, pp. 75-76)

In order to ground abstract theories and concepts, I will refer back to Jeffrey's comments throughout this section of the thesis.

Turner's (1986) broad distinction between 'mere' experience and 'an' experience is a useful place to begin exploring Kleinman's (1995; 1999) understanding of experience, as it bridges our intuitive, common sense understanding of the concept with Kleinman's theoretical conceptualization of it. Drawing on Dilthey's work, Turner (1986) explains that "Mere experience is simply the passive endurance and acceptance of events. *An* experience, like a rock in a Zen sand garden, stands out from the evenness of passing hours and years" (p. 35). Kleinman's conceptualization of moral experience is in keeping with Turner's (1986) notion of *an* experience rather than what he refers to as "mere experience" (p. 35). Turner goes on to describe *an* experience in the following manner:

> These experiences that erupt from or disrupt routinized, repetitive behavior begin with shocks of pain or pleasure. Such shocks are evocative: they summon up precedents and likenesses from the conscious or unconscious past – for the unusual has its traditions as well as the usual. Then the emotions of past experiences color the images and outlines revived by present shock. What happens next is an anxious need to find meaning in what has disconcerted us, whether by pain or pleasure, and converted mere experience into *an* experience. All this when we try to put past and present together. (p. 36)

Thus, experience in this sense is inextricably linked to the concepts of meaning and expression, which in turn are grounded in the social world. Turner (1986) explains that "Meaning arises when we try to put what culture and language have crystallized from the past together with what we feel, wish, and think about our present point in life" (p. 33). Finally, unlike 'mere' experience, *an* experience "urges toward expression" (Turner, 1986, p. 37); as social beings, Turner explains, we have the urge to communicate our experiences.

Jeffrey Ring's recalled experience of gaining a faculty appointment has all the characteristics of 'an experience'. Note that it is memorable and stands out for him as he "vividly" remembers the "intense fears"; it begs expression (it is included in his article); and it suggests a search for meaning.

While Turner (1986) offers a useful preliminary distinction, it is to Kleinman's (1995; 1999) more nuanced and theoretically relevant definition of experience that I now turn. Simply stated, experience is "the felt flow of *interpersonal* communication and engagements" (Kleinman, 1999, p. 358). Kleinman elaborates by pointing out that these engagements occur in one's *local world* and that experience is *intersubjective* in nature. That is, it involves "practices, negotiations, contestations among others with whom we are connected" (p. 358), bringing together subjective and collective processes. Experience is also *moral* in the sense that it reflects what matters at both the collective and the personal levels. Each of these key elements of experience (i.e., its intersubjectivity, its occurrence at the level of the local world, and its moral component) are considered in greater depth below.

Experience as Intersubjective. As a point of comparison, it is useful to consider how the concept of experience has traditionally been understood in North American psychology. In that tradition, experience is typically understood in essentialist or subjectivist terms. For example, Jeffrey's experience might be analyzed in terms of its accuracy in 'reflecting reality'. How 'valid' were his fears? An answer to this question requires that the 'real world' be mined for objective criteria to determine whether his experience was 'normal' in terms of accurately reflecting the objective reality of his situation. (e.g., What does history suggest might be the actual consequence of an instructor making a race-insensitive comment?) Are his fears 'legitimate' or do they represent a sense of paranoia? (e.g., How common are his fears among his White colleagues?) In psychology, the objective world is clearly valued more highly than the

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presumed subjective and unpredictable world of experience; thus, objective measures of the external world are generally used to interpret subjective experience.

Continuing for a moment in the dominant line of reasoning in North American psychology, Jeffrey's experience of fear and threat might be understood as a purely subjective experience; that is, as unique, idiosyncratic, residing within him, and inaccessible to others. In this perspective, as an individual Jeffrey would be viewed as part of a collective and functioning within a social realm, yet his personal experience would be viewed as qualitatively distinct and separate from that social domain. That is, the line between the individual's experiences and the collective are clearly demarcated.

Kleinman (1995, 1999) rejects that notion of experience and offers one in keeping with social constructionist assumptions of reality. In his view of experience, the lines between the individual and the collective, and between personal and social processes are not so clearly drawn. Experience, he posits, is intersubjective in the sense that it involves both individual and social elements. "It is the outcome of cultural categories and social structures interacting with psychophysiological processes such that a mediating world is constituted. Experience is the felt flow of that intersubjective medium…" (Kleinman, 1995, p. 97). Thus, experience is what is felt when the idiosyncratic mingles with the collective (which is the result of particular social, historical, cultural, and political forces) and in the process creates something new while still retaining its distinct elements. To illustrate this relationship, Kleinman (1999) points out that while fresh and salt water intermingle in a tidal stream, they also maintain their own forms. However, given this intermingling, the line between private and collective is at times blurred. Distinguishing between the private and the collective is particularly challenging due to the common reliance on symbolic forms. Kleinman (1999) points out that symbolic forms such as language, music and cultural images belong to the "social world of values and the interior world of feelings" (p. 378). As such, experience can be

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seen to reside in the symbolic world, and our access to it is through symbolic expressions.

Thus, Jeffrey's described experience of fear and anxiety can be viewed a result of idiosyncratic processes (e.g., a particular history of rejection) and broader social factors (e.g., the cultural meanings and social implications associated with 'whiteness' and 'professor,' the meaning and status of 'diversity,' etc.). Jeffrey's account further illustrates how experience cannot be understood outside of a social context. His fear and uncertainty only make sense within the context of his relationship with colleagues, students, and the Latino community, among others. In order to understand social influences and collective processes it is necessary to study other similarly positioned individuals and look for common threads in their stories.

The Local World. Experience, as the felt flow of lived engagements, occurs at the level of a local world. It is in the "microcontext of daily life" (Kleinman, 1995, p. 124) in which societal and personal processes are seen to come together.

> …much of lived experience in a local moral world occurs not in that realm of policy deliberation versus the deepest strata of innermost dreams and terrors, but rather in the mediating medium I described earlier as an intersubjective level of words, gestures, meanings, images,feelings, engagements with and amongst others. (Kleinman, 1999, p. 377)

The local world is "particular, intersubjective, and constitutive of the lived flow of experience" (Kleinman, 1999, p. 124). Given that experience is constituted in the social realm, and that our interactions with others occur within a particular local context, Kleinman suggests we must focus our gaze first on that local world to understand experience. The local world can be understood in terms of those spaces within which individuals relate to others: communities, neighbourhoods, social networks, families, workplaces, and other institutions. It is in these contexts that we daily communicate, negotiate, interact, and live. From this perspective, Jeffrey's experiences can only be understood within the context of his local world, defined in part by his relationships and

interactions with his colleagues, students, family and friends, neighbourhood, and community.

While Kleinman (1995) argues that experience must be understood within the context of a particular local world, he does not deny the influence of macro-level forces. Macro-level factors, such as socio-economic and political forces, certainly influence experience, but they are posited to do so indirectly, as they are mediated through the local world. For example, our constitution guarantees individual rights and freedoms and states that we cannot, therefore, discriminate on the basis of one's race. This constitutional policy directly influences our experience when it becomes operationalized within the context of our local world. In the case of Jeffrey, this position may be reworked in his local world to define what is considered discriminatory behaviour by his students and the consequences for him as a professor should he be found guilty of it. It may also inform his colleagues' questioning of his legitimacy as a White male in the department, and his feelings of fear and anxiety at unintentionally offending others. It is, therefore, at this local level that a broad constitutional policy shapes the world of Jeffrey's lived experience.

Is this notion of local worlds that exist in a cohesive and recognizable form that can be studied relevant in an era of globalization and diversity? Furthermore, assuming that reality is constructed, how can the concept of 'local worlds' and 'local worlds of meaning' be justified? Kleinman (1999) agrees that local worlds represent places of conflicting interests, yet argues that they are also coherent and unified through their use of "symbolic apparatuses of language, aesthetic preference, kinship and religious orientation, rhetoric of emotions, and commonsense reasoning, which, to be sure, derive from societal-level cultural traditions, yet are reworked to varying degrees in local contexts" (p. 124). Thus, symbols constitute the intersubjective world of

experience and their shared use and negotiation binds individuals together in local

worlds that are not static, but in constant flux.

<u>Experience as Moral.</u>

> Experience is moral, as I define it, because it is the medium of engagement in everyday life in which things are at stake and in which ordinary people are deeply engaged stake-holders who have important things to lose, to gain, and to preserve. (Kleinman, 1999, p. 362)

According to Kleinman (1999), moral experience is "always about practical

engagements in a particular local world, a social space that carries cultural, political,

and economic views and practices: a view from somewhere and an action that

becomes partisan" (Kleinman, 1999, p. 365). Kleinman argues that there is no

standard, universal, acontextual criteria for determining a 'correct' moral option, as

experience cannot be separated from its local social context. Furthermore, "Irony,

paradox, uncertainty, and change are the very stuff of moral experience," (Kleinman,

1999, p. 365). Kleinman suggests that moral experience involves individuals in specific

situations and contexts weighing different options, each of which has potentially

different consequences and relationships to what is at stake for those individuals in

their local worlds.

Thus, what is at stake and what matters for individuals cannot be considered to

be universal; it varies across local worlds and across historical periods. Furthermore,

what is at stake has both a collective and a personal significance, suggesting what

morally defines a local world. It is through an examination of symbols, residing in the

intersubjective space between the world of feelings and the social world of culture, that

we can gain insights into how a local moral world is structured. Kleinman (1999) further

suggests that identifying perceived "dangers of social experience" offers insights into a

local moral world, as they "…order the course of moral processes" (Kleinman,1999, p.

362). These perceived dangers represent a threat to other things that are at stake.

It is difficult to identify what is at stake for individuals or groups in any given situation, since what is at stake resides at the level of common sense knowledge. However, in Jeffrey's case, the perceived dangers of social experience are apparent, and what is at stake is easily discernible at one level at least. At stake are the potential loss of his job, career, good intentions and his "very soul." Clearly there is a great deal at stake for him individually; but there may also be something at stake collectively for White males, for faculty members, for his students, and for his community.

To recap, in contrast to the passive endurance of events a moral experience is '*an* experience' that triggers a search for meaning, begs expression and is grounded in the social world (Turner, 1986). Furthermore, moral experience is the "felt flow of interpersonal communication and engagements" (Kleinman, 1999, p. 358) that occur in one's *local world*, are *intersubjective* in nature, and in which there is *something at stake*. Intersubjectivity implies an interweaving of individual and social elements that cannot be easily separated due to their shared reliance on symbolic forms. This intersubjectivity is experienced in the context of one's local world: While macro-level forces certainly influence this experience, we experience them through interactions with others in the local contexts in which we live. Finally, moral experience implies that there is something at stake for individuals in their local worlds.

2.3.2 Secondary Theories

My research interest shares Kleinman's (1995; 1999) focus on moral experience, but the kind of experience I am interested in clearly differs from Kleinman's primary interest in pain and suffering. I am interested in the moral experience of White people formally 'doing' anti-racism work as well as in what it means to 'be' an anti-racism educator, and the meanings of that identity in an individual's "lifeworld" (Good, 1994). As such, I will need to look beyond the specific context of their formal role as anti-racism educators in order to examine the broader meanings of anti-racism in their

lives. Thus, in order to understand and to contextualize the experiences of my participants, I drew upon a collection of secondary theories in conceptualizing this research.

The first of these theories is Turner's (1969) theory of liminality. While this theory speaks to a general state of 'betweeness' that is potentially relevant to my participants' experience, it does not explore in detail the particular kind of liminality I am studying. That is, I am specifically interested in the experiences of people in liminal positions who are engaged in key power struggles and conflicts in Saskatchewan. White, anti-racism educators might be conceptualized as occupying the unique position of being between two groups (i.e., the dominated and the dominators), defending the rights of the minority group while at the same time being a member of the dominant group. Thus, the two forms of liminality deemed potentially relevant to my study are dynamic in form; the first is synchronic (i.e., occupying and negotiating the space between opposed social groups) and the second is diachronic (i.e., working towards and assisting in culture change).

To understand these particular kinds of power relations and functions involved in these liminal positions I drew upon Foucault's (1977, 1978) theory of power, de Certeau's (1984) notion of tactics, and Todorov's (1984) theory of otherness. Finally, to explore issues of identity and the experience of Self in relation to these liminal positionings, I used Goffman's (1961) notion of moral career.

In addition to Kleinman's theory of moral experience, this combination of theories by Turner (1969), Foucault (1977, 1978), de Certeau (1984), Todorov (1984) and Goffman (1961) make ups a cohesive theoretical model and creates many unique and interesting intersections that were deemed potentially useful in informing both micro and macro aspects of the analysis of my participants' moral experience. However, the primacy of Kleinman's theory of moral experience in this research bears

noting; the usefulness of these secondary theories could only be determined in relation to the actual data collected. That is, while these theories were identified ahead of time as potentially relevant to my research and guided my conceptualization of it, they were drawn upon in the analysis only to the extent that they helped me to make sense of participants' accounts of their moral experience as White, anti-racism educators.[15]

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[15] It should be noted that the theoretical model presented here does not include all the theories used in the interpretation of the data. Rather, this model includes only those theories that were chosen prior to the data collection and deemed appropriate at that time based on my experiences and the literature reviewed. While these theories were used in conceptualizing the research and developing research instruments, they were not rigidly imposed upon the interpretation of data; rather they were drawn upon when it was deemed appropriate to do so. As Turner (1974) noted, "Although we take theories into the field with us, these become relevant only if and when they illuminate social reality" (p. 23). While briefly noted in these pages, these theories are more fully described in the contexts in which they are applied to the interpretation of data. Furthermore, the specific data collected suggested additional theories that were also used to make sense of the data. These theories will also be presented in the context of the data analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

As Crotty (1998) points out, in order for research to 'make sense' the methodology used must be informed directly by the particular theoretical position claimed and by the broader epistemological stance taken. Thus, Kleinman's (1995, 1999) theory of moral experience, grounded in a constructionist epistemology, was the guiding force in determining how this research should be carried out. The key aspects of that theory outlined in the preceding chapter have clear implications for methodological choices in that they imply a particular approach to data generation and analysis. In particular, the conceptualization of experience as intersubjective suggests a methodology that draws upon both interpretive and critical traditions in the social sciences; a methodology referred to by Lock and Scheper-Hughes (1990) as a "critical-interpretive approach." In addition to Lock and Scheper-Hughes, this approach is espoused, among others, by Good (1994), Kleinman (1995; 1999), and Ingstadt and Whyte (1995).

Recall that constructionism rejects the idea that meaning resides within an object independently of consciousness, positing rather that all meaning is socially constructed. Thus, to study people's intentional world need not imply a subjectivist and individualist approach (i.e., what Crotty calls "constructivism"); rather, a constructionist position suggests that consciousness itself is informed by collective processes. Crotty (1998) explains that "we are born into a world of meaning. We enter a social milieu in which a 'system of intelligibility' prevails" (p. 54). The emphasis in the critical tradition is on deconstructing and critiquing the conventions of language and other social processes that are implicated in the construction of the meaningful worlds that pre-exist

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us. The interpretive tradition differs in that its focus is on understanding the construction of these cultural meaning systems themselves. Crotty is clear that both critical and interpretive traditions are firmly rooted in constructionist assumptions. He further specifies that while particular versions of the critical and interpretive approaches to research may be incompatible, in most cases "they have more than enough in common … for fruitful dialogue to take place. There are signs that a dialectic of this kind is emerging" (p. 63). Indeed, it seems the critical-interpretive approach referenced above is a good example of precisely this dialectic in practice. The relative contributions of the interpretive and critical traditions to this methodological approach are outlined below.

In brief, the focus in the interpretative tradition is on gaining a rich understanding of participants' world of meaning, (Good, 1994). The aim of understanding the world from "the natives' point of view" (Geertz, 1977), typically relies upon a process of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973).[16] Thick description, like Gadamer's notion of the hermeneutical circle, requires "a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring both into view simultaneously" (Geertz, 1973, p. 491). This ever shifting focus allows patterns to emerge, grounded as much in the details as in the global structure of the world under study. Furthermore, the continuous back and forth between micro and macro levels allows one to gain insights into the whole from the parts while also gaining insight into the parts from the whole. Thus, while focusing on accounts of specific interactions that occur in participants' daily lives, for example, I can at the same time be considering ways in which these accounts fit into patterns, themes,

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[16] Geertz is not referring to description in an objectivist sense where one attempts to offer a 'pure,' objective, depiction of the essence of some phenomena. Rather, a constructionist perspective assumes that the description offered is a researcher's construction of participants' constructed accounts.

or metaphors which inform their worldview or their global ethos. Simultaneous to moving between the details and the whole, between concreteness and abstraction, interpretation also involves another parallel and contiguous back and forth movement between people's concepts and the researcher's conceptual world; each of which informs the actual understanding of people's practices and life. This process relies upon both "experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts (Geertz, 1973).[17]

According to Good (1994), an intersubjective view of experience also requires a recognition of broader social and political forces that inform it. As Good explains, "It would be a mistake to underestimate the extent that the social and political body is also a source and medium of experience. If experience is intersubjective and evolves in dialogue with those in the social environment, this dialogue and the structures it mediates are also constitutive of experience" (p. 127). It is in this regard that the critical tradition makes a useful contribution, since it seeks in part "a critical unmasking of the dominant interests, an exposing of the mechanisms by which they are supported by authorized discourse" (Good, 1994, p. 58). However, when not "combined with 'thick description' and close analysis of meaning," Good argues that critical research tends to be "long on critique … and short on real historical and ethnographic analysis" (p. 59). Thus, he proposes an approach in keeping with the critical interpretive approach of Lock and Scheper-Hughes (1990); an approach that relies both upon thick description of participants' firsthand, contextualized accounts which seeks to understand their lived experience, and a critique of the "larger social and historical processes of which the actors are only dimly aware" (p. 62).

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[17] An experience-near concept is one which a participant "might himself naturally or effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others" (Geertz, 1973, pp. 481-482), such as the notion of 'fear'. An experience-distant concept is one that is employed by the researcher (or another specialist) for their specific purposes (e.g., 'phobia'). The theoretical model employed in this research represents experience-distant concepts, whereas experience-near concepts are those local categories that emerge through discussion with the participants.

Whyte (1995) offers a useful illustration of this methodological approach applied to the field of disability that serves to ground these abstract concepts. She points out that in the anthropology of disability there are two distinct research approaches, each with strengths and limitations, that map neatly onto Good's (1994) distinction between critical and interpretive traditions. In the first case, she describes research that focuses on broad, cultural forces and the production of disability (e.g., Foucauldian-based discourse analysis). According to Whyte (1995), this research tends to be deterministic and fails to adequately address the question: "How does discursive practice relate to the subjective experience of people with disabilities?" (p. 268). She asks how these constructions are accepted, resisted, or transformed by people with disabilities. In the second dominant research tradition (i.e., interpretive), the experience of disability is central, and relies primarily upon firsthand accounts of disabled individuals. While Whyte applauds the depth and nuance evident in this second body of research, she argues that not enough attention is paid to critically evaluating the social and political contexts of that experience. Like Good (1994), Whyte argues that more research needs to focus on "the interface of objectifying discourse and subjective reality" (p. 268); she concludes that researchers must "find inspiration in both discourse analysis and the study of individual experience, while maintaining the old appreciation of context and community that is rooted in ethnographic fieldwork" (p. 280).

In summary, the methodological approach employed in the present research involves thick description that seeks to understand the meaning systems that inform participants' experience. This thick description includes a critical analysis of the social and political forces at play, while maintaining an appreciation of context. In keeping with Kleinman's (1995; 1999) theory of moral experience, the description offered is based upon data generated using a largely unstructured interview approach. Participants were required to supply the contexts (i.e., define their local worlds) within

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which meanings are shared and particular things are at stake; these could not be determined ahead of time nor imposed upon participants. Furthermore, it was assumed that since moral experience begs expression, participants would be unlikely to require significant structure to guide or stimulate their discussion.

3.1 The Conceptual Model

The domains of experience identified for exploration in this study and used in the development of the interview instruments emerged through an organic process that involved tacking back and forth among the literature, my personal experiences, and the various theories previously noted.

First, both my own experience and the literature reviewed suggested an important area of moral experience is the relationship between the anti-racism educator Self and various Others (e.g., the racialized Other and the White Other). I then read Todorov's (1984) exploration of the relationship between Self (i.e., the Spaniard Self) and Other (i.e., primarily the Indian Other) within the context of the conquest and colonization of America. The typology of relations he presents reinforced that this was an important domain to consider, and also identified particular dimensions of my participants' relationships that I might want to explore (i.e., love of, knowledge of, and identification with, the Other). In this manner, I further identified other general domains and more particular dimensions for exploration in the interviews.

A second domain identified for study was participants' constructions of the concepts of race, racism, and anti-racism. Given the constructionist view of language as constitutive and the view of experience as intersubjective, an exploration of their discursive productions of these concepts was considered critical. The importance of explicitly focusing on their discourse was highlighted in my reading of the literature; I noted distinct constructions that suggested different implications for practice, as well as for positionings for Self and Other.

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Third, in order to contextualize their experiences and understand their local world, I needed to explore their particular anti-racism involvements and the ways in which they describe 'doing' anti-racism. Furthermore, the literature review suggested that the practice of anti-racism education is rife with potential moral dilemmas and challenges. Foucault's (1977, 1978) theory of power and de Certeau's (1984) notion of tactics suggested ways to conceptualize aspects of their practice in terms of power relations.

Fourth, the literature review suggested that anti-racism may have broader implications for participants' lives and identities, and as such it should not be limited conceptually to a professional identity or specific activity. Goffman's (1961) notion of moral career suggested I may want to explore the centrality of anti-racism to participants' experience of Self, as well as to various dimensions of their lives (e.g., broader belief systems, family life, social interactions).

Finally, as I read through the literature, I had the sense that White, anti-racism educators live in an in-between state; in particular they seemed to position themselves between White and racialized people. Turner's (1969) theory of liminality not only offered me a name for this state (i.e., liminality), but it also suggested additional ways in which I might conceptualize these individuals' experience of liminality (i.e., diachronic and synchronic). Thus, these were the distinct yet inter-related broad categories of information that I set out to explore in this research and that guided the process of data generation.

3.2 Instruments

While the domains of experience described above comprised the main topics I wished to have participants discuss in the interviews, the conceptual model also suggested many specific intersections of interest. For example, Foucault (1977, 1978) and de Certeau's (1984) theories suggest the relationship between Self and Other, as

well as issues of identity cannot be understood outside of the context of power relations. Thus, by considering various theories in relation to each other, additional dimensions of experience were highlighted for consideration. The challenge was to balance the need for as non-directive an interview as possible, with my curiosity to explore these many specific dimensions of experience.

I resolved this dilemma in the following manner: I used two interview strategies, an open-ended life history interview followed by a semi-structured interview; I relied upon a minimal number of formal questions; and I ensured questions were posed as broadly as possible. At the same time I kept in mind these many specific dimensions and questions as I conducted the interviews: Listening deeply to participants' stories included filtering their comments through this complex web of ideas in my mind. Thus, sometimes their comments would resonate in a particular way, triggering a follow-up question that allowed me to briefly explore a particular theoretical intersection. In this manner I was able to ensure that all participants talked about the main topics of interest while also exploring additional specific domains when appropriate to do so; all the while avoiding rigid, contrived conversations. The strategy proved to be effective as the interviews were dynamic and stimulating, producing rich and often unexpected data.

3.2.1 Life History Interview

The first interview was minimally structured in order to allow participants to narrate their life histories in relation to their involvement with anti-racism with as little guidance from me as possible. Rothe (2000) explains that these stories "can provide details to socially or historically significant events in the interviewees' lives" (p. 94). In order for participants to orientate their narratives in relation to the topic of research, three broad questions were posed to them in advance of the interview (see Appendix A). These questions asked participants how they came to be involved in anti-racism;

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how they were currently involved in anti-racism; and how they expected to be involved in anti-racism in the future.

3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was used in subsequent meetings to explore topics of interest not yet discussed and to follow-up on issues raised in the first meeting (see Appendix B). The interview schedule was not used in a rigid manner; rather, it was designed to guide discussion and engage participants in as non-directive a manner as possible. Probes or follow-up questions were used only as required to clarify or expand on a position, or to explore intriguing or unexpected comments.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Participant Criteria and Recruitment Strategy

Preliminary investigations suggested very few individuals in Saskatchewan are specifically employed as anti-racism educators; however, individuals who consciously incorporate anti-racism education into their work in some meaningful way (e.g., as teachers, police officers, etc.) were identified. In order to involve as many of these people as possible in the study, participation criteria needed to be broad. What was deemed critical for participation was simply that individuals identified both as White and as anti-racism educators. My strategy was to present these criteria to potential participants and allow them to determine their eligibility.

While formal criteria for participation was minimal, careful consideration was given to how the project should be framed for recruitment purposes to ensure an appropriate sample was found. In recruitment, the emphasis was deliberately placed on individuals involved in the field of 'anti-racism' rather than more broadly in the areas of 'race relations' or 'diversity'. This choice was important since my interest was in interviewing individuals who identify with the notion of fighting racism rather than the more benign goal of improving relations among different racial or otherwise diverse

groups. It was my sense that 'anti-racism' more distinctly implied a recognition of power relations that were deemed important to my research topic.

While participants were free to define themselves and their work on their own terms in the study, for recruitment purposes the term 'educator' was deliberately chosen rather than 'activist' given that the former term was used more commonly in the literature. It was also my sense that 'educator' tends to define the activity of fighting racism in more personal and relational terms; it was this aspect of experience I was particularly interested in exploring. Furthermore, I chose not to limit participation based on an a priori definition regarding what constitutes anti-racism education, as I was interested in finding out how participants construct and understand their anti-racism involvements.

Finally, while it was expected that most anti-racism education might emphasize Aboriginal - non-Aboriginal relations given the demographics in Saskatchewan, there was no theoretical basis for distinguishing among the efforts of individuals working to address racism directed at particular racialized groups of people. What was seen as crucial to this research, however, was that specific contexts be taken into account in interpreting the data.

Recruitment was attempted through contacts made through word of mouth and snowballing techniques. Initially my focus was on recruiting participants in Saskatoon. To that end, I first contacted the few individuals I was aware of who worked in the area of race relations and asked them for the names of potential participants. I also contacted various organizations that I thought might be able to offer me potential leads, including the following: school board offices, the RCMP, the City of Saskatoon Police Department, government agencies (e.g., the Department of Aboriginal Affairs), independent organizational consultants, the City of Saskatoon's Race Relations Office, various organizations focused on serving the needs of immigrant populations (i.e.,

Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, Open Door Society), large corporations (e.g., SaskTel), church and community groups (e.g., the Salvation Army), First Nations organizations (e.g., Wanuskewin Heritage Park), correctional facilities, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Association, and associations focused on human resource development (i.e., Saskatchewan Training and Development Association and the Council of Human Resource Associations. Upon the completion of each interview, I also asked participants if they knew of anyone else who they thought might like to participate in the study. Using these strategies I was able to recruit nine participants from Saskatoon before I ran out of leads to follow. I then became aware of three more potential participants in Regina and decided to broaden my scope to include individuals living in that city. Had I sensed a significant difference between the narratives of individuals from Saskatoon and Regina I might have felt the need to recruit more participants to balance the numbers between the two cities; however, no such difference was noted to justify additional data collection.

My intent was to recruit 10-15 participants for this study with the view that this number of participants would allow for in-depth analysis without producing an unmanageable amount of data. I met this target, interviewing a total of 12 individuals. This seemed to be a natural point to end the data collection for several reasons. First, while each interview was unique, at this point I was beginning to sense recurring themes emerging. Second, while I doubt I had exhausted all avenues for recruitment, I had contacted many organizations and did not have any more clear leads to follow up. Third, the interviews I had completed had been longer than expected, and had produced rich, dense data. Having accumulated over 1000 pages of transcripts I was concerned that collecting more data might make the analysis process unmanageable.

3.3.2 <u>Procedures</u>

Potential participants were contacted either by phone or e-mail and their general interest in collaborating in the research was assessed. I did not ask for a definitive response at that point, but simply asked if I could send them more information to assist them in making their decision (see Appendix C). If participants were open to considering participation, a letter was sent to them clarifying the purpose of the study, the criteria for participation, and expectations for participation. Since I was relying upon self-selection, I wanted to ensure that all participants clearly understood the criteria for participation. Furthermore, as the study required a significant time contribution on their part, I wanted to be sure they were aware of this before agreeing to participate.

Several days later I contacted these individuals to address any questions that may have arisen regarding the study and to ascertain their willingness to participate. If an individual expressed an interest in participating, a first meeting was scheduled at a mutually agreed upon location. Three participants chose to meet in a room I had booked on campus; two participants chose to meet in their homes; the seven remaining participants requested that we meet at their workplace. A few days prior to the scheduled interview, the participants were given the three questions for the life history interview and asked to reflect on them prior to our meeting.

I began the life history interview by outlining the purpose of the study and reviewing issues of consent (see Appendix D). After obtaining consent, I presented them with a paper listing the life history questions. It is noteworthy that most of the participants brought these questions to the interview with them and mentioned that they had given thought to them ahead of time; some had even prepared written comments to which they referred. The life history interviews were taped and lasted between one to two hours. Participants offered rich, complex and carefully constructed narratives; several voiced surprise at how much they had to say in this interview. At

the end of the interview we agreed upon a date, time and location for the semi-structured interview. In order to ensure that the topics and issues raised were not forgotten by the participant, and to build upon the rapport established in the first meeting, I attempted to schedule the second meeting as soon as possible following the first. Typically, we were able to meet again within a week or two of the first meeting.

Prior to the second meeting, I listened to the taped life history interview and made notes for follow up and/or clarification. This process was extremely useful as I heard things in this second listening that I had missed during the initial interview, allowing for a more meaningful semi-structured interview session. Reviewing the tapes also seemed to assist in building rapport as several participants remarked positively that I had obviously been listening carefully to their comments during the first meeting.

I began the second meeting by asking participants if there was anything they wished to talk about based on our prior interview (i.e., any additional comments, clarifications, or questions that had arisen from that interview). I then offered them a brief overview of the topics to be covered in the semi-structured interview before proceeding with it. When we reached the end of our allotted time, I explained to participants roughly how many more questions remained in the interview and asked them if they would like to set up a third meeting to complete the interview. In most cases (i.e., nine) either we completed the interview in time or the participant opted to extend our meeting time, making a third meeting unnecessary. In three cases, a third meeting was scheduled. The length of the semi-structured interviews ranged from just over an hour to three hours.

At the end of the semi-structured interview, I invited participants to contact me if they later had anything they wished to add to the interview. One participant did send an e-mail following the interview, asking that I add her written comments to her transcript. I also asked the participants if they knew of anyone else that they thought might be

interested in participating in the study. In most cases, participants mentioned at least

one other individual. As a way of thanking participants for their involvement in the

study, I gave them each a small gift of Fair Trade coffee and tea. Finally, I asked

participants if they would like to review their interview transcript before it was included

in the data. Eight participants declined this offer and signed a waiver to that effect (see

Appendix E). The remaining four participants chose to review their transcripts and

made minor editorial changes to them. These changes were incorporated into the

official transcript used for data analysis purposes.

3.4 Data Analysis

"Whitehead once offered to the natural sciences the maxim 'seek simplicity and distrust
it'; to the social sciences he might well have offered 'seek complexity and order it.'"
(Geertz, 1973, p. 34)

Prior to outlining the particular steps I followed in data analysis, it is important

for me to clarify that in keeping with the constructionist epistemological stance of this

research, I view the meaning generated through data analysis as a co-construction

between myself and my participants. Because researchers are unable to access the

experience of others directly, they must rely upon participants' expression of their

experience. Bruner (1986a, pp. 6-7) identifies the "critical distinction between reality

(what is really out there, whatever that may be), experience (how that reality presents

itself to consciousness), and expressions (how individual experience is framed and

articulated)"; acknowledging the problems that the gaps between these concepts

constitute. Thus, the articulation of an experience is a construction and the

researcher's retelling of that story represents another construction. Researchers'

productions are therefore "stories about their stories; we are interpreting the people as

they are interpreting themselves" (Bruner, 1986a, p. 10).

The process of making meaning from participants' stories is a difficult one to

describe in that it was not a linear process with a clear beginning and end point. For

example, prior to the formal data analysis stage (i.e., during interviews and data transcription), I was already involved in the process of data analysis as I listened to participants' stories and jotted down possible interpretations and questions that arose. While writing conventions suggest I describe the process of data analysis in more linear terms, in actuality, the experience is better conceptualized as a cyclical process. The reader is encouraged to read the following account in this spirit rather than as a rigid series of steps followed.

3.4.1 Transcription

The entire interview process (i.e., life history and semi-structured) produced between 47 and 115 pages of transcripts per participant, for a total of approximately 1000 pages of written transcripts. In order to get a better sense of the data and transcription protocol I wished to follow, I transcribed three of the interviews myself. However, given time constraints I hired someone to transcribe the remaining nine interviews. In these cases, I reviewed the transcripts while listening to the tapes in order to ensure consistency and quality of transcription, and to remain close to all the data.

My research question and the theoretical framework guided how I proceeded with transcription. In reviewing different approaches outlined by Wood and Kroger (2000), I decided against the use of a strict, formalized approach to transcription which would involve drawing upon complex notation conventions in order to note a multitude of things such as length of pauses in speech, audible in-breaths and out-breaths, speed of speech, etc. While this approach to transcription may be warranted by other types of research questions, in my case I concluded it would be more distracting than helpful. My ultimate goal was to transcribe the data in such a way that when I read the transcripts I could hear the person saying the words and feel the context in which they were said to me. I found this goal could be accomplished using a much simpler

transcription method and by listening to the tapes. In transcribing the data I simply

underlined words or phrases that were emphasized by participants and made

comments in brackets that would assist me in recalling any relevant context for a

comment (e.g., laughter, gestures, tone of comments). I have retained these minimal

markings in the interview excerpts included in the following pages to assist the reader

in 'hearing' the intonation in participants' voices.

While I did include the "uhs," "ums," and sentence fragments in the

transcription, I did not necessarily retain these in the quotes included in the thesis

unless I felt they were important to the context of the quote (e.g., illustrating hesitancy).

However, an ellipsis mark was used to indicate if any words or sentences were

removed from a quoted passage. While it could be argued that this smoothing of the

data might change what participants say, in this case it seemed that *not* smoothing the

data would change their meanings more significantly. That is, we do not speak in the

same manner that we write. While I found participants to be articulate and intelligent in

the interviews, when I read their transcripts they appeared less so given the

transformation of their spoken word when written on a page. Participants also noted

this difference, prompting those who reviewed their transcripts to comment on it,

sometimes with apologies or embarrassment. One participant specifically asked that I

remove all the "uhs" and "ums" from the transcript prior to using the data.

3.4.2 Surface and Deep Structural Analysis

Given that none of the proponents of the critical-interpretive approach to

research outlines precisely how to go about carrying out thick description, I relied

Rothe's (2000) approach to data analysis to guide me in this regard. While he does not

refer to his analysis as thick description, his method of analysis was very much in

keeping with it. This process involved first conducting a surface analysis, which

required me to identify themes and explore the relationships among them with the goal

of organizing the data into a coherent system of meaning. To that end, data was first coded using Atlas-ti software. This process involved a careful reading of all the transcripts. As my hope was not to impose pre-determined codes on the data, the process was necessarily cyclical and messy in that codes were constantly being added and revised. For example, transcripts coded later in the process might suggest new codes that could be applied to preceding transcripts. Following coding, I grouped the data into meaningful chunks that determined the focus of the various chapters. [18]

The second level of analysis, which Rothe (2000) refers to as deep structural analysis, involved a deeper reading of the data and a theoretical interpretation of the identified clusters of themes. As I developed each of the individual chapters, I remained attuned to threads of meaning that seemed to ran through the interconnected themes and chapters. In the deep structural analysis, these threads of meaning were explored as a whole in relation to various theoretical constructs. The result of this analysis is presented in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

3.4.3 <u>Organizing and Presenting the Data</u>

As the researcher, I clearly played an active role in the particular data generated in this research. That role was perhaps most obvious to me in the organization of the data into coherent parts, in the form of chapters and sections. While I tried to remain close to the data to ensure that participants would recognize themselves in the final written product, I realize that the data could have been organized and presented in many other forms. Given the degree of interconnections of ideas in participants' talk, it was often difficult to know where to draw boundaries. While I recognize the necessity of organizing material in some manner, I am conscious of the arbitrariness of dividing up participants' experiences in this manner. Thus, the reader is

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[18] While there are many ways in which Atlas-ti software can be used in the data analysis process, in my case I simply used it as a glorified word processor in helping me to organize the data.

encouraged to view these boundaries as conceptual suggestions and to recognize their fluidity.

While the final product of this research is best viewed as a co-construction, participants' voices and my interpretive voice are differentially privileged throughout the presentation of the data, in keeping with the goal of producing thick description. The structuring of the analysis follows a general pattern in this regard. In introducing each new topic, participants' experience-near accounts are offered first. While I actively organize these data to ensure they are presented in a comprehensible form, I generally refrain from commenting on them directly, offering rather an 'unproblematized' presentation of their constructions. Following this presentation, a more critical reading is offered in which my interpretive voice is privileged to a greater extent; I draw upon experience-distant, theoretical concepts in an effort to make sense of participants' accounts.

3.5 Participants[19]

In this section I offer a brief description of participants in terms of their demographic characteristics and family history (see Table 1), and I offer contextual information to help situate their anti-racism involvements.

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[19] While my theoretical framework suggests that I should provide as much contextual information as possible in order understand the moral experience of my participants, I have had to balance this ideal with the need to protect the identity of my participants. Given the small number of individuals overtly involved in anti-racism education in the province, and the fact that some participants hold positions that could make them easily identifiable, I have chosen to err on the side of caution and speak in general terms when doing otherwise might jeopardize the anonymity of my participants.

Table 1

Demographic Information

	Frequency*
Gender	
Male	4
Female	8
Age:	
30-39	2
40-49	5
50-59	3
60-69	2
Marital Status:	
Married/Common Law	8
Divorced	3
Single	1
Has Children:	
Yes	9
No	3
Education:	
College Certificate or Diploma	6
Bachelor Degree	3
Masters Degree	2
Ph.D	1

Table 1 - continued

Demographic Information

	Frequency
Areas of Study:	
Education	5
Psychology	2
Nursing	2
Human Justice	1
Theology	1
Rehabilitation Services	1
Political Studies	1
Administrative Studies	1
Current Areas of Employment:	
Education	3
Not-For-Profit Human Services Organizations	3
Law Enforcement and Correctional Services	2
Social Work	1
Agriculture	1
Organizational Development	1
Psychiatric Nursing	1

* Based on a total of 12 participants.
** As several participants described formal education in several areas, the frequency count for area of studies exceeds the total number of participants.

3.5.1 <u>Demographics and Background Information</u>[20]

In terms of general demographic characteristics, eight participants were

between the ages of 40-59, while two participants identified themselves as under 40

and the final two were over 60 years of age. The gender split among participants (i.e.,

a 2:1 ratio of women to men) was noteworthy; it seems based upon my readings and

observations that this gender split may be somewhat representative of the field of anti-

racism itself. Eight participants were married and nine of them had children. Nine of the

participants resided in Saskatoon and the remainder lived in Regina. All of the

participants had pursued post secondary education. Half of the participants had

obtained a college certificate or diploma while the remaining six had obtained at least

one university degree. While diverse areas of study were reported, nearly half of the

participants (n=5) had a certificate or a degree in Education. However, only half of the

participants were currently working in a profession directly related to their field of

studies. Participants were employed in a wide array of professions. Most commonly

they worked in the field of education (n=3) or they worked in the not-for-profit human

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[20] Given the strong association some people have between quantified data and the goals of
objectivism, it is necessary to specify my rationale for quantifying data in this research (i.e.,
specifying the number of participants endorsing particular positions) and my use of the
statistical symbol of 'n'. According to the American Psychological Association publication
guidelines, an uppercase 'N' is used to designate the total number in a sample, while a lower
case 'n' is used to designate the number in a subsample. While the use of these symbols may
be associated typically with quantitative research carried out in the post-positivist tradition,
according to Crotty (1998) the quantification of data need not be in conflict with the goals of
constructionist research. As Crotty explains, "We should accept that, whatever research we
engage in, it is possible for either qualitative methods or quantitative methods, or both to serve
our purposes. Our research can be qualitative and quantitative, without this being in any way
problematic" (p. 15). Indeed, my constructionist stance and my desire *not* to present experience
as homogenous and decontextualized *requires* me to note variation between participants'
accounts. Social constructionism suggests that meaning is shared, but it would be an error to
suggest that all of my participants share identical systems of meaning; it is up to thick
description to peel apart and make sense of both the commonalities as well as the many
variations in participants' accounts. Bruner (1986a) shares this view in criticizing monographic
descriptions that "tend to be synthetic in that they are composites based on abstractions from a
series of particular instances. They seek the general so as not to be misled by the unique. But
in striving for a balanced, representative account, much of the meaning and the drama of the
event itself is lost" (p. 8).

services industry, providing specialized services to particular groups within the community, such as immigrants and refugees (n=3).

I asked participants how long they had been involved in anti-racism work and whether they had received any particular training or education relevant to their anti-racism involvements. Answers to the first question were somewhat vague and most participants voiced uncertainty as to when they should consider the 'official' start date of their involvements. In the end they all offered answers that ranged between 10-33 years. As far as training to 'do' anti-racism, participants emphasized that the majority of their learning had occurred outside of formal educational settings. In support of this claim, they pointed variously to experiential, hands-on learning that had occurred over the years, books they had read, and informal mentoring relationships and friendships they had established. In addition, eight participants mentioned having attended a variety of conferences, workshops, or other training sessions that they felt had provided them with pertinent learning opportunities in recent years. These areas of training included cross-cultural training, training in facilitation and counseling, and training related to union involvements. Only one participant described a more formal program of studies that, while not specifically focused on anti-racism, was described as particularly relevant to this work.

In addition to gathering basic demographic information, I asked participants about their family backgrounds. Given that this research explores issues of racism and otherness, I thought it would be useful to collect information regarding their family of origin and to hear their stories of how their families came to make Canada their home. None of the participants were newcomers to Canada; all traced their Canadian roots back at least two generations. In most cases it was grandparents who had made the move Canada from Europe, and the reason for immigration was a seeking of opportunity in all but two cases. In these two cases, the participants explained that their

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German grandparents, who had been living in Russia, came to Canada in an attempt to flee civil war in that country. Only two participants described themselves as having a strong cultural identity, both of whom identified themselves as Ukrainian. Eight participants were born and raised in Saskatchewan and three participants were born and raised in other Canadian provinces. One participant was born in the United States, but grew up primarily in Canada. Of the Saskatchewan-born participants, half (n=4) were raised in rural areas, while the remainder grew up in either Regina or Saskatoon. Most participants (n=7) described the socio-economic status of their childhood family as middle-class, two participants positioned their family as middle to upper class, and the remaining three participants explained that they had grown up in a state of relative poverty.

3.5.2 <u>Contextualizing Participants' Anti-Racism Efforts</u>

Participants' anti-racism efforts could be categorized in terms of three primary areas of involvement: educating Whites, 'helping' the racialized, and attempting to change structures in society. While all participants were involved in varied anti-racism activities, in their descriptions of their anti-racism work they tended to describe their primary involvements as being *either* within the context of their paid employment *or* in the context of their volunteer efforts. A further distinction can be made among participants who identified their anti-racism efforts as linked to their paid employment. That is, for some individuals, anti-racism work was described as a required and integral part of their job description; other participants explained that while it was not a requirement of their employment, they *chose* to integrate into a job. Participants also varied in the extent to which they interacted with Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal racialized people in their anti-racism efforts, and the degree to which their efforts connected them to broader anti-racism networks. Each of these distinctions is described further below.

Types of Anti-Racism Involvement. The literature reviewed suggested that the practice of anti-racism could be understood primarily in terms of education (e.g., Kumashiro, 2000). Indeed, this was one reason for framing the study as one about anti-racism *educators*. Certainly education was an important component of the work described by my participants and they all identified to some extent with the label 'anti-racism educator'; however, it was not the only type of involvement that they discussed. In the context of describing their anti-racism involvements, each participant also described efforts to directly assist the racialized people (e.g., advocating for them, or providing various forms of support to them), as well as efforts to change racist structures in society.[21]

While all participants described a wide range of anti-racism involvements, it is possible to offer a general overview of the number of participants who focus *primarily* on education, efforts to assist the racialized Other, or changing structures. Stephanie and Jeff both identified education as their main area of involvement. Most of the work done by Diane, Grace, Liz, and Tom was directed specifically at assisting the racialized Other. Finally, the emphasis in the work of Debbie and Margaret tended to be on directly challenging racist systems and structures. The remaining participants' efforts cannot be so easily categorized; Kelly, Cathy, Joan and Chris seemed to be equally focused on education and on changing structures.

Anti-racism Work as a Volunteer Effort. Five participants (i.e., Margaret, Cathy, Tom, Liz, and Debbie) described their main involvement in the work of anti-racism as being carried out in their capacity as volunteers. It is noteworthy that each of these participants also saw themselves as significantly integrating the message of anti-

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[21] Note that a criterion for including an activity as an 'anti-racism' initiative in this study was that the *participants* needed to frame it as such. For example, helping immigrants adjust to life in Canada might not fit everyone's definition of anti-racism work, but it is included here as this is precisely how it was described by some participants.

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racism into their paid employment, but in telling their stories they emphasized their voluntary involvements. While these involvements were wide ranging, they tended to focus specifically on fighting racism. For example, Tom was involved with an organization whose very name identifies it as an organization that addresses racism. The remaining four participants associated themselves with groups (e.g., boards and committees) that, while using the language of 'diversity' and 'equity' to define themselves, also have a stated mandate to address issues of racism.

In their volunteer efforts, participants identified with particular organizations and groups that were of two types. First, participants described what sounded like more formal organizations that were sanctioned in some way by an authoritative, structured body (e.g., police department, governmental organization). For example, one individual sat on a formal advisory board, while two others held positions within union structures, and another chaired a human rights committee. The second type of organization in which three participants were involved was described by them as being community-based and grassroots in nature. They were further described as having a less formal structure, being more 'radical,' and functioning independently from other organizations (i.e., few ties to established structures such as governmental bodies or business). Participants described these as groups forming on an ad hoc basis for short periods of time to address particular issues related to racism in their communities.

Anti-racism Work as Integral to a Job Description. Kelly, Jeff, Diane, and Grace described the work of anti-racism as a key aspect of their employment responsibilities; however, in each case it was described as an indirect rather than a direct focus of their employment. That is, they argued that while they could not carry out their duties without addressing racism, it was not necessarily an explicitly stated contractual expectation. For example, in assisting refugee and immigrant populations in their adjustment to life in Canada, two participants pointed out that addressing racism in the

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community is crucial to their work since it negatively affects the lives of their clients. The other two participants explained that since their work focused on race relations, addressing racism was an integral part of their job.

Anti-Racism Work Integrated into Everyday Employment. Finally, while Stephanie, Joan, and Chris also described their involvement in anti-racism as directly related to their paid employment, in their cases there was no employment requirement to do so. Rather, they made the personal choice to significantly incorporate anti-racism into their work. For example, one participant explained that unlike many professionals involved in doing organizational development work, she chose to integrate the messages of anti-racism and diversity into all her professional pursuits (e.g., team building, leadership development). As educators, two participants spoke of intentionally integrating messages of anti-racism into all the high school courses they taught, regardless of subject area.

Time Allotted to Anti-Racism Work. Participants were reluctant to quantify their anti-racism work in terms of the hours spent on them, but in listening to them describe their many commitments I would venture the number would be high by most standards. While it is more difficult to calculate the time spent on anti-racism in the cases of four individuals whose primary efforts were described as incorporated it into their paid employment, I expect Liz's comments would pertain fairly well to the remaining eight participants who described a myriad of volunteer commitments:

Vonda: How many hours, or how much time do you devote to your anti-racism efforts, 'cause I understand you say it kind of weaves into everything you do.

Liz: Everything I do, yes, so it's hard to say. On a weekly basis? Oh God. Twenty hours?

Vonda: So that's in addition to your regular work hours?

Liz: I would say ya. Cause every day I'm in something, or doing something…. A lot of my weekends and days off.

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When these participants describe their typical work week, it is hard not to be impressed by the time and energy devoted to so wide an array of anti-racism involvements. For example, one participant currently heads a committee responsible (among other things) for coordinating a major, annual diversity event in the community. In addition, she chairs another committee dedicated to protecting human rights, sits on boards for several cultural associations, and is very involved on a number of levels with a political party. Within each of these domains, she described carrying a variety of duties relating to anti-racism.

Distinguishing Between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Racialized People. In talking about the racialized Other, participants tended to distinguish between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal racialized people. In most instances, descriptions of interactions with the racialized Other meant interactions with Aboriginal people. Diane and Grace were exceptions in this regard; they described having more interaction with refugees and immigrants than with Aboriginal people. Margaret, Joan, Cathy, and Liz described interacting equally with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal racialized Others.

Anti-Racism Networks. In the interviews I tried to get a sense of how participants viewed themselves and their involvements in relation to broader anti-racism efforts being carried out at local, provincial, national, and international levels. All the participants suggested that addressing racism at the local level was their highest priority. In fact, five participants suggested their involvements did not move them beyond the sphere of the local community (i.e., Saskatoon, Regina, and nearby vicinities). Four participants described also being involved in anti-racism at a provincial level, and six spoke of some form of commitment at a national level. These involvements typically involved holding formal positions on boards or committees. Only two participants mentioned being involved in anti-racism work at an international level,

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and these involvements were described more as occasional involvements with particular causes on an informal basis. Finally, seven participants described themselves as well connected to formal or informal networks of people committed to addressing racism in their communities. The remaining five participants stated that they did not feel connected to an anti-racism network, but each mentioned having a few people in their lives with whom they shared their passion for fighting racism.

3.5.3 Participant Summary

In summary, participants can be seen to be similar in many regards. For example, the participants were quite similar in terms of age (it is noteworthy that the youngest participant was 38 years old); most participants were, or had been, married; and the majority of them had children. Participants were also broadly similar in terms of their family histories and in the stated absence of strong cultural identifications. Furthermore, they shared a reliance on experiential and self-directed learning methods over formal training opportunities in developing their skills to carry out anti-racism work. A common commitment to anti-racism work was also apparent in the amount of time and energy dedicated to their efforts. Participants also shared a focus on addressing racism primarily at the local level, and all suggested they had been involved in fighting racism for a long period of time. Finally, they all described a range of involvements that included a variety of educational initiatives, efforts to assist the racialized Other, and attempts to change racist structures in society.

There was also considerable diversity among participants that bears noting. While participants were similar in having pursued post-secondary education, they differed both in the level of education attained and in their fields of study. Furthermore, participants described working in a wide range of professional contexts. In terms of their anti-racism involvements, they differed in whether they addressed racism primarily within the context of their paid employment or within the context of their volunteer

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efforts. They also differed in the extent to which they reported interacting with

Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal racialized people in their work.

3.6 Situating the Research: Historical, Political and Social Contexts

Having situated participants in terms of their specific demographics, and having

contextualized their particular anti-racism involvements, it is necessary now to situate

them more broadly within historical, political, and social contexts of race relations in

Canada and in Saskatchewan. Clearly it is beyond the scope of this research to offer

an in-depth account of the many forces which have influenced the development of

Canadian society; the goal here is much more modest. My wish is simply to

acknowledge several broad social factors relevant to shaping my participants'

experiences as anti-racism educators. To that end, there are three main parts to this

section. First, I explore briefly a time of societal transition following WW2 during which

the conceptualization of the racialized Other in relation to Canadian society underwent

a radical shift. This transitional period of time is of particular interest given the age of

my participants; since they were all born between the early 1940s and the late 1960s,

this change occurred during their formative years of development. Second, I consider a

current and dominant narrative structure used to conceptualize the racialized Other in

relation to Canadian society. Finally, I offer a snapshot of race relations in

Saskatchewan today.

I have chosen to structure this discussion of race relations primarily around the

relationship between Aboriginal people and the dominant White society, a relationship

built upon a colonialist foundation. This approach recognizes (1) the unique status of

Aboriginal people as the original occupants of Canada; (2) the significant impact of

colonization in shaping modern Canadian society; and (3) the distinction in the

literature between the construction and experiences of Aboriginal people and other

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racialized peoples. However, within this framing it is possible also to map relations between White and other racialized groups.

3.6.1 <u>Post WW2: A Critical Period of Transition</u>

In reviewing ethnographic research on Native American culture change, Bruner (1986b) identifies a significant and abrupt shift in the dominant narrative structure used to understand Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations that occurs in the decades following WW2. Bruner argues that in the years prior to WW2, the past was depicted as a glorious time for Aboriginal people, while the future was conceived in terms of their absolute assimilation into White society. In relation to this past and this future, the present "could only be interpreted as disintegration, framed as it was by both glorious integrity and eventual disappearance" (Bruner, 1986b, p. 142). However, Bruner argues that in the decades following WW2, this dominant narrative structure was replaced by one in which the Aboriginal past was re-conceptualized as a time of exploitation and oppression; the future was recreated as a time of ethnic resurgence; in relation to these, the present was necessarily re-constructed as a time of resistance. This shift is apparent in the language that emerged in post-war Canada: "exploitation, oppression, colonialism, resistance, liberation, independence, nationalism, tribalism, identity, tradition, and ethnicity – the code words of the 1970s" (Bruner, 1986b, p. 141), replaced expressions of unproblematic assimilation in both formal and everyday discourse. The "new story was articulated by new organizations, leaders, and prophets" while the old story slowly "lost its explanatory power and credibility" (Bruner, 1986b, p. 152).

If, as Bruner (1986b) argues, shifts in narrative structure occur in relation to changes in "history" and "world conditions" (p. 139), we do well to consider what these 'changes' might include in this case. Bruner highlights events following WW2, including the "overthrow of colonialism, the emergence of new states, the civil rights movement,

and a new conception of equality" (p. 152). In addition to these global movements, significant societal and political changes occurred in Canada during these years that bear comment. For example, in response to the atrocities committed in WW2, the Canadian Bill of Rights was enacted in 1960 by the federal government as the first formal effort to protect human rights in Canada. In 1982, these rights became entrenched in the constitution of Canada in the form of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Also noteworthy is the federal government's formal rejection of its policy of assimilation in favour of a policy of multiculturalism in 1971, a move broadly understood as an effort by the government to counteract the growing nationalist movement in Quebec. The implementation of these key policies and the events which directly inspired them occurred primarily during the childhood and early adult years of my participants; furthermore, the society in which my participants now live and work has been significantly shaped by these events.

3.6.2 Oppression, Resistance, and Resurgence

Evidence suggests that the post-war narrative structure described by Bruner (1986b) and noted above, continues to enjoy its dominant status in Canadian society.[22] Thus, I would like now to consider in more depth the story of race relations in Canada as viewed through this particular framing of the past, present, and future; broadening the scope of the discussion to consider the construction and experiences of non-Aboriginal, racialized Others within Canadian society.

In reflecting on the past, the story of race relations in Canada begins with the brutal and systematic attack on Aboriginal people's way of life following the arrival of Europeans to what is now known as Canada in the early 16th century. A few examples

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[22] While the dominance of this broad and encompassing narrative structure may be apparent in key elements of our society, it bears noting that our discursive repertoire is not limited to it. A range of narrative structures might be drawn upon in different contexts, including those that have a clearly racist foundation.

serve to illustrate the many acts of exploitation and oppression directed at various racialized groups in Canada since that time:

- The Indian Act of 1876 made status Indians legal wards of the state, and gave the federal government control over almost every aspect of their lives. For example, they were prohibited from owning land or leaving their reserves without a pass, certain cultural ceremonies were made illegal, and the government-appointed Indian agent was given authority over decision-making on reserves ("Setting the Context", n.d.). A residential school system was established in the early 1900s and run by local churches with the express purpose of assimilating Aboriginal children into White society. Children as young as six were forcibly removed from their homes and forbidden to speak their language or maintain their cultural traditions; many of them endured severe emotional, physical and sexual abuse during their stay at residential schools. The last federally run residential school, located in Saskatchewan, closed as recently as 1996 ("Residential schools," n.d.).

- In Nova Scotia, Black people were kept as slaves until 1833; formal policies of racial segregation in the education system were legislated in 1936; and Black recruits were denied the right to serve in the military in the beginning of WW1 (Butler, n.d.).

- In the late 1800s, the Canadian Pacific Railway, built to span the entire country, was constructed in large part through the efforts of Chinese bonded labourers. These individuals were paid discriminatory wages and were refused the right to bring their families to Canada; hundreds of Chinese men died due to harsh working conditions (Butler, n.d.). In an effort to discourage Chinese immigration, in 1883 a $50 "head tax" was imposed on Chinese persons entering Canada ("Setting the Context," n.d.). In more recent history (1912-1914), Saskatchewan along with three

other provinces passed legislation that prohibited "Oriental" males from employing White women (Butler, n.d.).

- During WW2, 23,000 Canadians of Japanese descent were sent to detention camps while their assets were liquidated with little or no financial compensation to them. Notably, Canadians of German descent were not similarly treated.

In addition to these race-specific policies and laws, immigration policies blatantly discriminated against people who were Black, Jewish, Chinese, and Japanese at various times in Canadian history ("Setting the Context," n.d.). Furthermore, Aboriginal people, as well as Canadians of Chinese and Japanese origin, were refused the right to vote until the late 1940s (Butler, n.d.). Finally, given its geographical significance to this study, it bears noting that in the late 1920s and early 1930s, chapters of the Ku Klux Klan were active in Saskatchewan; estimates suggest there were more than 25,000 members in the province (Weedmark, n.d.).

Recall that in contrast to the dominant construction of the past as a time of exploitation and oppression for racialized people, the narrative of the present is one of resistance leading to a future of cultural and ethnic resurgence and hope. Evidence of a present constructed and experienced in terms of resistance can be seen in the media, in political and legal decisions of recent years, and in academic literature. In the media the image of the passive and victimized Indian of the past has been largely replaced in the present by images of the modern day warrior. For example, there are daily reports of Aboriginal people fighting legal battles over land claims; demanding treaty promises be fulfilled in relation to fishing and hunting rights; negotiating settlements for cases of residential school abuses; and reasserting their nationhood status in the pursuance of self-governance. Also in the political arena, Japanese and Chinese Canadians have actively and publicly fought for formal recognition of past injustices faced by their communities at the hands of the government. As a result, in

1988 the federal government apologized to Japanese Canadians for their forced

internment during WW2 (Butler, n.d.); in 2006 it began to distribute redress payments

to surviving Chinese Canadians who were forced to pay a head tax. In academia, the

ever-burgeoning body of post-colonialist literature focusing on de-constructing and

challenging colonialist ideas and practices further works to entrench the construction of

the present as a time of resistance.

3.6.3 Race Relations in Saskatchewan

Despite the impression that might be given in the above examples, I should

clarify that resistance need not be conceptually limited to a redressing of past

injustices; equally important in this framing is the notion of resistance to the ongoing

oppression of racialized people. While it may be less blatantly obvious than it was in

the past, there is certainly considerable evidence in the literature that colonialist and

racist practices are still deeply imbedded in Canadian society. A quick perusal of

statistics for Saskatchewan, the province in which most of my participants were raised

and all now live, illustrates the degree to which Aboriginal people experience ongoing

oppression in this province.[23]

According to Warnock (2004), in comparison to non-Aboriginal people in

Saskatchewan, Aboriginal people have lower incomes, higher rates of infant morality,

and face higher levels of health problems. Furthermore, government statistics suggest

that Aboriginal people have lower levels of educational attainment and higher levels of

unemployment (Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan, 2001). Finally, while Aboriginal

people make up only 14% of the general population in the province, Aboriginal men

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[23] I choose here to focus specifically on Aboriginal people given that race relations in the
province tends to be framed primarily in terms of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations. This
focus is hardly surprising given that Aboriginal people make up over 14% of the population in
Saskatchewan and projections suggest this number will increase to 33% by 2045. ("Aboriginal
People," n.d.) Furthermore, social indicators of success suggest that Aboriginal people fare
worse than other racialized groups in the province.

and women account for 75% and 90% respectively of inmates in prisons in Saskatchewan (Warnock, 2004).

While recognizing these bleak statistics, Findlay and Weir (2004) point to active resistance against the forces of oppression facing Aboriginal people in the province. They highlight as examples economic development initiatives undertaken; the success of urban reserves in reducing poverty; the creation of effective Aboriginal partnerships; increases in the enrollment of Aboriginal people in post-secondary education; and the influential work of Aboriginal scholars and activists in the province.

It is against this broad historical, political, and social backdrop that I would like to present my participants and explore their constructions of race, racism, and anti-racism; their descriptions of their anti-racism practice; and their conceptualizations of Self and Other. However, prior to delving into the data, I would like to pause momentarily to reflect on my experience in carrying out this research.

3.7 Reflections on the Experience of Data Generation and Analysis

Certainly it is necessary to specify the methods used in this research; to provide the rationale for choices made; to outline the basic demographics of the participants; and to situate them broadly in social and historical contexts. However, there seems to be something crucial missing in this rather static and detached portrayal of the research process and of my participants. I would like to breathe life into this description by sharing my observations and impressions both of the data generation process and of my participants.

First, I was surprised in the recruitment process that participants were unable to provide me with more names of individuals who were involved in anti-racism work. My impression (later confirmed by their comments) was that they were not generally connected to large networks of individuals similarly involved in this work. Furthermore, most of the participants did not seem to know each other. While this is good from a

research perspective in that I am not limiting myself to one particular network of people, it was surprising given that Saskatoon and Regina are not large cities and the number of self-proclaimed anti-racism educators does not appear to be large. In discussing their networks, several participants themselves voiced surprise at how few people they knew who were similarly involved in anti-racism work.

Second, during the recruitment process I had expected some people to take issue with the study's narrow focus on the experiences of *White* people involved in anti-racism. Although I outlined the rationale for this choice in my introductory letter, I thought there would be more questions or comments about this choice. Not one participant questioned the appropriateness of this decision or commented on it in any way. I did, however, receive a strongly negative response from one individual who had been eager to participate, but upon reading the introductory letter realized he did not qualify for participation. I was sent an angry e-mail from this individual, accusing me of racism for limiting my study to White people. Although I felt badly that my study caused offence and attempted to explain the rationale behind this decision to the individual, I found this reaction to my research rather ironic: my decision to focus on White people in this study was, in part, based upon a moral stance that recognized and rejected the racist tendency in research to focus on the racialized Other.

Finally, the interview process was a wonderful experience for me. Based on the types of portraits produced in the literature, I was surprised by how warm and personable participants were, and by the extent to which I was drawn to them. Despite their extremely busy schedules, they were quick to agree to participate and remained highly committed to the project. In fact, two participants who had heard about the research from friends took the initiative in contacting me to request participation in the study. Rapport in most cases was easily established and maintaining a conversation was easily accomplished. Participants had much to say and little prompting from me

was required. In fact, most of them touched upon the key topics of interest in their life interviews, suggesting that my reading of the literature and choice of theories were highly relevant to their experiences. The conversations we shared were both intellectually stimulating and enjoyable, and in many cases I went away wishing the individual was a part of my social network. Furthermore, the interviews left me with a sense of admiration for the dedication and passion with which these individuals were fighting racism and injustice. Finally, I am truly grateful for the willingness of participants to share their experiences with me and for enriching my life in the process. It is my sincere hope that participants are able to see themselves in the descriptions offered, and that the interpretations their words have inspired will be of interest and of use to them.

PART II: CONCEPTUALIZING RACE, RACISM, AND ANTI-RACISM

The focus in the following two chapters is on how participants talk about the concepts of race, racism, and anti-racism. A constructionist view of language as constitutive suggests that how participants construct these concepts is crucial to our understanding of their experiences in anti-racism. Indeed, one could argue that the entire thesis is about participants' talk regarding these general subjects since I relied upon interview data and focused discussions around these broad topics. However, while in other chapters I consider participants talk about *doing* anti-racism, *relating* to Others, and *being* anti-racism educators, in the two chapters that follow I focus more narrowly on their conceptualizations regarding what constitutes race, racism, and anti-racism.

4. CONSTRUCTING RACE AND RACISM

During the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to talk about the

concepts of race and racism in two ways: I asked them to broadly define the concepts,

and I asked them to tell me what racism looks like in Saskatchewan today. These two

questions triggered noticeably different responses from participants regarding what

constitutes race and racism. In the first case, participants' answers were more abstract

and definitional in form. In the second case, highly contextualized descriptions were

offered. I have used this distinction between abstract and contextualized talk in

structuring this chapter; first, I consider participants' talk of race, and then I examine

their talk of racism. I conclude the chapter by suggesting a theoretical lens through

which participants' varied and seemingly contradictory accounts can be understood.[24]

4.1 Understandings of Race

In reviewing participants' responses to my direct and abstract question (i.e.,

What is your understanding of race?), I was struck by the similarity of their answers.

First, five participants seemed surprised at my question. Cathy's response was typical

in this regard: "Hmm. That's interesting, I've never really thought much about it…."

Second, the definitions participants relayed were short and simply worded, focusing on

phenotypic characteristics. All but two participants noted skin colour as a basis for

racial distinctions. For example, Joan responded without hesitation to the question:

"Well, at first blush skin colour leaps to mind." Third, while answers were brief and to

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[24] This presentation of data is in keeping with the general structure of the analysis outlined previously. That is, in discussing the topic of 'race,' participants' experience-near accounts are presented first, followed by a critical, theoretical interpretation of them. Similarly, 'unproblematized' presentations both of participants' abstract and contextualized talk of racism are followed by theoretically-inspired interpretations of these accounts.

the point, there was a quality of vagueness to them; specifically, it was unclear whose

constructions of race were being offered. Their answers suggested they were telling

me how race is typically defined in society, and the degree to which they personally

endorsed these definitions was not clear. For example, eight participants prefaced their

answers with phrases that served to distance themselves in some way from the

definitions they offered: Tom opened with the words, "Some people believe that….";

Jeff prefaced his phenotypic definition of race by saying "In the most general sense….";

Cathy began by saying, "I would … presume that most decisions that are made about

race [would be based on]…."; Diane explained , "If we're looking at race as being

genetic…." While participants did not seem to be directly rejecting this view of race,

neither did they appear to be presenting it definitively as their own.

Stephanie's answer to this question was unique: She clearly outlined a position

that was unambiguously her own, rejecting any essentialist understanding of race and

eloquently describing a position in keeping with a social constructionist perspective:

> I've long ago tossed aside the idea of race. The idea of race, as I teach my
> students over and over again, is but a theory, it's an idea, it's never been
> proven…. It really comes down to the values that are placed on that group,
> whoever that group may be. What happened unfortunately is that there has
> been a, you know, a hierarchy created and each of these very vastly different
> and diverse peoples have been relegated to certain places, that the values that
> have been placed on them has determined….

In contrast, when talking about what race means within the context of their

actual involvements in anti-racism (i.e., in practice), participants offered quite a

different construction of race. In this context, ideas were presented unambiguously as

their own; they did not talk about race in abstract, definitional terms; nor did they

construct their conceptualizations as 'true' or 'right'. Rather, participants spoke about

how they *apply* the concept of race in their anti-racism practice. For example, Tom

prefaced his abstract answer to my direct request for a definition with the ambiguous

line, "Some people believe that…."; yet when talking about how he personally

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understands race in the context of his work, he prefaced his comments quite differently: "But for me, when I use that [term] I just mean…." Furthermore, in contrast to the narrow, phenotypic definitions offered in their abstract talk, in discussing their practice, race was defined broadly and inclusively. They used the concept it in a more generic sense to refer to wide-ranging differences among groups, including differences based on culture (n=7), ethnicity (n=3), religion (n=2), and language (n=1). Kelly illustrates this perspective on race by saying, "For me, it's a combination of everything. Skin colour, faiths, religions, you know, it's a mixture of everything is how I look at it … other than just the origin of people based on their skin colour or that type of thing."

In order to make sense of this apparent duality in their talk about race, note the following general observations. First, participants' response to my request that they define the concept suggests they were not especially interested in abstract discussions of race: the question stimulated little discussion and the constructions they offered were not explicitly framed as their own. Indeed, Grace specifically notes her disinterest: "In terms of the theoretical kinds of questions, I guess I'm not really so interested in descriptions or definitions."[25] Overall, their accounts portrayed abstract definitions of

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[25] Since Grace's voice is largely absent in these sections of the thesis given her stated dislike of "theoretical" discussions, I have included below a fuller excerpt from the interview in which she explains why she is not interested in "theoretical" discussions:

Grace: In terms of the theoretical kinds of questions, I guess I'm not really so interested in descriptions or definitions. … I'm not really thinking in those terms, I'm thinking more of the experience of working here... There are people in the community who describe the issues extremely well, and who can speak to the issues very well. I've never considered myself to be a person who does that particularly well. I'm more interested in and better at … some of the interactions that are happening and how we deal with situations, I guess, in this organization. How we deal with situations in this organization, and the education that we do and how we try to do that in.. just to try to bring change in the community and to try to make a difference.

Vonda: Tell me more what you mean by that, when you say you're not interested in definitions.

Grace: Well it's not that I'm not interested in them, it's just that … if you asked me … to describe the issues and … underlying reasons for racism, I think.. I don't articulate that particularly well. I don't think it's that I don't understand those things, it's just that … I haven't really developed a smooth way to articulate those things and I haven't sort of bought an argument. I haven't bought a package. So I don't use the words, I don't use the jargon, I don't use, you know, all the usual terminology because I'm not thinking in

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race as largely irrelevant to them. Second, participants offered alternate definitions of race that emphasized the application of the concept. When their talk shifted from the abstract to the concrete, and they described how they apply the concept race in practice, participants appeared more engaged in discussion and spoke more decisively about what race means to them. Taken together, these data suggest that participants' constructions of race might be understood as structured primarily according to a pragmatic outlook.

4.2 Abstract Constructions of Racism

Participants' response to my direct and abstract question, What is racism?, reminded me of their responses to my question regarding race. Their answers were similarly concise and simply worded. Chris's response is typical in this regard: "I think racism is people making some decision about people and what they're like, and what they're capable of, based on race. Is that too simplistic?" This type of response surprised me initially, as I had expected more complex and lengthy answers from these individuals whose lives were focused on racism. In probing their understandings further, several themes emerged in participants' definitions of racism.

First, a majority of participants (n=8) focused on racism at an individual level in their constructions, defining it primarily in terms of attitudes and prejudices held. Three other participants also spoke about racism in this manner, but their comments were distinctive in that they also emphasized systemic forms of racism. Only Stephanie focused exclusively on systemic racism in this part of the interview.

Second, three primary causal factors were noted in participants' references to the cause of racism. Half of the participants suggested that racism is a result of normal cognitive functioning, as Kelly alludes to in saying, "I think everyone is just born with it."

those terms.… So I wouldn't participate in this if you want a clear articulation of the reasons for racism, and sort of the theories.

This link was expressed in terms of a general predisposition rather than in a strongly deterministic manner. That is, participants suggested that while humanity may be predisposed towards racism, its development is not inevitable. Nine participants referred to ignorance and a lack of knowledge about the racialized Other as contributing to racism. Finally, seven participants suggested that a fear of difference and a lack of interaction with the racialized Other also contribute to the development of racism.

Third, I noted a theme of optimism for the future in all participants' abstract discussions of racism. While the degree of optimism voiced varied, in every case it seemed to be tied to their causal attributions regarding ignorance about, fear of, and lack of interaction with, the racialized Other. That is, participants tended to link their optimism directly to changes that had occurred in society that either encouraged more interaction between racialized and White people, or to changes in education that have led to White people knowing more about the Other. [26] Kelly referred to both of these bases for optimism:

> There hasn't been any education for a lot of generations, <u>until</u> today where you're starting to see discussion around racism, celebrations around fighting racism, expression of multiculturalism, more awareness and understanding of First Nations and Métis peoples. Whereas in the past you didn't see that.… And I think today what you're seeing in some cases at least … you're seeing some of the good things happen because at a young age people are placed in situations with people from other races. So there's more understanding of diversity, they're growing with it, they're experiencing the good and the bad. And I think the outcome, once they get to an older age is going to be much different.... And I think there's more, there's just generally a more awareness today and more exposure.

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[26] In terms of this variability, five participants voiced highly optimistic positions regarding the decline of racism in our society. Three other participants voiced qualified optimism in the sense that the future looked positive as long as society continued to move in the direction it has been moving in regard to racism. Another three participants were much less optimistic about the future, each of them framing their optimism in terms of having some level of "hope" for the future. However, whether highly optimistic or mildly hopeful, all of these participants referred to societal shifts as the basis for their optimism. One participant did not speak to the topic.

Fourth, the notion of intent featured prominently in eight participants' talk of racism. These individuals distinguished between a racism based upon well-intentioned ignorance, and a less common form of racism that they suggested is based upon deliberate, ill-intent towards the racialized Other. In the latter case, racism tended to be framed in stable, dispositional terms.

Finally, I noted a similarity in participants' tone in their responses to my general questions about racism. In addition to optimism, I heard certainty and confidence in their voices: They presented their views in what seemed to me to be a neat, conceptual package that explained racism in clear and unambiguous terms, and they did so in a matter-of-fact manner.

These common themes suggest that participants may be drawing upon a shared discourse in responding to my general questions about racism. Indeed, the discursive pieces offered by participants fit together to form a more or less cohesive narrative on racism. [27] This narrative of racism begins with our natural predisposition towards bias that is cognitively hardwired. Socialization processes then build upon this predisposition and introduce additional factors that are critical to the development of racism. Specifically, our natural bias interacts with fear of difference (whether innate or learned) and negative teachings (whatever the source) about the Other. The result of these processes is an avoidance of the Other. This lack of interaction with the Other then leads to ignorance about the 'real' Other, which exhibits itself in racist behaviours towards him.

In this explanatory model, racism requires no ill-intent towards the racialized Other, and racism can be reduced by addressing those factors which can be directly

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[27] If drawing upon a common discourse can be conceptualized as reading off a shared script, the degree to which participants did so varied. Specifically, the themes noted were least evident in Stephanie's talk, and the most apparent in the narratives of Kelly, Margaret, Diane, Chris, Tom, and Liz.

influenced. For example, ignorance and fear of the Other can be addressed through increased interaction with the Other and education about the Other. Given the good intentions of the majority, these efforts will presumably be welcomed and embraced, and will allow ignorance and fear to be replaced with understanding. This solution to racism forms the basis for an optimistic view of the future. Simply stated in causal terms, as the amount of interracial contact and education about the racialized Other continue to increase, levels of racism will necessarily decline.

I attribute the ease with which I was able to assemble these discursive pieces into a cohesive whole to my familiarity with the social cognitive approach to racism offered in the literature review. That is, participants' talk can be seen to parallel the social cognitive account of racism offered previously. It seems that social-cognitive researchers in psychology may draw upon the same discourses of racism as do the participants in these accounts. The similarity between these discourses, combined with the similarity between participants' talk about racism, and the ease with which they presented these ideas, all suggest that the view offered in response to the question, "What is racism?" may represent a common sense understanding of racism in our society.

4.3 Contextualized Descriptions: Racism in Saskatchewan

When participants' talk shifted from general and abstract discussions of racism to noting actual encounters with racism in the varied contexts of their lives, there was a noticeable change both in the content and the tone of their talk. The neat and tidy explanatory package in which the pieces loosely fit together to produce a relatively cohesive theory of racism was replaced by a messier, disjointed and complex collection of perspectives. The complexity was evident in the way previously stated narrow definitions of racism were reformulated, making them broader and more relevant to participants' lived experiences. In addition, while few participants had

referred to issues of power in their previous talk on racism, issues of power became critical elements of their contextualized discussions. Complexity was also achieved by an apparent shift from focusing on racism primarily at the level of the individual, to placing a greater emphasis on systemic forms of racism.

This shift from simplicity to complexity in their discourse was accompanied by a noted change in tone. The upbeat and optimistic tone of their earlier talk was replaced by a more somber, pessimistic outlook, while previously detached voices became voices full of passion and emotion. As participants described the racism they saw all around them, they seemed to become more engaged in the interview, no longer requiring my probes to guide their discussion. While I may not have been surprised by anything I heard at a cognitive level, their stories of racism witnessed were often raw and compelling, and I found myself emotionally shaken at times by the graphic and dark world that they described.

In addition to presenting participants' contextualized constructions of racism and offering an analytic perspective on them, my hope in the following pages is to draw the reader into the world of my participants as I was drawn in during the interviews. Participants' stories were so vivid and rich, that I experienced them as multi-sensory phenomena. The images, sounds, smells, and emotions that were evoked became important to my understanding of participants' world. Indeed, a deep appreciation of participants' experiences with racism is crucial as it is related to all other aspects of their experiences as anti-racism educators. Thus, my goal is for the reader to have not only a cognitive understanding of how this world is conceptualized by participants, but to feel also some of the energy, urgency and intensity with which participants described it. While I had the benefit of facial expressions, intonation and body language in having this conveyed to me in the interview setting, in attempting to pass this on to the reader I

am limited to offering secondhand words on a page. It is hoped that the use of many interview excerpts in this section will help to minimize this inherent limitation.

With these goals in mind, I have broken this section into three main parts. First, I explore how participants reconceptualize the notion of racism when they shift to talking about it the context of their anti-racism work. Second, I present in some detail their descriptions of how racism can be seen to operate in Saskatchewan in terms of its varied forms and its broad impact.[28] Finally, I note participants' portrayal of racism in relation to descriptions of racism that have been produced in other geographical and societal contexts.

4.3.1   Racism Reconceptualized

In contrast to the straightforward definitions of racism offered in response to my general question, when speaking about racism in the contexts of their lived experience, participants tended to use the term more broadly to refer to the varied ways in which oppression, and othering in general, occur in our society. With the exception of two individuals, participants spoke of the tangled nature of systems of oppression and noted the challenges in separating out issues of racism from other forms of oppression and discrimination in our society. Diane illustrates this point in describing her struggle to distinguish between racism and other types of inequality that she encounters:

> No one definitely talks about what is racism.… I mean it's stereotyping. Like it's not being fair to somebody, like for me to say, "Well, you're a Caucasian female, you know, in a certain age group and so you're like this." … What right do I have to say that about you? What do I know? You know? … So, I mean there's stereotypes … because of race … then that's racism, I guess. But I mean there's also stereotypes because of age, and there are stereotypes … if you're a refugee versus an immigrant.… Like people who come in and they say, "Well I'm an immigrant, I came independently and I wasn't a refugee," because they don't want to for some reason identify with the people who came from their country as refugees.… Is that racism? I don't know. What is that? Classism? I don't know (laughter). Sometimes it's the Black people coming from a country

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[28] While participants spoke about racism in a variety of contexts, they tended to frame these discussions within a provincial context, presumably in response to the way questions were structured. Thus, I have chosen to frame it is as Racism in Saskatchewan.

where a lot of people who originated from India live ... and the Indians feel they're up here (*indicates with her hand)* and the Black people are down, or vice versa, you know. I mean that's an issue. And they've clumped everybody together and say, "All those people, all those people from India, are..." you know. That's racism in a way.

This construction of racism, as interconnected with other forms of oppression and others, fits with participants' practice of using 'race' to generically denote otherness based on culture, ethnicity, religion, or language.

Just as some participants tended to redefine racism within the context of their lived experience, seven participants voiced unease in using the term 'anti-racism' until they had similarly clarified their particular understanding of it. Interestingly, while no participants took issue with the term when invited to participate in a study regarding the experiences of *anti-racism educators*, these seven individuals took the initiative early on in the interview to state their discomfort with framing their efforts exclusively in terms of anti-racism. In discussing what anti-racism *means* in their world, participants used phrases such as "fighting against oppression," "fighting for justice and equity," "promoting diversity," and "encouraging cross-cultural understanding."[29] In their clarifications, participants seemed to emphasize not only their fight *against* something negative, but also their fight *for* something positive. For example, note how Margaret replaces 'anti-racism' with 'equity' in the following excerpt:

We don't use the words "anti-racism" a lot in the union movement and the labor movement, we talk about equity we talk about equal opportunities because we.. in more general terms we're covering all the equity groups. Every once in a while there will be a specific course on racism or something like that, but most of the time when we're talking about it we're … including all the equity groups together.

However, once participants had clarified what they meant by anti-racism, they tended to use it in the interview with no apparent sign of unease. In the following

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[29] Given that participants use the terms race and racism broadly and inclusively in practice, their equally broad construction of anti-racism is hardly surprising. Note that these conceptualizations will be considered in greater depth in the following chapter which focuses on anti-racism; they are simply noted here given their relevance to the present discussion.

excerpt, note how Jeff begins by taking issue with the identification of his work as anti-racist work, then offers a clarification of how he views his efforts in relation to anti-racism, and then proceeds to use the term in reference to his own work:

> I guess, two things to start the interview, one is when I think about what I do I'm not necessarily sure that I call it 'anti-racism work' but I think it falls under that category. I don't call it that, I don't think about it that way, but I think about it in terms of working to combat racism, to clarify issues and to educate and to deal with peoples or organizations or institutions that aren't … <u>aware</u>, that aren't <u>educated</u>, … that don't <u>acknowledge</u> diversity in difference, or that do it but only in a sort of a surface way and non meaningful way, and I like to make sure that people think about it more clearly, think critically about, what they're doing and <u>how</u> they're doing it, and make sure that they do it in practice. So it <u>is</u> anti-racism. But it's, it's just that I don't necessarily <u>refer</u> to it that way, but that's what it's about.… But the work that I do clearly, I mean, situates me centrally in issues of racism and anti-racism and unlearning racism, and you can't be a non-Aboriginal person working in Aboriginal issues like <u>I</u> do, without having to talk about it, without hearing about it, without learning about it, it's central to issues in Aboriginal country, around residential schooling, around access to education and employment. It's central in the way that we <u>treat</u> people, the way we <u>view</u> people, the way that we <u>categorize</u> people, the way that we <u>think</u> about initiatives, so it's central.… And when I think about my <u>involvement</u> in anti-racism work, it didn't really start until I was 30.…

In summary, while participants seemed to have no difficulty in producing clear-cut, abstract definitions of key terms when specifically asked to do so, it is important to note that these common sense definitions may not be the referents used when they talk about their actual, contextualized experiences. As noted, in practice participants tended to avoid constructions that imposed rigid demarcations, preferring rather fluid and broad conceptualizations of constructs (e.g., race as otherness, racism as oppression, anti-racism as fighting oppression). In making sense of participants' experience in anti-racism, the reader is encouraged to remain cognizant of what *participants* mean by these terms within the particular contexts of their talk, in order to avoid erroneously assuming they are referring to a singular referent.

4.3.2

<u>The Pervasiveness of Racism</u>

I turn now to participants' descriptions and stories of racism in Saskatchewan.[30] In their descriptions, the previous talk of racism in terms of simple and well-intentioned cognitive errors was noticeably absent, as was their optimistic vision of the future. Instead, they all described a dark world of violence, fear, and hopelessness. They spoke of a society racially divided and hierarchical, in which Whites enjoy a position at the top, Aboriginal people are relegated to the lowest position, and immigrants and refugees populate the middle rungs.

In this world, racism is portrayed as pervasive and complex, operating in numerous forms and across varied boundaries with devastating effect. Using graphic descriptions and personal stories laced with emotion, participants shared wide-ranging examples of racism witnessed directly or indirectly. In describing their communities, participants painted a picture that I expect would be disturbing and unfamiliar to most people in middle-class White society. Indeed, a parallel theme to racism's pervasiveness that runs through participants' narratives is the invisibility of its operation to White people. As Stephanie put it, "Racism is <u>so</u> prevalent still today. I see it as very, very prevalent…. I have grave concerns about it and how unbelievably prevalent and invisible it is. And so when you don't see that, when you don't see that happening, I guess you don't think that it is."

Participants chose various ways to categorize and make sense of the racism that they said they witnessed in their daily lives. While some participants distinguished between overt versus subtle expressions of racism, others emphasized a distinction

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[30] Having just cautioned the reader to bear in mind participants' broad usage of the word racism to encompass various forms of oppression, the specific focus on racism in participants' accounts in this section bears comment. While I tended to include excerpts that focused more specifically on racism in writing this section, participants themselves also tended to highlight incidents that would fit more traditional understandings of racism. I expect participants' particular focus on racism per se in these stories was, in part, a response to my framing of questions in these terms.

between individual versus systemic forms of racism. However, there was at the same time a stated recognition of the limitations of any classification system, as participants pointed out the artificial nature of lines that were often blurred in the complexity of reality. As Diane put it, "In personal experience, I have probably not seen individual incidents of racism but probably more the systemic stuff.… And sometimes it all gets mixed up."

Recognizing that to some extent organizing these "mixed up" descriptions of racism requires an imposition of structure upon them, I have chosen to group their accounts into three categories that vary depending upon whether individual or systemic factors of racism are highlighted in their stories. These categories include: (1) racism in the form of daily harassments for the racialized Other; (2) racism that affects an individuals' ability to meet their basic needs of employment, housing, and safety; (3) racism that operates at a systemic level. Whereas individual acts of racism are central in the first grouping, the individual is largely absent in the third grouping in which the focus is on racist systems.

4.3.3   <u>Daily Harassments</u>

All participants' made reference to the daily experiences of racism faced by racialized people. Most commonly, participants referred to examples of individuals being treated with disrespect or suspicion; receiving poor service in stores and restaurants; having racial slurs directed at them; or being subjected to racial 'jokes'. Kelly and Diane offer examples of these kinds of harassments:

> I mean, you'll be introducing someone and they happen to come from another culture, and you'll see maybe the way they're treated, or the look their given, or that type of thing. Uh, go to a restaurant and you'll see the way that some person is treated because they come from a different race. And I've seen that a <u>lot</u>. (Kelly)

> I know there's a lot of people … they say they're followed around in the stores, you know, because they're just assumed … they're going to shoplift. (Diane)

4.3.4 <u>Meeting Basic Needs</u>

Ten participants referred to acts of racism that were described as significantly and negatively affecting racialized people's ability to obtain and retain employment (n=8); to find suitable housing (n=3); or to live lives free of violence (n=5). I have grouped these together on the basis that these incidents all seem to relate to the possibility for individuals to have their basic human needs met (i.e., income, shelter, survival).

Racism in the context of employment was a major theme in eight participants' stories of racism in Saskatchewan.[31] In their stories, participants described how racism can hurt an individual's chance to get a job due to factors such as blatant bias in the interview process, or the reluctance of potential employers to recognize professional credentials from abroad. Furthermore, these participants pointed out that racialized individuals fortunate enough to find employment then face overt and subtle forms of racism that make it difficult for them to retain jobs or advance in their careers. Supervisors, co-workers, and customers were all described as behaving in a racist manner in the workplace. For example, two participants described cases where racialized individuals were deliberately kept out of the public eye by employers who feared their visible presence in the company would hurt business. Grace describes witnessing this form of racism:

> I've had employers say, "Yes, I'd like to have him but I don't have a space at the back right now and I can't have him up front because my customers wouldn't be happy." I've had employers say, "I sent somebody out to do sales in a rural community and they told us never again to send a person <u>like that</u> again," a Black person. So employers will tell me this and I say, "Do you realize what you are saying?" … Some are open, and some will say, "I know, it's terrible."

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[31] This theme is picked up again in considering systemic racism and the racism inherent in many workplace policies and procedures.

Finally, five participants noted the high degree of pressure put on racialized people in the workplace given the intense scrutiny of their work by employers and the unfair criteria by which it is judged. As Joan put it, "The burden of proof, the burden of education, I still see as primarily on their shoulders, and kept on their shoulders.… To be seen as a shining star you've got to out perform tenfold someone with different demographics…."

Three participants said racism makes if difficult for racialized people to obtain and retain suitable housing in Saskatchewan. They shared stories such as Cathy's below, in which they became aware of the difficulty for racialized people to find housing through their own experiences in attempting to assist them:

> I remember some years ago my friends calling me, they wanted to go see an apartment, and they are from Uruguay, so their skin is darker than ours. So I went, we saw the apartment, the manager showed us around the building, and he said, "Go right down to that office and sign the papers." So we went down to the head office and the person there took one look at them and said, "Sorry, it's been rented." … How do you prove it? But they knew. And they knew that it's because they look like First Nations-Métis Nation people that this happened.

These participants also spoke of the ongoing racism that their friends face from landlords and neighbours. Grace describes how a woman's request to have repairs done to her apartment brought the following reply from her landlord: "Well, if you don't like it here, why did you leave Iraq? Why did you come to Canada? Why don't you go back there?"

Seven participants related stories of racism that spoke of incredible acts of violence against racialized people, and Aboriginal people in particular. These stories spoke of dangers racialized people face in their daily lives that impinge upon their ability to live normal lives. In addition to examples of violent individual incidents, frequent references were made to cases recently in the media of police brutality against young Aboriginal men. The sources of violence were described as complex, involving interactions between individual acts and systemic forces. For example,

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several participants referred to the case of a young Aboriginal girl who was first raped by several White men and then re-victimized by a legal system that granted the men lenient sentences.

Tom also pointed out that White people's inaction can be construed as an act of violence against racialized people. He explained that issues of drug abuse and hopelessness that have wreaked havoc on Aboriginal people living in his core neighbourhood for years have been largely ignored by White people. He contrasted this inaction with the intense attention and mobilization of resources directed towards addressing the rise of crystal methamphetamine usage in the broader community:

> *Tom:* Because people <u>die</u> day after day after day, and month after month here from drug issues and that.… I've talked to the media, I've said, "I know that crystal meth is a <u>terrible</u> drug, it's a drug we don't want to see happening here." But I said, "It's just another scourge here," I mean we go to wakes here all the time with young people, just over in that brown house, the third one down, there's a young mother of 25, went to a wake last month. She died from drug issues. Nothing to do with crystal meth, but her little girl sits on the front step there….

> *Vonda*: So now that it's hitting <u>White </u>people, it's an issue.

> <u>*Tom*</u>: Ya, ya, that's right. Ya, now it's … "Now, Holy God, we've got people," I hear all the time, when they describe it, "people are dropping out of school, people are dropping out of their work...." I said, "That's been happening for <u>decades</u> that <u>I</u> know of, right in this <u>area</u>. And <u>dying</u>!" And another young woman just within the last few days too that died from hanging.

> *Vonda*: In this neighborhood?

> <u>*Tom*</u>: Ya. But <u>many</u>, many deaths.

4.3.5   Systemic Racism

While all participants spoke of individual acts of racism, they emphasized stories of systemic racism in Saskatchewan. Systemic racism was presented as ubiquitous, evident in the education system; law enforcement, justice, and penal systems; political systems; and the health care system.

The Education System. Seven participants spoke of racism operating within the educational systems in the province. All of these individuals identified racism both in the content of what *is* and is *not* taught, specifically noting the Eurocentric focus in how history is presented. Stephanie spoke at length on this topic:

> I do become very frustrated with the fact that history is still being taught today, in 2005 the way it was taught to me, back in 1985, I guess. I can't believe it. It blows … my mind, like holy crap! Did the '60s never happen? … And sometimes Sask Learning will insert, "Oh, here's a little thing on Native people," every once in a while in the curriculum, and it's a joke. Teachers don't have to do it if they don't want to, and sometimes it doesn't even fit. Like the whole thing has to be revamped. You can't just insert little things on Native people and call it, "Oo, there's social justice and equity. We'll wave our magic wand and now everybody's, you know, equal."

Both Joan and Stephanie further suggested the very structure and philosophy upon which the education system is built is inherently racist in that western ways of thinking are privileged. Stephanie referred to this as the "assumption of Eurocentric superiority" that is evident in the "top-down…hierarchical…male dominated" structure of our education system.

Law Enforcement, Judicial, and Penal Systems. More than half of the participants (n=7) described racism operating within law enforcement systems. Incidents of police brutality towards Aboriginal people and examples of racial profiling were portrayed not only as acts of individual racism, but also as evidence of systemic racism within police departments. Four participants further suggested that systemic racism works to exclude racialized people from entering or remaining on a police force. For example, Cathy noted that attempts to recruit racialized people to law enforcement jobs are undermined by more subtle techniques of exclusion: "It's not so obvious and not so blatant, but for example when we are working our way through police manuals and police policies and procedures … many of the policies and procedures … have that systemic racism built into them." Tom spoke of more blatant forms of racism that racialized police recruits and officers experience within their workplace:

Tom: I have actually met <u>secretly</u> with recruits.… [Two racialized instructors]
wanted me to meet with a First Nations recruit who was <u>really</u> distressed by
the racism. …

Vonda: So why secret?

Tom: Secret for <u>their</u> sake, they said it would have to be kind of clandestine, for
<u>their</u> sake too, and for <u>her</u> sake.… She was very concerned of the racism she
experienced within, but she wanted to talk about it. She didn't want to openly
talk, she was proud and excited to have completed this. It was really close to
graduation, she was actually just days before graduation. But she wanted to
talk about it because she wanted us to try and, you know, at least be aware of
it because if people come to us she wanted us to know that this is a serious
problem within there. And these instructors … <u>they</u> wanted it known, also they
wanted it known outside of there because they can only do so much from
within.

Four participants noted systemic racism within the judicial and penal systems.
Two of these individuals suggested that racialized people are less likely to have their
cases diverted to alternate programs that would allow them to deal with their crimes
outside of the judicial system; all four noted the disproportionate number of Aboriginal
people being incarcerated. Cathy described the statistics as follows:

Some of our correctional facilities 90% First Nations people, and our facilities
have <u>not</u> proven themselves at <u>all</u>. I mean, recidivism – there is study after
study after study – that our systems create recidivism, and many First Nations
and Métis Nation people are locked into that, and have great difficulty finding
their way out. Of course it's all … racist, in a systemic way.

<u>Political Systems</u>. While seven participants referred to systemic racism within
our political systems, they did so in a variety of ways. Several of them noted racism
more generally within political parties (Tom: "There's no political party that <u>I</u> know of
that is free of serious racism."), while others referred to racism experienced by specific
individuals running for office. Four participants pointed to the demographics of
politicians (i.e., predominantly White males) as evidence of systemic racism in politics;
three of these individuals further noted a link between these demographics and a
shortage of funding for oppressed groups in society. Debbie comments on this
relationship below:

Ya, ya, we're talking political … because <u>who</u> has the money? I mean, <u>who</u> has the money for the <u>resources</u>? I mean, frankly, it's <u>male</u>, White <u>men</u>. And they're <u>old</u>. And so they're the ones who have the money, they're the Ralph Goodales of the world. We as groups have to go <u>begging</u> to for a couple of <u>crumbs</u>, you know. And whether it's the Aboriginal groups, or it's the women's groups, or disability groups.… And do we have any of those faces in that parliamentary structure, or even in this legislature? No! And, you know, to me that's the <u>key</u>. You have to begin with recognizing, you know, that people can't just <u>get</u> there. I mean, I don't have $10,000 to throw into a campaign to get elected so I can help other people, you know. So, I mean, who's running these organizations? So, there has to be, you know, you talk about <u>racism</u>, there has to be <u>all</u> the faces represented, as much as we can get there.

Finally, two participants referred to racist immigration policies that, they argue, unfairly benefit individuals from particular countries.

Our immigration policy for people who live in the southern hemisphere have been blatantly - our practices - have been blatantly different. The whole immigration economic thrust right now, what do we have? We have our Saskatchewan government bringing in 300 truck drivers from the UK. So, White is best, there's no doubt about that. (Cathy)

<u>The Healthcare System</u>. Three participants described systemic racism within the healthcare system, suggesting that the treatment offered to Aboriginal people is inferior to the treatment received by White people. For example, Liz reflected on her experiences working in a hospital:

There was <u>so</u> many Aboriginal children that were brought in. And they were brought in with abuse, a lot of abuse issues, where they had been, you know, burned with cigarettes, or they had been placed on top of stoves, on a hot burner, and, or they had been beaten, you know, whatever. And I always noticed with some of my fellow workers, that they didn't give them the same type of care as the, you know, status quo White children. And they had the attitude, "Well, we'll fix them up but you know they'll be back in a month." And ya, they were.

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In the literature review I noted the potentially racist implications of solely emphasizing the cost of racism to the racialized, as it tends to render whiteness invisible and position the racialized as victims. While this critique may be valid, listening to the participants' stories invites another observation: While racism

undoubtedly affects everyone, to speak about the cost of racism to White people

(within the context of reflecting on the impact of racism on racialized people in our

society) may also have racist implications in serving to minimize its comparatively

devastating effects on the racialized.

4.3.6   <u>The Racism of the Racialized</u>

As is evident in the many examples of racism described above, racism in

Saskatchewan was typically constructed by participants in terms of what the dominant

White group *does to* the racialized Other. However, participants' portrayals of racism

were not limited to this important, though narrow, structural relationship. Participants all

noted various forms that racism can take depending upon the relative positionings of

individuals in relation to specific groups, and rejected outright the argument that only

White people are capable of racism.

<u>Reverse Racism.</u> All participants discussed what several of them labeled as

"reverse racism," that is, racism of the racialized towards Whites. In all but one case,

participants were adamant that reverse racism occurs in Saskatchewan; however, they

were equally adamant in distinguishing it from racism expressed by the dominant group

in terms of its impact. As Tom eloquently illustrates below, participants described this

form of racism in a manner similar to what Memmi (2000) calls a "toothless racism":

> Some people will say, "Well you know … there's reverse racism." … <u>I</u> don't call
> it reverse, I call it racism *(chuckles).* But the difference for me is that <u>my</u> racism
> … affects whether his family has a job or, you know.… Sometimes when I go to
> work … [an Aboriginal] child might say something to me but you know, it goes
> off my back *(chuckles)* because I understand where that's coming from and.. it
> doesn't affect me because I'm going to my <u>job</u>. But if I, at my <u>job</u>, where I've
> been there for a long time, continue to promote racism then I affect whether
> someone else - his parents - get a job.… And so as I tell people there's some
> differences in that. … But there's certainly racism in every race and culture has
> their problems with racism like that. And in this culture, my racism of <u>my</u> people
> – people like me, anyway – causes a lot of problems.

<u>Racism Among Racialized Groups.</u> Seven participants also offered examples of

racism expressed between racialized groups, in particular between Aboriginal versus

immigrant and refugee populations. These participants also offered theories regarding the causes of this racism. Three participants explained that the racism of Aboriginal people directed at newcomers is rooted in a feeling of resentment towards a group that is perceived to be receiving preferential treatment over them. For example, Tom suggests that some Aboriginal people are bitter about immigration, saying "Geez, what the hell are we doing bringing in immigrants here, we haven't even got a job here."

The explanation offered by four participants for the racism of immigrants and refugees towards Aboriginal people was reminiscent of Roediger's (1991) notion of whitening oneself through the distancing of Self from a lower status Other. That is, these participants explained that newcomers to Canada quickly learn that Aboriginal people are considered undesirable in our society, and take steps to distance themselves from them in order to ensure their own acceptance into Canadian society. They further suggested that newcomers gain this negative view of Aboriginal people both directly and indirectly, from White society. Tom, stating a view shared by several others, explained how this process begins early in the newcomers' settlement period:

> When I do help with immigration issues or cases of refugee things, those people <u>often</u> tell me that when they came they were told by – they were educated – by immigration people and that, to watch out for First Nation people. That <u>those</u> are the people that you've got to be wary of.

Cathy's comments below are illustrative of the views expressed by three participants, regarding the role that schools play in this process of educating immigrants about Aboriginal people:

> And one of the other things that I notice is that refugee children are not here very long before they're talking about Indians, or "dirty Indians," and they pick this language up from their schools. And, they don't pick it up as a formal policy or practice at the schools but from their counterparts in the school system.

> <u>Lateral Racism.</u> Cathy, Jeff, and Debbie spoke of a racism that is expressed by

individuals against other members of their racial or cultural group. Cathy labeled this as

"lateral racism." Jeff offers an example of this form of racism in telling of his experience in teaching a class of Aboriginal students:

> I saw people acting in ways that were racist against each other.… Which confused me a bit because I was told that racism was something that was done to people <u>by</u> people, not <u>by</u> people to their <u>own</u> people.… All Aboriginal students, and <u>doing</u> things and <u>saying</u> things that were racist.… But then we did a course on unlearning racism, and realized that racism is one of those kinds of things that permeate your mind, and that even when the colonial master is gone the person that's done it in residential school or wherever, the Indian Agent, that people learn it and then do it, and continue it, and do it to themselves, because they've been taught ... to believe that they are inferior, lesser than, not, "like us." And then they continue to remind each other about that. And then it plays itself out in destructive ways.[32]

Internalized Racism. According to Stephanie and Jeff, racism can also be directed towards oneself. What Stephanie refers to as "self blame" and Jeff calls "internalized racism," can be summarized as the result of racialized people believing in the messages of inferiority they have been given. Jeff explains that this occurs "because they had been taught all these years to see White as better than brown."

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The variety and complexity of forms that racism is described to take in the numerous and wide-ranging examples offered by participants, emphasizes the insidiousness of racism in participants' portrayals of Saskatchewan society. Interestingly, while power may not be explicitly discussed in these stories, theories of power can be read as implicitly woven throughout participants' discussions of race relations. Their talk suggests a conceptualization of power that is in keeping with Foucault's (1978) view: rather than portraying it as an essentialized force operating in a simple top-down fashion between Whites and racialized Others, power is alluded to in

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[32] It is noteworthy that in comments such as this one, the classification of racialized people into cohesive groups seems to be based primarily upon *participants'* vision of them as such. That is, it would be interesting to explore what the basis for an Us-Them distinction might be for those people purportedly making racist comments against "their own people." Perhaps they do not view themselves in this manner, and distinctions might be constructed rather in terms of tribe, language, treaty status, etc.

fluid terms, as the outcome of the opposing forces coming together in particular, localized contexts.

4.3.7 <u>Commonalities Among Portrayals of Racism</u>

In listening to participants talk about racism in Saskatchewan, I was struck by the similarity of their descriptions to other accounts of racism in the province (e.g., see Reber & Renaud, 2005; Warnock, 2004). I was also struck by how similar their portrayals were to descriptions of racism operating in other geographical regions. While I am necessarily limited here to a rather cursory comparison, the similarity among my participants' descriptions and those offered by Furniss (1999) and Wetherell and Potter (1992) is noteworthy. Furniss carried out an ethnographic case study of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents in Williams Lake, British Columbia; Wetherell and Potter conducted interviews with Pakeha (i.e., Whites) regarding racism in New Zealand. In both of those studies, a similar racial hierarchy was described: Whites were positioned at the top, indigenous people located at the bottom, and other racialized groups were said to occupy the spaces in-between. Furthermore, racism was similarly constructed as permeating all aspects of society; operating in a manner largely invisible to dominant group members; and having a devastating impact on Aboriginal people in particular. Finally, descriptions of the logic used to justify racist practices, as well as the subject positions identified for Whites and racialized people in the dominant discourses, were highly similar across these varied accounts. While it is beyond the scope of the present research to delve further into the similarities and explore the differences of these portrayals, such a comparison would be an interesting focus in future research.

4.4   <u>Exploring Contradiction through Programs of Truth</u>

In the preceding sections I have considered both participants' abstract and contextualized descriptions of racism, noting a contrast both in the content (i.e.,

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straightforward explanations versus complex and seemingly disjointed ones) and in the tone (i.e., detached and optimistic versus passionate and less optimistic) of this talk. Not only are the two discourses produced in participants' accounts distinct, but they also appear to be contradictory in several regards.

Recall the following themes noted in participants' more generic definitions of racism: (1) the stance that interaction with the racialized Other necessarily reduces racism; (2) the assumption of good intentions and apparent nonexistence of White resistance in their talk; (3) the view of education as the unqualified best way to address racism; (4) the portrayal of the future in highly optimistic terms. Contradictory themes can be read in participants' contextualized references to racism in Saskatchewan. First, five participants told stories in which racism was said to have increased due to increased levels of interaction between groups. For example, Diane suggested that First Nations people experience the highest levels of racism because Euro-Canadians have had more opportunity to interact with them over the years than with immigrants; as a result, Whites have had more opportunity to develop stereotypes about them. Second, there was little mention of resistance in their generic definitions and talk of well-intentioned racism; yet, in their actual stories of racism, White people were commonly described as resistant to recognizing and naming racism, and references to intent were largely absent. Third, in participants' contextualized talk of racism, education still held a privileged position; however, most of the participants argued that education alone could not significantly reduce racism in society. In these contexts, they argued that additional measures needed to be utilized given the resistance of White people to recognize and address racism.

Perhaps the most startling contradiction between generic and contextualized discussions of racism lay in participants' portrayal of the future of race relations in the province. In seven participants' stories of racism in Saskatchewan, the optimistic vision

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of the future that predicted a continuing decline in racism was replaced by suggestions

of a foreboding and uncertain future. In this version of events, there is a tone of

hopelessness in the suggestion that the level of racism has remained largely

unchanged over the years: "I think in the rural areas, coming from a small town, I don't

think anything has changed. I listened to, you know, the views my parents had, and I

listened to, you know, my brother's views and the people who are still back home and it

hasn't changed. It absolutely hasn't changed" (Margaret). In speaking about the future,

three participants suggested, as Kelly does below, that the province is at a critical

crossroads and that decisions made today will have a significant impact on future

levels of racism:

> In Saskatchewan … we're at a point here where unless we deal with racism, unless we address these issues, we're going to become a province that's just going to be worse off down the road. So, we have to be able to recognize that, work on that so we can create … a better province in that respect. Or better communities, safer communities, healthier communities. Cause so many of the problems that we face are typically tied to certain races of people. And in Saskatchewan it's First Nations. So, diabetes, smoking, overweight, gangs, the whole hospital issue, you know, and health issues in this province, are so dependent on making things better, so that First Nations people don't make up the, the majority of that. Or the justice system. You know, we arrest so many First Nations people.

During the interviews, I was intrigued by these apparent contradictions and I

couldn't resist on occasion questioning the rationale behind participants' stated views

on a subject. For example, if a participant suggested that the solution to racism is to

increase interaction between White and racialized people, I might ask: "Could

increased interaction not also lead to increased racism?" If a participant had previously

emphasized the good intentions of most White people and later commented on

resistance as common, I might ask "How do you make sense of resistance given the

good intention and openness of people to unlearn racism?" These questions did not

engage participants in a discussion; rather, their body language and their abrupt

responses suggested they were irritated by them. I initially interpreted this reaction in

terms of some sort of deficiency on the part of my participants: as practitioners, most without formal training in the study of racism and with apparently little interest in engaging in theoretical discussions, I concluded that it was not surprising that most of them would rely upon a common sense definition of racism. As to their apparent irritation in having their contradictions pointed out, I assumed that this response was a sign of their embarrassment in recognizing their contradictory statements. The theory of cognitive dissonance would support this interpretation.

In discussing these interpretations, it was pointed out to me that rather than assuming a deficiency on the part of my *participants*, perhaps I should consider whether the deficiency resided rather in my conceptualization of the situation. Specifically, I was encouraged to question the dominant view in western psychology of the person as a unitary and cohesive being. It was suggested that I read Veyne's (1988) essay on the constitutive imagination to explore this matter further. In so doing, I came upon a much more satisfying interpretation of the apparent contradictions in my participants' talk than the conclusions I had previously formulated.

The relevancy of Veyne's (1988) ideas to making sense of my data was immediately apparent in the question posed in his opening line: "How is it possible to half-believe, or believe in contradictory things?" Veyne addresses this question by challenging the conventional view of what constitutes 'truth'. Taking a decidedly constructionist and relativist stance, Veyne suggests that instead of talking about truth in the singular, we need to consider it in a plural sense. That is, rather than interpreting truth narrowly in terms of a simple dichotomy (i.e., truth/fiction), it is more useful to conceptualize truth as existing in multiple forms (i.e., "programs of truth"). For example, while truth in the West is typically understood to be synonymous with scientific truth, scientific truth is more appropriately viewed as one *form* of truth (and a relative newcomer at that).

According to Veyne (1988), it would be erroneous to suggest that myths are 'false' or that religious claims are 'untrue'; rather, they simply constitute a different *kind* of truth than scientific truth. As Veyne (1988) noted in referring to the truth of mythology for the Greeks, "These legendary worlds were accepted as true in the sense that they were not doubted, but they were not accepted the way that everyday reality is" (p. 17). Similarly, the worlds of religion, of art, and of literature can be understood to be 'true' in relation to the specific symbolic form that is pertinent to that world. Thus, Veyne argues, what is sometimes interpreted as "contradictory beliefs" may be understood rather as *different* truths that make sense within a particular world of meaning.

This concept of multiple truths fits neatly with Good's notion of multiple lifeworlds. In expanding upon Schutz's (1971, as cited in Good, 1994) notion of "multiple realities," Good (1994) suggests that we all live in multiple "worlds of experience," each of which is related to a different symbolic realm and operates according to its own unique "logic" (i.e., Veyne's "program of truth"). Good explains that each of these different worlds (e.g., the worlds of music, art, literature, religion, and science) suggests a different "reality" and each has "distinctive characteristics, distinct forms of organizing experience and modes of acting" (p. 124). Good clarifies: "These are not simply forms of individual experience, but diverse worlds, with distinctive objects, symbolic forms, social practices, and modes of experience" (Good, 1994, p. 122). For example, "common sense reality" in the "world of everyday life" is described as "a world of everyday activities and projects, rather than a world of theory or imagination," and is characterized by a "natural attitude, one in which objects are taken-for-granted rather than submitted to critical attention, as in the scientific attitude" (p. 124). According to Good, we constantly move back and forth between these distinct worlds, seamlessly shifting between different ways of thinking and being without even noticing it.

The application of these theories to understanding the apparent contradictions in my participants' constructions of racism is relatively straightforward. When participants were asked to offer generic definitions of race and racism, these theories would suggest they were drawing upon a particular truth that is perhaps relevant to a world of general and abstract ideas. However, when asked to talk about their actual experiences and encounters with racism in their daily lives, they switched to the world of everyday life; in so doing, they drew upon a different world of symbols and a different program of truth. According to this interpretation, their negative reactions to my questioning of their apparent contradictions can be re-interpreted as irritation with *me* for failing to respect the rules of the world from which they are speaking, rather than due to a recognition of their own inconsistencies.

5. CONCEPTUALIZING ANTI-RACISM

Having considered participants' constructions of race and racism, I now shift my attention to their conceptualizations of anti-racism. As the following chapters also deal specifically with anti-racism, a word of clarification regarding the distinction between them is required. In this chapter, the focus is on participants' general conceptual understandings of anti-racism and issues relating to how it is constructed. In the following three chapters, my interest turns from participants' talk *about* anti-racism to their talk about their involvement in *doing* anti-racism. While the distinction is useful to my purposes, it is awkward to sustain in any definitive way and should be viewed as a loosely imposed structure given the artificial nature of dividing up participants' experiences in this manner.

Participants' broad definitions of anti-racism were noted previously in discussing their talk on race and racism (e.g., as fighting *against* oppression or *for* justice and equity, as promoting diversity, and as encouraging cross-cultural understanding). With these definitions in mind, I have organized participants' talk about anti-racism into three main sections. First, participants' visions of a non-racist society are explored (i.e., the utopian vision to which they are directing their efforts). I then consider how participants conceptualize their own, and others', general approach to fighting racism and moving towards this utopian ideal. The focus here is not on particular strategies or specific involvements, but rather I consider their general frameworks for conceptualizing anti-racism. In these first two sections, I rely primarily on participants' responses to particular questions that asked them to describe their vision of a non-racist society and their approach to fighting racism. In the third section,

rather than relying upon participants' answers to specific questions, I look sweepingly

across their talk about their involvement in anti-racism and note several key discourses

that suggest additional conceptualizations of anti-racism.

<p style="text-align:center">5.1 <u>Visions of a Non-Racist Society</u></p>

In the semi-structured interview, participants were asked to describe what a

non-racist society in Saskatchewan would look like to them.[33] Most participants spoke

about issues of difference and equality, and made reference to how structural aspects

of society would be altered if racism were to be eradicated. While these broad

similarities are noteworthy, the differences among participants in how they spoke about

each theme are equally intriguing. In reading their accounts, two distinct versions on

each theme became apparent. That is, difference was constructed in two distinct

manners, equality was framed in two ways, and two visions of society in terms of its

structural components were offered.

5.1.1 <u>Difference and Equality</u>

In their portrayals of a non-racist society, six participants spoke about

'difference' in a highly similar manner; they suggested that, ideally, differences among

people would not be a cause for tension. They explained that, while racial and cultural

differences may be unavoidable, in a non-racist society these differences would be

"respected" and "accepted." However, these participants also suggested that in such a

society, people would not be preoccupied with differences, but would focus more

attention on similarities among people. Kelly's comments below are illustrative of this

construction of difference:

> I think it would be finding the similarities. And all of a sudden everything else
> doesn't become all that important, at least not in a way that's as damaging as
> racism. I mean, yes, you're gonna have disagreements, yes, you may not have
> the same values and that type of thing, you may look at things differently, you

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[33] Given that the word "utopia" was used frequently in these discussions by both me and
participants, I also use it here to refer to their visions of a non-racist society.

may have a different faith. But those are differences, so as long as those can be accepted and respected then that'll be fine. You're probably never gonna get away from those. But it would be a place to get to where you could get away from the hate that comes from that, the destruction that comes with that, that would be the ideal.

The same six participants also described similar views on the meaning of equality in their non-racist society. Within the described context of respect and acceptance, equality was defined primarily in terms of equal opportunity; existing "barriers" would be removed, allowing all individuals an equal chance to "succeed" based on "meritocracy." Margaret's concise summary of an ideal, non-racist society is typical of these six participants' comments in this regard: "You know, when everybody just has the same opportunities to run for a position and to do a good job and it's all done on merit." In their descriptions, measures of equality were primarily outlined in terms of socio-economic status. Simply stated, they suggested that racial equality would be achieved when racial groups no longer differed in terms of their socio-economic status.

In contrast to the passive acceptance of difference outlined above, three participants described difference as something that would be actively sought, embraced, and celebrated in a utopian society. [34] Difference was constructed as the basis for a new economic prosperity; a better environmental future; and an exciting society, in which there would be ample opportunity for stimulating experiences. Joan illustrates this last point below:

> Just more <u>variety</u>! And more variety <u>everywhere</u>. More variety in who's a CEO or who's a board member, or who's pushing a broom…. To me the utopia would be, you <u>can't predict</u> who's going to be in what role. So if you're reading somebody's name on a business card and if it's perhaps a gender ambiguous name, that you'd have <u>no clue</u>. Whereas right now, still eight times out of ten I could predict who (laughter).. you know, race, education level and sexuality probably. Those kinds of things…. There'd be much more variety. Foods! In

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[34] Two participants talked about difference in a ways that were similar to both versions in that difference was something to be passively accepted *and* something to be actively embraced and celebrated. One participant did not refer to difference in her utopian description.

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grocery stores, would be different. … Just there'd be variety in what we're seeing, what we're hearing, what we're smelling, the food we have. … So that's to <u>me</u> a big part of what the utopia would be.

A distinct vision of equality was also offered by these three participants.[35] Their vision included a focus on equal opportunity, but was not limited to it. Rather, they described equality in broader and more abstract terms, and their talk had what I would consider to be a relativist flavour to it. They suggested a non-racist society would mean diverse ideas and values would be given equal status. Stephanie summarizes this view in suggesting that at present Eurocentric thinking hinders equality in our society. She concludes: "If there were no racism … those judgments and assumptions about [Eurocentric] superiority would be gone, and we'd be so open to so many different types of systems of learning, and systems of thinking and ideas."

5.1.2   <u>Societal Structures</u>

In describing their utopian visions, eleven participants noted how different a non-racist society would look in terms of structure. Indeed, eight participants explicitly used the language of "hierarchy" and/or "structure" in their talk, making references to the "power structure," "patriarchal structure," and "hierarchical structure" of our current society. While participants' accounts were similar in noting the need for structural changes, the extent to which current societal structures were altered in their depictions of utopia varied.

In one version of utopia, espoused by seven participants, structural aspects of our current society were clearly described as problematic and in need of modification. However, they suggested that the problem does not reside in the *existence* of these structures per se, but rather in how they currently operate. For example, they spoke of

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[35] Two additional participants did not explicitly use the language of "equality," but their utopian descriptions were similar in suggesting a broader view of equality than simply equal opportunity. Their talk also seemed to have a relativist feeling to it. One participant did not refer to equality in any manner discernable to me.

"restructuring" organizations to be "more inclusive" and more "accommodating" for everyone. Thus, basic structures such as the judicial system remain in their utopia, but they are significantly modified.

A key word used by three of these participants that seems to capture this view is "incorporate." For example, one participant suggested that in order for law enforcement to become a non-racist institution, more First Nations ideas and practices needed to be "incorporated" into the current system. In this description, the foundational aspects of policing itself remain intact. Similarly, Chris suggested that a non-racist educational system is one that "incorporates a lot of First Nations and Métis content and perspectives." Again, the basic structure of the education system remains outside the bounds of consideration in this view. While courses are tweaked and perhaps new ones added, the basic hierarchical structure of the system, the general philosophy of education underlying the educational system, and the established societal goals of education are left undisturbed. In brief, these descriptions suggest moving towards utopia may require a shift in how things are done within existing systems rather than a fundamental rethinking of structures themselves.

In contrast to this static vision of structure within utopia, three participants (two of whom suggested difference be embraced and equality defined broadly) offered a more radical perspective. They suggested that attaining utopia would require a dismantling of current structures, which they portrayed as inherently hierarchical and racist. However, their accounts did not end with a structure-free society, as references were made to new structures replacing old ones. The new structures were not described in any detail, but participants did point out that they would be decidedly less hierarchical and more inclusive. As Debbie put it, "It doesn't matter where you go, the most open progressive group in the world, you're working in structures." She goes on to say that there is a need to "eliminate" and "kill the structures that are there" so that

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new structures "that are inclusive" can be developed. Diane spoke of utopia in terms of her ideal workplace, explaining that currently "the hierarchy in the structures are very strong." Ideally, she suggests, she would like to see the structure of her organized completely "flattened." In this utopian vision, everyone would "work cooperatively," and receive the same status and pay regardless of their role. In these descriptions, one gets a sense of a radically different society. As Stephanie concludes, "My God, if people didn't have a racist thought in their head, I don't think anything would look like it does right now. It couldn't!"

To illustrate these two positions on structure in utopia, contrast Stephanie's utopian description of the education system below, with Chris's previously described vision in which course content is simply modified to incorporate more Aboriginal material:

Stephanie: Without racism I believe our, you know, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal kids would have the same success level in education because our education level would be run much differently if there was no racism, if there wasn't that assumption of Eurocentric superiority. I don't think our system would look like this.

Vonda: What would it look like?

Stephanie: I think that there would be a breakdown of that hierarchical structure, I think that teachers would have a lot more opportunity for leadership and for decision-making, I think that there would be many more teachers that were from diverse backgrounds….

Vonda: So would you say not as hierarchical, in terms of the administrative level?

Stephanie: Absolutely. And the power. The power, top down. It's very Eurocentric and very male-dominated. … and maybe we'd even change the way we think about education because now we have education so that, you know, each subject is quartered off and isolated and maybe we'd have more holistic-type learning, and maybe we'd actually take an opportunity to look at some of these other cultures throughout time and look at how they've educated their generations and in what ways they did it. … And so I think that system would completely dissolve itself if there were no racism because of course those judgments and assumptions about superiority would be gone, and we'd be so open to so many different types of systems of learning, and systems of thinking and ideas.

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One participant spoke about structure and hierarchy in a unique manner that bears noting. Structure and hierarchy were apparent in Grace's description of a non-racist society, but in using these concepts she ascribed new meanings. She explained that she is uncomfortable with a "more hierarchical kind of a model of running an organization" in which being higher in the hierarchy is associated with a "sense of authority." She goes on to say, "I don't see it that way," explaining that ideally "if you're higher up in that hierarchy you just serve more people." Thus, in this vision of utopia hierarchy remains, but its meaning changes as it becomes associated with a sense of power reversal.

5.1.3 Versions of Utopia

In noting the various dualities in participants' depictions of a non-racist society, it seems that two distinct models of utopia are produced. While this may have been apparent in reading *across* participants' descriptions, this does not mean each participant's account necessarily fits neatly into one category. Still, certain patterns could be seen. For ease of later discussion, I have labeled these two utopias generically as version #1 and version #2 below.

Version #1. Six participants described a utopia in consistent terms as a place where difference is passively accepted, equality is defined in terms of equal opportunity, and current structures are moderately modified. Participants' tone in describing this utopia was somber, and the focus of their talk tended to be reactive rather than proactive. That is, they described utopia in relation to current society, emphasizing that in an ideal society there would be an *absence* or *removal* of the current negative affect towards, and behaviours directed at, racialized people. Thus, it seemed racialized people were portrayed as the primary beneficiaries of a non-racist society.

Version #2. Four other participants' utopian descriptions held together to produce a different utopia that was described less in direct relation to current society, suggesting a more proactive stance. In this vision, difference was something to be actively embraced; equality was broadly defined; and current structures were radically altered. [36] In contrast to the somber tone noted in the first version of utopia, I sensed a feeling of excitement and anticipation in this talk. Rather than focusing on the absence of negative factors, the focus seemed to be on possibilities and what *could be.* In this utopia, society as a whole seemed to benefit from the absence of racism.

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Following their descriptions of a non-racist society, I asked participants about the achievability of this goal. Despite the different visions of utopia described above, participants' responses were nearly identical: they all suggested that while the total eradication of racism from society may be unachievable and society as a whole may not be transformed, these goals could be met on a smaller scale within particular contexts. For example, several participants identified particular structures in society, such as workplaces, that they argued could be transformed in keeping with their utopian vision. As Cathy noted in talking about her church, "I don't live with the belief that all these systems will be changed, maybe never, but I live with the belief that true community can exist <u>within</u> churches. … And maybe not in ways that are dominant, but … in how a particular congregation works." There was no indication in their talk that participants felt a sense of despair in the recognition that their idealized vision of society may not come to full fruition. Rather, it seemed that these visions functioned as

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[36] While these four descriptions were highly similar, only one of them presented utopia in precisely these terms. Each of the other three descriptions varied slightly on one of these themes. For example, one presented difference as something to be both accepted *and* actively sought. Still, taken together they suggest to me a distinct vision of utopia.

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a source of energy and inspiration for them in their efforts to fight racism within

particular localized contexts.

5.1.4 <u>Reading Participants' Utopia Through the Lens of Structure and Communitas</u>

Turner's (1969) conceptualization of society in terms of structure and

communitas offers a useful framework for making sense of participants' utopian

constructions. Turner (1969) theorizes that structure and communitas together "make

up one stream of life" (p. 140) in society, and suggests that individuals move back and

forth between these two worlds in their many forms. Turner summarizes the

relationship between structure and a particular form of communitas as follows:

> Spontaneous communitas is richly charged with affects, mainly pleasurable
> ones. Life in 'structure' is filled with objective difficulties: decisions have to be
> made, inclinations sacrificed to the wishes and needs of the group, and physical
> and social obstacles overcome at some personal cost. Spontaneous
> communitas has something 'magical' about it. Subjectively there is in it the
> feeling of endless power. But this power untransformed cannot readily be
> applied to the organizational details of social existence. It is no substitute for
> lucid thought and sustained will. On the other hand, structural action swiftly
> becomes arid and mechanical if those involved in it are not periodically
> immersed in the regenerative abyss of communitas. (p. 139)

Using this theoretical lens, consider participants' descriptions of an ideal, non-

racist society in contrast with their previous depictions of Saskatchewan society (e.g.,

in terms of a racial hierarchy, the oppression of various groups based on gender,

sexual identity, disability, class, ethnicity and culture). When set directly beside each

other, the differences suggest we might understand these two portraits in simple terms

as communitas versus structure. However, upon closer consideration, it seems the

different versions of utopia produced by participants may better be understood as

incorporating to varying extents aspects of both structure *and* communitas.

In order to identify themes in keeping with the notion of communitas in

participants' talk, note Turner's (1969) elaboration on its key characteristics:

> …such universal human values as peace and harmony between all men,
> fertility, health of mind and body, universal justice, comradeship and

brotherhood between all men, the equality before God, the law or the life force of men and women, young and old, and persons of all races and ethnic groups. And of especial importance in all these utopian formulations is the persisting adhesion between equality and absence of property. (p. 134)[37]

While references to "harmony," "justice," "equality" resonate to some extent with all participants' descriptions of a non-racist society, they seem particularly relevant to the second version of utopia described.

Still, no utopian portrayals offered by participants fit perfectly with Turner's depiction of communitas. Specifically, elements of structure were apparent in participants' talk of *changing* structures, rather than doing away with them completely. Just as the second version of utopia seems to fit better with the notion of communitas, the first version can be seen as a better fit with Turner's description of structure given the relatively minimal adjustments demanded of current structures.

What can be concluded regarding these visions of a non-racist society that can be conceived as incorporating elements of both structure and communitas? First, these utopian visions, which might best be framed as visions of structure purified, appear to serve a function of communitas in the apparent regenerative power in them to inspire and motivate participants in their anti-racism efforts. Second, these visions seem to suggest a pragmatic and grounded quality to my participants: while they are speaking of ideals, their visions of utopia at the same time are rooted firmly in their lived experience. That is, they tend to describe utopia not in abstract terms as a world utterly detached from reality, but rather in relation to particular contexts of their lives, such as their workplace or community. Thus, while participants suggest an entirely non-racist society may be unattainable, they are able to transform their utopian vision into a form that *is* deemed attainable.

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[37] While Turner's reference to "brotherhood" and "equality before God" may not sound like an inclusive utopia to modern ears, we must recall that these writings are the product of a different era. Rather than discard Turner's utopia outright based on modern sensitivities, I would argue that we should interpret his meaning using more inclusive language that better depicts equality between all people.

5.2 <u>Anti-Racism Approaches</u>

Against the backdrop of their ideal end points (i.e., their utopia), participants' proposed approaches for moving towards this goal can be considered. In outlining their general approach to fighting racism, four distinct approaches to anti-racism emerged. While each participant's description of their approach can be read to align itself *primarily* with one of these four approaches, five participants' descriptions are best understood as a combination of two of them. Still, in each case, participants' descriptions seem to draw exclusively upon these four, seemingly cohesive, approaches to anti-racism.

In addition to describing their own approach to fighting racism, participants were also asked to identify other anti-racism approaches of which they were aware. In reviewing this data, the same four general approaches were identified. However, what is interesting is that the manner in which each approach was described varied considerably depending on whether the person was speaking as an insider or an outsider to that approach. Given that participants seemed to be speaking about similar phenomena from very different perspectives, the contrast in their portrayals produces a kaleidoscope-type image. In this section I attempt to portray both the ways in which participants' views converge and diverge by offering both insider as well as various outsider perspectives on each of these four approaches.

In order to organize this material, some sort of labeling is necessary. However, given that most participants do not explicitly name their approach, my doing so poses a challenge. I have opted throughout this section to use labels based on a recurring word or theme in participants' 'insider' descriptions, resulting in the following categories: the

moral approach (n=5), the pragmatic approach (n=2), the helping approach (n=4), and the cultural approach (n=1).[38]

5.2.1 The Moral Approach

The Proponents' Perspective. Five participants (i.e., Grace, Stephanie, Tom, Debbie, and Margaret) described their general approach to anti-racism in highly similar terms that I refer to as the moral approach, given the emphasis on 'right' and 'wrong' in their talk.[39] (This might alternately have been labeled the Martin Luther King approach, given that each of these participants referred to him and to the civil rights movement as key influences in their approach to anti-racism.) They portrayed their approach to anti-racism in highly aggressive terms, which seemed to suggest a fight between good and evil, and the word "justice" appeared frequently in their talk. In their descriptions, these participants used a tone that I would characterize as more harsh and absolute than the tone used by participants in describing other approaches. In line with this portrayal, the characteristics that they emphasized as important in the fight against racism included: strength in the face of opposition, a refusal to compromise on principles, and a 'direct' approach to fighting racism "head on." One participant summarized this as a "hard-hitting" approach. Tom illustrates several of these points in the excerpt, in which he refers to a friend after whom he says he has modeled his own approach to anti-racism. Note how this friend's directness, stubbornness, and unwillingness to compromise are portrayed as positive characteristics:

> Some people did just <u>very</u> much dislike her, and some people really liked her. There was very little in between, because when you're in a battle like that, she was <u>direct</u> … and that upset some people.… [Another friend] described her as having the 'sisoo spirit' … which he said means, "stubborn beyond all reason" *(chuckles)*, and he saw that as a very <u>good</u> thing – could be very difficult to live with too, *(chuckles)* and be around. And that's what some people found too in

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[38] 'n' indicates the number of participants whose descriptions suggest it is their *primary* approach to anti-racism.

[39] A general moralistic flavour was also evident in the talk of two other participants whose overall descriptions were more in line with the helping approach described below.

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meetings, I saw that she would not, in lots of cases, compromise on issues, that if there was racism you confront it wherever it is. … I think that's part of what she believed and I certainly believe that now too.

The Critics' Perspective. In contrast, four participants (i.e., Jeff, Diane, Chris, and Kelly) criticized the moral approach. Though they did not label it as such, they described an approach to anti-racism that sounded to me like the moral approach viewed from a different perspective. Specifically, they described an approach that was abrasive and harsh, and that approached racism from a negative perspective that focused overly on "problems" rather than on "successes" or "opportunities." They suggested this approach was largely ineffective in reducing racism because, as Kelly put it, "I just see that as turning so many people away … It builds up walls rather than taking them down." Diane similarly notes that when people come in "pointing the finger," others "get defensive or they get angry." Two participants suggested this approach was overused and had little new to offer to the practice of anti-racism. As Jeff put it, "We've heard it a lot already, a thousand times … And there's not a whole lot of solutions or proposals that come along with it, it's just, 'this is bad, this is bad, this is bad.'" It seems that what is conceived by some participants as being strong, true, and forcefully fighting injustice; may be conceived by others as being either ineffective or doing more harm than good.

5.2.2   The Pragmatic Approach

The Proponents' Perspective. Jeff and Kelly described their approach to anti-racism in highly similar terms, both emphasizing their pragmatic focus.[40] While neither Jeff nor Kelly denied moral imperatives for fighting racism, the approach they outlined seemed to be guided first and foremost by pragmatic arguments. In contrast to the moral approach, the tone of this talk was highly optimistic and upbeat. Jeff referred to his approach as "solution based," and both participants suggested it is a "new" way to

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[40] Two other participants also made passing reference to pragmatic elements in their approach.

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fight racism. They pointed out that if people are offended they will not be motivated to listen or change; thus, their stated goal is to present the message of anti-racism in such a way that it will be more palatable and less threatening to the dominant White society. To that end, they noted the importance of making their message positive and inclusive, and emphasizing the pragmatic benefits for the dominant group in improving the lives of racialized people.[41]

For example, both Jeff and Kelly claimed that they avoid using the word 'racism' given its negative focus, and rather emphasize 'diversity', a concept that Kelly says allows for a "broader perspective." Furthermore, rather than emphasizing the cost of racism to racialized people, Jeff explained the need to focus on "success stories" as a way of inspiring further successes. Similarly, Kelly said that he views his approach as a "win-win model" that is "benefiting everybody." Both Jeff and Kelly spoke of anti-racism with reference to a business model, noting the need to emphasize the "bottom line" benefits of diversity in order to "sell" their anti-racism message. Jeff summarizes key aspects of this approach:

> Of <u>course</u> there are problems, and there are still sort of issues about access and education and content, but I would never change my way. … I think the more we're optimistic about the future and promote the good things, share them, tell the counter narrative to that which is in the newspapers and on the radio and in people's minds, about how things <u>are</u> working well, that we <u>can</u> get together and do things successfully, that there are ways of overcoming racism and prejudice, then I'll continue to do that. … We need to figure out pragmatically solutions to the problems, and we have to build on the good things as quickly as we can.

<u>The Critics' Perspective.</u> Joan and Debbie were highly critical of an approach to racism that one referred to as "the corporate model" and the other described as "the

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[41] Interestingly, what these participants refer to as a "new" approach is very similar to the strategy that the Spanish conquistador Las Casas is described as taking in the 15th century (Todorov, 1984). In his efforts to improve the treatment of indigenous peoples, Las Casas made the case to the king of Spain that it would be in the best economic interests of Spain to treat them humanely.

business model." In both cases, these participants criticized what they saw as an approach that relied too heavily on presenting anti-racism narrowly as financially beneficial to White people. Joan described people working from the perspective of the "business model" as taking the view "We value diversity because it makes us more money!," while Debbie pointed out, "It doesn't grasp the human aspect of it."

Both participants pointed out that this approach is not merely ineffective at addressing racism, but it may increase problems given its inadequacy in addressing the complexities of racism. As Joan complained, "I've had to go in too often and clean up after them." Contrasting this approach with her own, she says, "We don't give the easy answer; we don't give them a quick fix."

Debbie added that she is critical of an approach that focuses on "diversity" rather than on more directly emphasizing issues of inequity. In contrast to Kelly's stated preference for the broad and inoffensive language of "diversity," and his emphasis on presenting it in terms of benefiting everybody, note Debbie's harsh critique of this approach:

Debbie: Diversity. It's a <u>corporate</u> word, it only fulfills … the needs of a corporation.

Vonda: How so?

Debbie: Versus looking at, looking at groups of people or individuals as, first of all human beings, and providing them human services and human resources. … They'll argue … it's <u>expansive</u> way of looking at equity. To me that's a diversion. … It's a watered down version of what should be equity. You know, equity is very clear. And people don't <u>like</u> the word equity. They get <u>nervous</u>.

(Later in the interview…)

Vonda: So why does 'equity' make people feel uncomfortable?

Debbie: … It will just invoke such <u>hatred</u> in some cases, and others <u>resentment</u> and <u>anger</u> and, you know. It's just, it's <u>unbelievable</u>. So, <u>hence</u>, I think the corporate model stuff, "Mmm, this equity thing isn't really working, let's call it diversity." Maybe next week they'll call it something else. Call it what it is! You know, but people need to be on an equal playing field.

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Interestingly, what could be read as more broadly inclusive from one perspective, is here interpreted as "watered down", while a goal of being pragmatic seems here to be reframed as wishy-washy.

5.2.3   The Helping Approach

The Proponents' Perspective. Diane, Joan, Chris, and Cathy outlined their general approach to anti-racism in similar terms that emphasized the notion of helping.[42] Joan eloquently describes this approach:

Joan: I feel like there are very <u>few</u> of us really, doing this work here. <u>Very</u> few. 'Us' being anybody – by no means am I just talking about White change agents – people who are approaching change from a helping perspective. And it's the psychological influence. It's so different than doing this … from a business model. They're <u>not</u> doing it from a helping model, from a human relations model, and it's <u>very</u> different *(chuckles)*. <u>Very</u> different.

Vonda: So how is it different?

Joan: There's a continuum, I've found. … In broad brush strokes, on the one hand I would describe the human relations perspective as "This is about doing the <u>right</u> thing by people."… This is what I would identify with.

The remaining three participants did not as explicitly label their approach, but their use of words like "support," "assist," and "act as a resource" in their descriptions also suggest a helping focus. In their talk, helping was typically operationalized in terms of "removing barriers" to success and working to create accepting environments that are welcoming of diversity. One participant referred to this as a "liberal" approach.

The Critics' Perspective. Four other participants (i.e., Stephanie, Tom, Grace, and Debbie) described what sounded like a similar approach to anti-racism, but did so from an outsider's perspective. They spoke of an approach that, while based on good intentions, was seriously flawed. For example, two individuals emphasized the

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[42] Margaret's approach, described as primarily in keeping with the moral approach, also seemed to incorporate a focus on helping that was similar to these participants.

paternalistic flavour of a helping approach, as Stephanie illustrates in talking about

anti-racism in the context of the classroom:

> I think that the one thing I struggle with the most is that even people that work
> <u>really</u> hard to try to fight racism and want nothing more than to help all of their
> students, doesn't matter who they are, there is still this sort of we-they attitude.
> It's like "They're <u>different</u> than us. We need to give them a leg up." It's a
> paternalistic kind of attitude. It's like, "Oh, we need to help those poor people,"
> and that irritates me too.

Interestingly, both Stephanie and Tom (both of whom were speaking from

positions I have labeled the moral approach) also used the word "liberal" in their

descriptions of an approach focused on helping Others, but they used the word in a

derogatory sense. That is, they emphasized that "liberals," or those whom Tom

alternately referred to as "people that see themselves as more progressive," are too

concerned about being viewed as "nice" and maintaining a certain image: "People …

that kind of want to get along with everyone and they've still got their … friends, but

want to be anti-racism fighters … but don't want to really get people mad." He

concludes, "You don't have to be obnoxious to people but you <u>can't</u> be seen as nice to

everyone." "Liberals" are further described by these two critics as "picking and

choosing" their fights, not taking the issue of racism seriously enough, and being

unwilling to make the sacrifices that a deep commitment to the work of anti-racism

demands. As Tom explains, "So some people I think come into anti-racism work seeing

it as sort of a pastime, and "We can get involved and, you know, if we don't get

involved this week, you know, maybe we could help out with that next week." ... But in

the meantime … someone dies."

5.2.4   <u>The Cultural Approach</u>

At some point in the interview, all participants referenced an approach to racism

that emphasized a need to increase people's awareness, acceptance, or knowledge of

different cultures (culture being typically defined in rather narrow terms as food, dance,

and language). Furthermore, most participants suggested that this focus is incorporated to some extent in their anti-racism approach. However, within the context of specifically outlining their own and others' approaches to anti-racism, only Liz described her approach as *primarily* focused on increasing cross-cultural awareness and interaction.[43] Four participants explicitly noted and criticized an approach that focuses on culture in isolation, or as a primary approach to addressing racism. It is these explicitly stated views regarding a cultural approach that were made within the context of describing their own and others' approaches that I consider in this section.

The Proponent's Perspective. Given that Liz alone described her approach as primarily focused on culture, it is only fitting that her own words be used in presenting her perspective. In the excerpt below, note the rationale offered for approaching anti-racism using a cultural lens:

> *Liz*: I'm a strong believer … if we <u>celebrate</u> our cultures we <u>reduce </u>racism. And if we can celebrate our cultures together we can end racism faster.
>
> *Vonda*: So, just to interrupt for a second. Would that be a way to summarize your approach?
>
> *Liz*: Ya, I think so. Ya. Ya, because if we can celebrate our cultures together we're gonna <u>reduce</u> racism.
>
> *Vonda*: So what is it about celebrating each others' cultures that leads to the reduction of racism?
>
> *Liz*: Well, it's fun. And if I can be your brother or your sister or I can be your friend, I'm not as likely to speak out against you or lash out against you. … If you <u>celebrate</u> your cultures together, have <u>fun</u> together, share food, you know, share dancing. … It's a very <u>powerful</u> experience.

The Critics' Perspective. Critics of the cultural approach (i.e., Stephanie, Debbie, Kelly, and Cathy) suggested that while an emphasis on culture may be useful to the purposes of anti-racism, an exclusive focus on culture is problematic. They

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[43] One other participant, who described her work primarily in terms of helping, also noted the importance of increasing cultural awareness and cross-cultural interaction in describing her approach.

describe the cultural approach as potentially "harmful" in that it masks other important issues at play in racism. For example, Stephanie points out that this approach does not take into account the operation of "systems of oppression," while Debbie's comments below suggests that it trivializes difference and fails to adequately address racism:

> We call it the – and we do it quite sarcastically, the group of women I know – we call it, "wine, women, dance and song." You know, it's all about culture … That's how it's felt, and the phrase is usually used which is very derogatory "Why don't you women bring your costumes and come on out. Dress up in your little frivolity gear, you know, whether it's your sari or your Ukrainian dance outfit or your Aboriginal – you know you could set up a tipi and that would be really cool and whatever." You know? Or "Dance around the pow wow trail," you know, "And put your jingle dress on, and we'll take a couple of snapshots for the tourists and off you go," you know. I mean, at the end of that – I mean it's great, I mean, not to belittle, there's a wonderful opportunity for socializing and sharing each other's food – it's <u>not</u> all about that though, you know. It's <u>not</u> all about that.

<div align="center">*****</div>

In reflecting upon participants' constructions of their own and others' general approaches to anti-racism, several observations bear noting. First, these approaches can be compared to Lynch's (1997) broad distinction between the moral and pragmatic approaches described in the literature review. What I have labeled as the moral approach and the pragmatic approach are very similar to what Lynch describes using the same terminology. While Lynch's schema includes only two approaches to anti-racism, what I have referred to as the cultural and the helping approaches are related to his description of the pragmatic approach in that both of them tend to emphasize positive and upbeat messages, and each attempts to address racism in such a way as to minimize White resistance. Like Lynch, several participants observed a recent trend in which moral-based approaches are being replaced by more pragmatic-type approaches to addressing racism in society. The similarity among participants' descriptions, as well as the similarity between their descriptions and Lynch's

observations, suggests a possible connection between my participants and a broader anti-racism movement that is not confined to Saskatchewan.

Second, I noticed that in describing their own approach to anti-racism, most participants did so in a manner that relied upon another approach for contrasting purposes; a contrast typically based upon a good/bad dichotomy. That is, one's own approach was portrayed as superior in relation to another approach that was positioned on the dimension in question, as inferior. Thus, despite the frequent comments suggesting the need for a variety of approaches to fighting racism, other approaches were presented in highly critical terms. Indeed, the Us-Them dichotomy was thoroughly entrenched in their descriptions.

Finally, in arguing for the superiority of their own approach, all participants used an effectiveness criterion in making their case. Even proponents of the moral approach, whose arguments were clearly based upon moral reasoning, relied upon pragmatic evaluations of effectiveness to validate and defend their stance. Thus, all participants argued that their particular approach was superior to other approaches because it offered the most hope for concretely reducing racism in society.

5.3 Discourses of Anti-Racism

In addition to the four broadly cohesive conceptualizations of anti-racism that were produced in participants' explicit identification of approaches, metaphorical references sprinkled throughout their talk of their anti-racism involvements suggested a broader range of discursive tools were relied upon in their construals of anti-racism. While not presented by participants as intact frameworks for understanding anti-racism, as I read *across* participants' varied accounts of their experiences, the images that were evoked through their use of metaphors suggested four distinct discourses of anti-

racism.[44] I have labeled these as the discourses of economics, warfare, culture-learning, and law enforcement. Prior to considering each of these discourses, a few preliminary comments are in order.

First, there are clearly links between the use of these discourses and the approaches claimed by participants: those who described their approach in a certain manner also tended to rely upon certain discourses more than others. [45] Still, what is noteworthy is that most participants drew, to varying degrees, upon *all* of these discourses in discussing their involvement in anti-racism. Thus, while a participant may have stated that she was opposed to a militant approach to anti-racism, she might still draw upon the language of warfare in her talk.

Second, there was no apparent connection between participants' professional identities and their preferred discourse. For example, one participant working in law enforcement drew heavily on the economic discourse and very little on the discourse of law enforcement, while a social worker relied heavily on the language of warfare in talking about anti-racism.

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[44] To avoid confusion, it is important to note that in this context I use the term 'discourse' not in a Foucauldian sense:

> Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others. (Hall, 2001, p. 72)

Rather than referring to the sweeping, collective and dominant ways in which a particular social object or practice (e.g., sexuality, race, etc.) can be conceptualized within a specific historical and societal context, my usage of 'discourses' is in keeping with what Wetherell and Potter (1992) refer to as "interpretive repertoires"; that is, "broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images" (p. 90). Wetherell and Potter go on to explain that in contrast to Foucault's general disinterest in "actual linguistic performance," they emphasize "discourse as social practice, on the context of use and thus on the act of discursive instatiation" (p. 90). Like Wetherell and Potter, my interest in this section is on exploring the kinds of discursive tools used by participants in their various constructions of anti-racism.

[45] The distinction I make between approaches and discourses is somewhat problematic in that it relies upon a rather artificial demarcation. That is, participants' descriptions of approaches can also be read as suggesting particular discourses of anti-racism. However, to distinguish between those explicitly presented frameworks and the images that were evoked in other contexts of their talk, I refer to the first as 'approaches' and the second as 'discourses'.

Finally, the status of my interpretive voice in this section requires comment. While this entire thesis can be viewed as a co-construction between me and participants, in this section I take a more active role in the construction of meaning. In presenting data regarding participants' stated approach to anti-racism, I attempted to simply organize participants' explicit answers to a particular question. In this section my meaning is imposed upon participants' words to a greater extent, as I attempt to piece together small units of language scattered throughout their discussions into cohesive discursive wholes.

5.3.1 Economic Discourse

Although the two participants whose approach is described as 'pragmatic' tended to rely most heavily on an economic discourse, all participants except one used language that suggested a conceptualization of anti-racism in economic terms. In this framing, racism is a problem that is "costing" us dearly as a society, while anti-racism becomes a valuable product for solving it. For example, as Kelly put it, "We can't keep things the way they are right now because we're paying for it in so many different ways … If someone had the answer [to racism] they could package it and sell it all over the world."

In this discourse, part of the solution to the problem of racism involves recognizing and exploiting the potential economic power of the racialized Other. The racialized Other thus becomes a commodity to be invested in, marketed, and sold to the consumer (i.e., White society). The word "resource" was used frequently in reference to racialized people, and Debbie spoke of a "storehouse" of potential. The image of Other as commodity is also evoked when Grace says "There's a wealth of knowledge! … And so why not be open and recognize … that what is being brought here [i.e., immigrants] helps to provide a service to the whole population that we have."

As the consumer, White people must be "sold" on the potential benefits of ending racism and their "buy-in" must be sought.

The job of selling this commodity falls on the shoulders of anti-racism educators, who are positioned as the marketers and the managers of diversity. They focus their efforts both on selling the product to the White consumer (Kelly: "You're providing them something that they just don't have") and on developing and marketing the product. As Grace put it, "We all work in our own way … How much we'll help to market somebody, to me it depends on what I see the prospects are for that person without that, and if it seems the prospects aren't very good unless I do that then I feel that's part of my role." The "sales pitch" is largely upbeat, focusing on the "value" of diversity and the "benefits" to the consumer of "investing" in diversity. However, there is also a dark side to this discourse, as the potential "costs" associated with *not* investing in racialized people are pointed out. In this scenario, the commodity that could be a source of wealth if managed appropriately, becomes an economic drain on our system if managed inappropriately. As Cathy put it, "The other part that we might talk about is the number of First Nations and Métis Nation people who are in contact with the criminal process in Saskatchewan, and that's very costly."

5.3.2 Warfare Discourse

What I have labeled as the discourse of warfare was most prominent in the talk of participants whose approach was labeled as moral. However, the language of warfare was evident in all participants' talk to varying degrees. The image of warfare is raised in participants' frequent references in their talk of doing anti-racism to "battles," "fights," "allies," "enemies," "victories," "winning and losing," "factions," "defending one's position," "watching your back," "in-fighting between allies," and having appropriate "ammunition" to fight racism. The allusion to warfare suggests it is a classic battle between good and evil. The enemy is racism and those who perpetrate it; anti-racism

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educators and their allies (i.e., anyone willing to fight alongside them) are warriors fighting on the side of truth and justice; the innocent victim in need of protection in this war is the racialized Other.

In this discourse, little is said directly about the racialized Other and subject positions offered must be inferred. The silence surrounding racialized people and the lack of voice attributed to them raises the image in my mind of oppressed captives of an occupied land passively waiting to be freed. While they may be involved in the battle in a peripheral manner, racialized people are positioned as being in need of protection and defending by dominant group members. Margaret's reference to "oppressed … immigrant populations" who "don't have enough energy to barely keep going day-to-day, never mind fight the struggles for equality" illustrates this position; as does Jeff's comment that "I needed to take responsibility for the fight. For helping my [Aboriginal] friends and colleagues who didn't always necessarily have the ability … to be fighting back."

In this discourse, anti-racism educators are offered several related subject positions including warrior, ally to others involved in the broader war against injustice, and military commanders and strategists. In the first instance, anti-racism educators exhibit the characteristics of good warriors in that they are adaptable and cunning, relying upon a variety of techniques on the battlefield. As talented warriors, they adapt their methods to the particular situation, and rely upon a combination of blatant frontal attacks and more subtle backroom strategies. Margaret's description of fighting racism in her workplace illustrates this theme well:

> Well, if it's someone I don't have a read-on yet, you may challenge them on something they've said, but you do it carefully, because you don't know what their reaction is going to be. I mean there's certain people where you have a history where they've made it clear what their opinions are, and they've made it clear that they're open to challenge, you know, so you can jump in with both feet and challenge them.

In the warfare discourse, allies play an important role. The warrior needs to be clear on who is an ally who can be counted on in the dangerous battle against racism. For example, Tom points out that there are people involved in anti-racism that "I wouldn't trust my life to," while Debbie points out that while some people may be "sympathetic" to the cause of anti-racism, "They're not gonna be the one that's running over the hill with you. Don't count on that 'cause they'll be backtracking and you'll lose the war." Participants also positioned themselves as allies to other groups involved in the broader fight against oppression and injustice, as Margaret illustrates below:

> I can be an ally to … the Aboriginal committee, by networking, getting information, sending information out, which will help advance their cause but yet I'm not part of that group. So it's all about networking and kind of helping them increase their network, and just supporting them. … Once you get involved in equity, it doesn't matter which equity group it is, you're going to defend all of them.

In addition to being directly involved in the battle and acting as an ally to other groups, anti-racism educators are also offered the subject position of commander in chief in charge of training and leading the troops. Note this positioning of Self in Stephanie's talk:

> I don't know what my future holds, but I don't think it will be small. I don't think that one classroom at a time is enough for me. I want it to be bigger, and so however I see that manifesting itself. I don't know yet. Maybe teacher education is the key, because then you can send the little soldiers out to the classrooms and they get it, and they've got the consciousness….

5.3.3 Culture-Learning Discourse

Not surprisingly, what I refer to as the culture-learning discourse was most apparent in Liz's talk (she identified her approach as primarily focusing on culture). Still, ten of the twelve participants used the language of culture in their talk of doing anti-racism. Collectively this talk suggests a particular conceptualization of anti-racism with unique subject positions for Self and Other. Given that I have already discussed the general conceptualization of anti-racism as culture learning, here I focus in

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particular on the subject positions in this discourse. To briefly review, in this discourse, racism is grounded in ignorance (primarily cultural ignorance of the racialized Other) and it takes on several forms. In the case of White society, it is viewed as ignorance about the racialized Other; however, in the case of the racialized Other it is viewed as ignorance about *oneself*. Presumably, both forms of ignorance need to be addressed in the work of anti-racism.

Individuals identified as White are offered the simple subject position of learner in this discourse. They are positioned as culturally (and racially) 'neutral'; in merely opening themselves up to learning about the cultural (i.e., racialized) Other their 'tolerance' towards otherness will necessarily increase. In relation to White people, the racialized Other is typically positioned as an effective teaching tool (e.g., the case study) to be used in the education of White people. Specifically, as Cathy illustrates, having them share their culture and their personal and traumatic stories of racism is deemed a highly effective technique in the education of White society: "We agreed at the outset that we wanted to find a way to touch people's hearts, so it needed to be a process that would touch people's hearts. And we achieved that by and large by having refugees and immigrants come in and tell their own stories."

Alternately, racialized people are presented as being culturally 'lost'. The assumption is that if racialized people (i.e., Aboriginal people in particular) are able to 'rediscover' their culture and embrace 'traditional' values, they will reject the vices of modern life that are seen to plague their communities and further the negative stereotypes held by White society. Wetherell and Potter (1992) identify a similar subject position for Maoris in their research on racism in New Zealand. In words that could be written about Aboriginal peoples in Canada, they point out that "Modern urban Maoris are presented as lost and aimless, searching for meaning and structure for their lives, and, in the absence of these things, prone to crime and disorder" (p. 131). They

go on to explain that in this discourse, Maoris are little more than "an empty vessel, waiting to be refilled" (p. 131). Kelly outlines a similar position using the voice of a friend:

> So many First Nations families … don't know who they are. And for him the answer is understanding their spirituality and understanding their culture. They have to know who they are. If you take their, if you give them back their roots you're gonna help solve this problem. If you don't, it's just gonna keep continuing. So his answer is that we have to, as non Native people, understand this. We should know what it's about. And especially if you're an organization such as the police where you're working with First Nations people, you have to understand and know it to an extent so that you can at least offer it.

Not surprisingly, White anti-racism educators are positioned in this discourse as the ones who coordinate all of these educational efforts. In addition to teaching White people about the cultures of the Other, they are positioned to oversee the teaching done by racialized people (e.g., bringing in racialized speakers to share their stories). As illustrated in the above quote of Kelly's, the position of cultural educator can even extend to educating culturally 'lost' racialized people about their own culture.

5.3.4 Anti-racism as Law Enforcement

There are three related discourses that I have grouped together under the heading of law enforcement. These three discourses include: (1) anti-racism as surveillance; (2) anti-racism as policing; (3) anti-racism as a judicial process. While each discourse is able to stand alone, they also work together in suggesting that in order for justice to prevail, racism must be ferreted out and offenders apprehended and prosecuted. In contrast to the other discourses outlined, this conceptualization of anti-racism did not seem to be clearly associated with any particular approach outlined previously, and was widely drawn upon by all but two participants.

As was the case in the discourse of warfare, anti-racism here becomes a fight between the forces of good and evil. However, where the tone in the warfare discourse was highly charged with the emotion of a religious-type war, here the tone is more in

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keeping with the cool and detached logic of the law enforcement world. In framing anti-racism as law enforcement, racism becomes a crime, its perpetrators are positioned as criminals, and anti-racism educators take on subject positions of authority in investigating, policing, and prosecuting the crime of racism. Where is the racialized Other in this talk of surveillance, policing, and the judicial process? The sole subject position offered him is of the silent and passive victim of crime.

As surveillance, the job of anti-racism involves gathering intelligence in order to root out racism wherever it may be hiding. In this framework, the anti-racism educator is involved in covert operations, taking on the role of spy, detective, and investigator. For example, Grace talks of "investigating" whether racism is at play in hiring practices: "Now I've … experimented with this, where people have contacted an employer and have been told there is no job, and I've phoned, and find there is a job. So I have, you know, challenged employers…."

In the discourse of policing, *enforcement* becomes more of a focus and the anti-racism educator takes on the role of police officer in workplaces, elementary schools, and public spaces. For example, Debbie points out that if she hears a racist comment at work, she "corrects it immediately," Chris says "If people throw out racist comments, I don't let them go," and Liz suggests that co-workers modify their racist behaviour in her presence: "People around here always say, 'Well don't say that when Liz's around.'"

In the third sub-discourse, the metaphoric language of a judicial process is drawn upon. In this framework, the values of objectivity, truth and fairness are held in highest regard. Racism is "challenged" using the power of "logic" and argument, and "cases" are made against it. The anti-racism educator takes on various subject positions in this discourse, including that of advocate, prosecutor, defense lawyer, and judge. Note how the image of a judicial process is invoked in the following comments:

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"I want to be better able to argue my points" (Jeff); "My approach is to get all of our evidence, all of our arguments, all of our approaches together, and then do it" (Grace); "I have a sense of justice which is sometimes too strong, because I can't let things go … If I don't think it's fair, like that's a real big issue for me" (Diane).

5.3.5 Commonalities and Differences in Discourses of Anti-Racism

I would argue that the economics, warfare, culture learning, and law enforcement discourses represent common sense understandings of anti-racism in our society. In fact, they seemed so unexceptional to my ear that it was only in the data coding process that I became consciously aware of them. I have encountered these discourses in academic circles, in the media, in everyday conversations, and they are apparent in my own talk during the interviews. In writing this chapter, I realized how difficult it is to talk about anti-racism *without* drawing on the discourses presented here. It seems then, that these discourses are not unique to participants, but rather their use by participants highlights the intersubjectivity of their experience, as they draw upon broadly available discursive resources in their construction of meaning.

While it may make sense that participants would draw upon commonly available discourses to construct meaning, it is less clear why these *particular* discourses were chosen over others. It seems to me that there are other common discourses available that did *not* feature prominently in participants' talk. For example, I found the absence of medical discourse noteworthy. In this familiar discourse, racism is a disease in society, and subject positions of doctor and patient are readily identified. While there were references made to racism 'hurting' us, the discourse as a whole was largely absent. Similarly, sports metaphors that are so common in political talk were rarely used by participants. I also found the absence of unique or unusual discourses to be striking. Given the lofty goal of changing society, I had expected 'new' discourses to emerge that would offer alternative subject positions and different ways to frame the

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issues. Neither were there any discourses that could be tied to the particular locale in which this study was conducted. For example, in our agrarian province, racism might be conceptualized as a weed, sown by racists and threatening to take over the fields of our society. While it is beyond the scope of the present study to conduct such an investigation, it would be interesting to further compare participants' discursive framings of racism and anti-racism with the broader discourses available in mainstream society.

There are also commonalities across the discourses drawn upon by participants that bear noting. Of particular interest to this study is the common pattern of subject positions offered to the Self (as White anti-racism educator) and to the racialized Other. The subject positions for the racialized Other identified in the four discourses presented included commodity, victim, one who is culturally lost, and human teaching aid. Contrast these subject positions with those available to White anti-racism educators in the same discourses: business person (e.g., salesperson, marketer, manager), warrior, military commander, educational coordinator, spy, police officer, and lawyer. In placing these subject positions beside each other in this manner, the contrast is striking. The racialized Other is offered comparatively few positions, and each can be interpreted as weak, passive, and silent. The positions available to Self are markedly more diverse, and each suggests a position of power and prestige. I am certainly not suggesting that drawing upon discourses that imply strong-weak subject positions reflects any innate or personal characteristics of my participants (e.g., a sense of superiority or a disrespect of the racialized Other). In fact, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter, participants' descriptions of their actual relationships with various racialized Others suggests they are often based upon a strong sense of egalitarianism. However, it is precisely these types of seeming contradictions that

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make their experience so intriguing to study, and discourage us from too quickly drawing simple conclusions.

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An interesting portrait of participants emerges in comparing and contrasting the various aspects of their experience discussed in this chapter. First, compare participants' explicit descriptions of their approaches to anti-racism, to their use of metaphors in describing their anti-racist practice. While an Us-Them based on a good/bad dichotomy was evident in participants' descriptions of approaches to fighting racism, a similar Us-Them distinction was not apparent in their metaphoric references to economics, warfare, culture-learning, and law enforcement. Rather, the Us-Them distinction implied in these discourses was between the strong anti-racism educator Self and the weak racialized Other. Second, note the contrast between the discursive positioning of a strong Self in relation to a weak racialized Other, and the theme of equality in participants' utopian descriptions. While participants explicitly described ideal relationships as being characterized by equality, they also relied upon discourses that imply inequality in the subject positions made available for Self and Other.

Veyne's (1988) theory of programs of truths once again appears relevant to making sense of these data, as the distinctions and contradictions noted can be understood in terms of participants living in multiple lifeworlds that operate according to distinct programs of truth. However, in this instance, it seems appropriate to combine this theoretical interpretation with Levi-Strauss' (1966, as cited in Crotty, 1998) concept of bricoleur. As Crotty explains, in constructing meaning, bricoleurs are not "straitjacketed by the conventional meanings we have been taught to associate with the object" (p. 51); rather, they use the various resources available to them to cobble together meaning in new ways to serve specific purposes. The pragmatic flavour of their talk (e.g., in their descriptions of utopia and in their assessments of anti-racism

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approaches based on measures of effectiveness) also fits with this image of bricoleur as practical and resourceful. Viewed as bricoleurs, participants can be understood as skillfully drawing upon the discursive resources at their disposal to creatively construct worlds of meaning that serve particular functions and enable them to carry out their work of anti-racism.

PART III: THE PRACTICE OF ANTI-RACISM

Of key importance to this study on moral experience is understanding anti-racism not only in terms of an ideology held, but as a way of life and a practice in which participants are actively involved. Whereas in the previous chapter I considered how participants construct anti-racism in terms of their ideas and ideals, in the following three chapters I consider their accounts of actually *doing* anti-racism. In outlining their anti-racism involvements, participants described not only educational efforts, but also efforts to advocate and provide support for racialized people, as well as efforts to change racist structures in society.[46] In each of these three broad domains, they described a different primary target of their efforts (i.e., White society, racialized people, and societal structures respectively) and particular tasks in which they were involved. They also spoke about distinct issues, challenges, successes, and feelings that were associated with each of these three spheres of involvement. Based on these distinctions, I have organized this section of the thesis into three chapters that consider separately each of these three areas of anti-racism involvement.

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[46] Several discussions from previous chapters are relevant to the following three chapters. First, recall that the main criterion for considering an activity as an anti-racism initiative in this study was *participants'* framing it as such, rather than my assessment of it in those terms. Second, in making sense of participants' anti-racism efforts, it is useful to keep in mind participants' broad and varied understandings of racism and anti-racism described in the previous chapters. Finally, for a discussion of varied contextual factors relevant to participants' anti-racism involvements, the reader is directed back to chapter three (i.e., 3.5.2).

6. EDUCATING WHITE PEOPLE

In this chapter I consider educational efforts described as by participants as directed at dominant group members (i.e., White people). While participants' accounts suggested that most of their educational efforts focus on White people, some of them also spoke of their efforts to educate racialized people. Given that the focus in these two forms of education is distinctly different, and since the latter relates more to participants' general efforts to 'help' the racialized Other, it will be discussed in the following chapter.

When specifically asked to describe their anti-racism work, participants tended to focus on their formal educational involvements, such as offering courses, workshops, or presentations; however, woven throughout the interviews were also references to the ways in which they are continually involved in educating White people in their daily encounters. In organizing the data, I have distinguished between participants' accounts of anti-racism education that occur informally and spontaneously in their daily life, and their descriptions of planned specific educational initiatives that occur in more formal contexts.

6.1 Educating in the Context of Everyday Life

All the participants suggested that they work to educate family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, clients or even strangers about issues relating to racism whenever the opportunity arises. The centrality of educating people about racism in the contexts of their daily lives was expressed most succinctly by Liz: "You have to continually, it doesn't matter to me if you're in the coffee room here at work, it's always. I feel like I'm always in the role of an educator." Participants offered many illustrations

of what educating others looked like in their daily lives. For example, Kelly stated that

he uses every opportunity he has in social settings to help clarify misconceptions

regarding Aboriginal issues, while Chris said that he has used Jim Pankiw handouts to

initiate discussions with neighbours about racism.[47] As Chris explained, "I'm an

educator in a school setting. But whenever I can do that with other people in a

community then I'm always open to doing that too – be it at my neighbor's or attending

conferences…." Within the workplace, Stephanie described having conversations with

her teacher-colleagues about systemic racism in the hope of educating them on the

issues. Cathy similarly noted instances in which she sought to educate her clients:

> Some of the clients [that] come here … they out and out refer to somebody as "the one that has the accent," or "the one who has the funny name," and that's a put-down in many ways. And so there's a lot of just education in terms of repeating back to people like, "This is the person's name. Does that sound like who it was you talked to before?"

In listening to participants' stories of spontaneously educating people in their

daily lives, I noted a tone of heaviness in their voices that suggested a sense of

obligation and responsibility in carrying out this work. As Debbie's comments suggest,

this heaviness seemed to be related to both the perceived magnitude of the job to

educate others, and the sense of futility in their efforts:

> You get tired of educating people. You know, I love educating, like I love education, I love learning myself, anything that I can learn. But you <u>do</u> get tired of it. It becomes quite a <u>burden</u>. And then you, I know I personally sometimes feel like "What's the <u>point</u>?" I mean, there's no educating people because they have their <u>beliefs</u> and they're gonna go back and they're gonna have their same redneck conversation in the next five minutes, as soon as you're not at the table and they feel safe to do so, you know, around the corner. So what the point of spending energy on it?

Several participants suggested that educating people in everyday contexts can

lead to a sense of isolation, as they find themselves at times socially rejected for their

efforts. For example, Tom described how he was hurt when someone he had

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[47] Jim Pankiw is a local politician who has, on several occasions, distributed pamphlets outlining his controversial views regarding race and race relations.

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considered a friend had referred to him as "too radical" for sharing his views on racism so openly. Stephanie told the story of how she had been "shocked" by the racist comments of acquaintances at a social gathering. In response, she says she got on her anti-racism "soapbox" and did "a lot of talking" while her acquaintances did a lot of "wide-eyed listening." She concludes of that experience, "Afterwards it was uncomfortable." While she said she did not regret having spoken out, she concedes that "Sometimes I get too self-righteous, and that doesn't win friends." To be clear, this apparent tone of heaviness and obligation should not be interpreted as an indication of moral uncertainty. If anything, it seems to suggest moral *certainty*, as participants were unanimous in their view that racist behaviors *must* be addressed despite any discomfort they might have in doing so.

In these stories of participants' attempts to educate people in the context of their daily lives, their efforts are described as a response to a racist action (e.g., a racist comment). Interestingly, when education was *not* described as a direct response to perceived racism, the tone of participants' talk was more positive, and educating was portrayed more as an opportunity and as a privilege than as a responsibility. This distinction in tone is illustrated in comparing participants' talk of educating different groups of family members, in particular, parents and siblings versus their own offspring. All but four participants mentioned instances in which they have attempted to educate parents or siblings; to varying degrees, the heavy tone of obligation can be read in all these accounts. However, when participants spoke from the position of a *parent*, and described educating their *own* children and step-children about racism (which all nine participants who were parents did), the tone of their comments was markedly different. In these instances, education was not presented as a response to a racist action; rather, they spoke enthusiastically and framed these efforts as wonderful opportunities to work proactively in *preventing* racism. In the two excerpts below, this

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contrast between educating other family members and educating one's own children is illustrated by Joan:

> I no longer even try with my mother. 80 years old. I've not been successful in changing her perspective on any number of issues, why would I expect to on this one (laughter). My head says she shouldn't be off the hook though, you know? So while I might not actively educate her, or push in the way I used to about those sorts of issues, I do make a point talking with her....

> It's really neat as a parent, I think that's probably where I feel the best about it, because I'm setting the norms.

6.2 Providing Educational Services

In addition to educating others in the contexts of everyday life, 11 participants suggested that educating White people in a more systematic fashion was an important aspect of their formal anti-racism efforts.[48] Participants outlined four distinct types of educational efforts: (1) training workshops focused directly on addressing racism; (2) formal presentations offered to groups or organizations; (3) academic courses and workplace training initiatives that incorporate education on racism; (4) organizing community cultural events.

Training Workshops. When I first conceived of this research project, I envisioned interviewing individuals whose primary occupation involved the facilitation of anti-racism workshops. Clearly, my expectations were misguided; only four participants reported developing workshops designed specifically to address racism, and in none of these cases was this work described as a primary focus in their employment. Based on the kinds of workshops I read about in the literature, I had also anticipated descriptions of hard-hitting sessions that were focused explicitly on challenging racism and that were designed to have White participants 'experience'

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[48] Tom was the exception in that he said he was not involved in any formal teaching activities. However, Tom did speak of informally weaving education into his work in advocacy, and noted that in the future he would like to become more involved in teaching and mentoring young people interested in becoming involved in the work of anti-racism.

racism through simulation exercises. Indeed, these were not the kinds of workshops that participants described.

Of the four participants who spoke of providing workshops, two of them were involved in the development and facilitation of the same diversity workshop, designed for employees of a large organization (i.e., primarily White males).[49] Given the size of the organization and the fact that attendance was mandatory for all employees, numerous sessions of the multi-day workshop were offered. These sessions were carried out over a period of several years. One of these participants worked as a member of the organization for which the training was being developed, while the second participant was one of several people involved in the project as an outsider. Both individuals were involved in the planning of the workshop and facilitated parts of it. The workshop was designed to educate employees on issues relating to the experiences of First Nations and Métis peoples, refugees and immigrants, gays and lesbians, and senior citizens. Methods employed reportedly included short lectures by a variety of speakers, experiential exercises, demonstrations, and group discussions.

The other two participants designed and facilitated what they referred to as "cross-cultural awareness training." [50] These participants also shared an institutional connection in that they both offered this training through the same organization, albeit at different times and independently of each other. While neither of these participants was currently involved in facilitating workshops, both explained that in previous years they had trained community volunteers interested in working with immigrant and

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[49] On occasion, I have opted to use neither participants' pseudonyms nor the names of organizations in presenting participants' involvements if I felt these omissions would be necessary to protect participants' identities. While this choice may result in some awkwardness in writing style, in my opinion it is a necessary precautionary step if confidentiality is to be maintained.

[50] A third participant also stated that she had been quite involved in offering cross-cultural workshops in the past. However, as she did not discuss these workshops in any detail, I have not included her in this discussion.

refugee populations; they had also provided workshops to community organizations at their request. These workshops were markedly different from the diversity workshop described above. For example, participation was voluntary; primarily White people attended them; and depending on the group and its needs, workshops ranged in duration from a few hours to full-day sessions. The stated purpose of the workshops was to encourage White people to be more aware and accepting of cultural differences among immigrant groups. Both participants explained that the workshops might be considered anti-racist on the basis that racism cannot easily reside alongside cultural understanding. The methods reportedly employed included lectures, experiential exercises, and group discussions. In both the diversity workshop and the cross-cultural workshop, participants said that they relied upon firsthand accounts of refugees and immigrants as part of their teaching strategy, as these were deemed "powerful" learning tools for attendees.

Presentations. Based on my in-depth discussions with participants, I expect most of them make anti-racism presentations occasionally; however, only four of them explicitly described such involvements as part of their anti-racism work. Two of these participants said they regularly act as guest lecturers in university classes and also make presentations to business groups. In these contexts, they explained that they typically talk about the history of First Nations and Métis people since colonization, and emphasize the need for various racial and cultural groups in the province to work together.

In contrast to lectures offered to university classes and business groups, two other participants spoke of making presentations to their own organizations. For example, as an educator, Chris said he occasionally speaks at teacher in-services; Margaret explained that she occasionally gives presentations to her co-workers.

<u>Integrated into Academic Courses and Workplace Training</u>. For three participants, educating Whites meant weaving the message of anti-racism into the very fabric of the academic courses they teach. While Chris made reference to integrating anti-racism into his course offerings, as an educator currently working outside a classroom setting, he tended to speak in the past tense and devoted relatively little attention to it in the interview. In contrast, Stephanie and Jeff provided rich accounts of how anti-racism influences both *what* they teach and *how* they teach it. I have previously noted what this means for Stephanie in choosing content for her English classes. In the following excerpt, Jeff explains how he integrates the message of anti-racism into all his courses:

> And even for my [other course] which is <u>not</u> Aboriginal at all, when I talk about policy I bring in Aboriginal cases, or when we talk about how legislation can affect change we bring in Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement in the early '60s and so students wouldn't normally in that class get Martin Luther King and Malcolm X or Mathew Coon Come, they do with <u>me</u>. And they <u>like</u> that. They don't <u>get</u> it in other classes.

But integrating the message of anti-racism goes well beyond content considerations for both Stephanie and Jeff. They explained that the messages of anti-racism and equality are reinforced in the way they conduct their classes, in how they relate to students, and even in the physical structure of their classrooms. For example, they explained that they arrange desks so that students sit either in groups or in a circle, rather than in rows facing the teacher in the front of the room; they pointed out that these alternate arrangements challenged the basic assumptions of social hierarchy typical in educational settings. Gesturing to the numerous posters of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X that decorate her classroom walls, Stephanie also pointed out that anti-racism is "spoken in my walls."

The demographics of students in these classes differed from the workshop participants described previously. Stephanie and Jeff both reported roughly equal

numbers of Aboriginal and White students in their classes, and argued that the course was equally relevant to both groups, albeit for different reasons. Stephanie explains her rationale as follows:

> I remember somebody asked me one time, "What do you think is more important, to teach Native Studies to your First Nations and Métis students or your non-Aboriginal students?" I can honestly say [neither] is more important … because you want the dominant society to get it, but you also want the people being oppressed to get it too, so that they don't self-blame.

Three additional participants described integrating anti-racism education into workplace training initiatives that were not primarily designed to address racism. For example, Margaret and Debbie explained that they are required to provide general training for union representatives. While they are not required to address racism in this training, both women said that they choose to do, initiating group discussions and choosing case studies that highlight issues relating to racism. For both women, these activities were portrayed as relatively minimal in relation to their overall anti-racism involvements. For Joan, however, integrating anti-racism into the varied training she does for organizations was described as a key aspect of her overall anti-racism efforts. Like Jeff and Stephanie, she explained that regardless of the explicit focus of the training, the principles of anti-racism and diversity directly inform both her approach and the content of all the training she provides.

Educating the Public through Community Cultural Events. This section is unique in that it includes the activities of only one participant (i.e., Liz); however, since these activities are central in her portrayal of her educational involvements, they must be noted. Liz described being highly involved in the planning and implementation of various local cultural events that she says are designed to reduce racism by educating

the public about cultural differences. [51] Below, she explains how this kind of event, though overtly focused on "celebrating culture," is decidedly an anti-racism initiative:

> If someone would say there's a public forum about racism they would never go. They're not interested in that. But because they've come to this and it's entertaining and it is such a shared sort of fellowship, they understand racism better now. Like, we don't get up and talk a lot about racism. … It's certainly not a lecture. People don't have to feel that they're there to have to learn, but they are learning because they're watching and they're seeing what's happening….[52]

6.3 The Experience of Educating

Against this backdrop, I would like now to consider how participants conceive of their *experience* in carrying out these educational activities. For example, do they enjoy this work? Do they feel they are effectively reducing racism? What are the moral dimensions of these involvements? How do they experience their relationship with their students? Despite the diversity of activities and contexts discussed, as well as the varying degrees to which participants suggested they are involved in education, it is possible for me to broadly summarize participants' answers to the above questions in such a way that applies to all of their narratives: participants referenced few challenges faced in their work; they suggested that their efforts were largely effective in addressing racism; and their words gave the impression of moral certainty. Furthermore, they pointed out that their teachings were generally well received, and they spoke primarily of warm and respectful relationships with their participants. Stephanie illustrates this last point below:

> I had a student write me a note the other day, and she's non-Aboriginal, and it was on her essay, and then just at the bottom she wrote this little paragraph and I photocopied it and kept it, and it just said, "You have opened my eyes to so many things that I'd never even thought of before, you should be so proud of

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[51] Two other participants made passing references to being involved in these types of events over the years, but they did not frame them explicitly as educational initiatives and as such are not included in this discussion.

[52] If this quote has a familiar sound to it, recall that Liz is also the participant who described her approach to anti-racism primarily in terms of culture-learning.

what you do. You're an amazing teacher…" you know. And I just thought this is my whole purpose, like this is my whole goal.

Finally, the general tone across participants' talk was positive and upbeat. In this regard, the tone was more similar to that noted in participants' talk of educating their children than the serious tone used when participants spoke of addressing racism in other contexts of their daily lives.

The above summary is not meant to imply that participants form an entirely homogenous group, or that they described *no* negative experiences, or *only* spoke of positive relationships with their students. I must also qualify that I am focusing here solely on participants' references to their experiences in educational contexts, and the summary I offered does not generalize to their comments regarding other domains of their anti-racism work. Still, participants' portrayals of their teaching experiences in primarily positive terms is intriguing in light of suggestions in the literature that anti-racism education is experienced as a thankless job, fraught with danger and intense resistance, and rife with moral dilemmas.

Given the stark contrast between what I read in the literature and what I heard from participants, and because participants said little about these topics on their own, I probed considerably around issues of resistance and questions of morality. In the following sections I describe the conversations that this probing triggered. [53] As such, the focus in these sections is less on participants' experiences of educating *per se*, than it is on how they make *sense* of their experiences (i.e., their explanations regarding the general absence of resistance and moral dilemmas they encounter).

Resistance. As previously stated, participants rarely spoke of resistance without my prompting. When asked directly if they face resistance to their teaching,

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[53] As these discussions occurred primarily with those most involved in providing educational services (i.e., Kelly, Stephanie, and Jeff, and to a lesser extent, with Joan, Cathy and Diane), their voices are the most pronounced in these sections.

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participants either denied any resistance or suggested that it occurred rarely and was not a significant issue for them. Stephanie's response to this question is typical in this regard: "I don't experience resistance in my students. If they feel resistant as they're sitting there listening to me, they work through it somehow. And I think I [present the material] in a very non-threatening, very understanding way."

Intrigued, I often probed further asking, "What do you think of the suggestion that White resistance is an unavoidable and necessary step in unlearning racism?" or I would quote Schick's (2000a) question: "Are we doing our job if there is no resistance?" (p. 84). In all but one case participants vehemently rejected the suggestion that resistance is unavoidable or a valid measure of effectiveness. Joan alone took a position that might be read to support Schick's position:

> If I've pissed somebody off, to me that's a negative indicator of success. And not for the sake of pissing them off … but if … they start to think in any way about White privilege or unpacking their stuff at all, and if their initial reaction is getting pissed, great! … If you've been blasé and complacent about this and you're now annoyed, I'm going to call that progress *(laughter)*.

In contrast, the other participants argued that rather than a sign of success, resistance is generally problematic because it hinders learning from occurring. As Diane explained, "If your defenses get up you're not learning … because you put up a block when you're being defensive.. … or else you're putting out bad things, negative energy, so you're not bringing in anything." Thus, participants explained, the ability to minimize resistance is a sign of a good instructor as it facilitates learning. In fact, the 'success' (i.e., effectiveness) of initiatives was most assessed in terms of their students' positive course evaluations; these evaluations were related directly to how well they as facilitators were able to create a positive, non-threatening learning environment that did not invite resistance. Sheila's comments are illustrative of this view of resistance:

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I'd never want to make anybody in my class <u>ever</u> feel uncomfortable. That's really important to me, because if they want to feel safe, and like this is a place where they can come in and be themselves and learn something, you have to create a climate where they feel like, you know, that they <u>want</u> to be here, and that they <u>like</u> coming here.

In the interviews, participants outlined factors that they argued were critical to explaining the minimal resistance they encountered. These factors largely fell within the educator's responsibilities, and can be grouped under the headings of 'methods' and 'facilitator characteristics'. In terms of methods, three themes emerged in the data. First, all participants noted the importance of using instructional methods that allowed their participants to feel "heard" (e.g., discussion, question and answer periods). As Debbie so succinctly put it, "You're not gonna change them by preaching to them." Three participants also spoke of the importance of presenting the message differently for different groups, pointing out that by increasing the perceived relevancy of the message, resistance would be minimized. Jeff explains the rationale for this thinking as follows:

I think you have to be intentional, and you have to appeal to people. You can't appeal to businesses necessarily morally and ethically, but as soon as you tell them about that, boom – the people retiring, the need for jobs and economic development – then everything takes on a different hue.

Second, for four participants, packaging the message effectively (i.e., to reduce resistance and increase openness to learning) also means avoiding the use of certain words like 'racism'; they argued that these words trigger an automatic and negative response from people. Kelly explains the rationale for deliberately not using the word racism anywhere in his diversity workshop despite the fact that addressing racism is a stated goal:

It gets people's backs up, because no one wants to discuss racism, no one wants to discuss this, everyone wants to sort of leave it, you know, it's something we shouldn't talk about. Or, "It's not happening," or "It's not me," or "It's not my family." … You have to discuss these issues, but … I think we have to be more creative in how we bring it up. And that's why we didn't want a session specifically on <u>racism</u> in our diversity course because we knew it would

turn people away. We wanted to get people there. They're gonna figure it out in the end, and they do.

Finally, Cathy, Kelly, and Diane suggested that using firsthand accounts of racism experienced is an effective method that reduces resistance and increases students' receptivity to hearing the message of anti-racism. For example, in his diversity workshop, Kelly explained that he invites an elder to speak about the impact that residential schooling had upon his life, while Cathy and Diane both invite refugees and immigrants to tell their compelling life stories. These participants pointed out that this approach is non-threatening to White participants and invites an empathic rather than a hostile response.[54] Cathy elaborates as follows:

> When we designed the … diversity training … what we agreed at the outset was that we wanted to find a way to touch people's hearts, so it needed to be a process that would touch people's hearts. And we achieved that by and large by having refugees and immigrants come in and tell their own stories. In terms of evaluation it was very positive, steep learning curve for many people but very positive.

In addition to highlighting specific training methods, all participants described particular facilitator characteristics that they argued were critical in establishing a positive learning environment that minimized resistance. They pointed to themselves as examples, noting qualities such as being supportive, non-judgmental, empathic, and open-minded as important factors in establishing positive relationships with their learners. In discussing her relationship with her students, Stephanie says:

> I think one of the gifts I've been given … is to be able to really empathize … I take care of them when they're here. Take care of them spiritually and emotionally …and psychologically … and I make sure everybody leaves here feeling good about themselves and what they can do, and the specific gifts that they have. And so I think being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes and think, "How would that feel?" even though you have never felt it yourself. To come even close to imagining is enough.

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[54] Recall that some White, anti-racism educators in the literature questioned the morality of using the painful and personal stories of racialized people as a tool for educating Whites; none of my participants expressed this view.

Finally, participants pointed out that they encountered little resistance, in part, because they were seen as credible and legitimate by their students. Credibility in this context was most often discussed in relation to the facilitators' cultural or racial identity, and took two distinct forms. First, four participants spoke of the importance of having a cultural or racialized Other act as co-facilitator as a means of increasing their own credibility with their participants. Specifically, they explained that co-facilitation with this Other afforded them the chance to demonstrate their consistency in word, and practice, by modeling a non-racist relationship. As Jeff said of his experience co-teaching, "She was a First Nations woman and I was a non-First Nations man, and we would talk about things and relate to each other in ways that modeled relationships to people, regardless of specificities…" Second, seven participants said that the White identification they shared with their participants was also an important means of establishing credibility with their learners. That is, they noted that their whiteness allowed them to be viewed as "one of us" by White students, thereby allowing them to establish rapport and increase the likelihood that their message of anti-racism would be accepted. Chris describes the power that whiteness affords him in this regard:

> I'm in the majority. People who are in the majority see me as, in many ways, an ally. That I'm not somebody who's really <u>different</u>. But I think they would treat somebody who was visibly <u>different</u> as somebody who's coming out and trying to promote their own cause, and it's sometimes a lot easier to – in some ways – to promote the causes of <u>others</u>, and people don't feel that you're <u>directly</u> associated with this. Now I <u>am</u>, because I think we <u>all</u> are, but there's more of a third party approach and people are more open, they don't see it as threatening, so <u>me</u> dealing with things here on race issues, I don't think people get overly threatened by, because I'm one of <u>them</u>.

In their discussions of resistance, participants tended to take credit for the minimal resistance they encountered, chalking it up as a sign of their skillful facilitation. However, when resistance *was* encountered participants did not attribute it to their *lack* of facilitation skills. When pressed, three participants did describe occasional encounters with resistant participants; but in these instances resistance was not

attributed to their poor facilitation skills, nor did they suggest that it elicited a strong

emotional reaction from them. Indeed, recall Joan's suggestion that resistance may in

fact be a "negative indicator" of success. While neither Jeff nor Kelly similarly

suggested resistance could be beneficial, the occasional resistance they noted was

attributed to their students' unique characteristic, as evident in Kelly's comments:

> The third last course I think we ran into a couple of problems. Just, some
> people in the course, in my opinion … just too narrow minded. They brought up
> some good points, but the way they brought it up, it's sort of a know-it-all type of
> attitude … that I thought was a little discouraging, because then they're also the
> type who go and they spread it around the rest of [name of organization]. But
> you're gonna get those people in every organization.

Kelly, stating a view that was also expressed by Jeff, further linked the mandating of

anti-racism training in organizations to the occurrence of resistance:

> I mean just to say everybody's going to go for the day and you have no choice,
> I just think doesn't work. And I even see it with the workshops I do, some
> companies send their people to learn about Aboriginal awareness from their
> companies. Well, they're there, they have to be there, they don't care what I'm
> talking about, they don't know who I am, most of them wonder why a White guy
> is talking to them about these things anyway, and they're on the cell phone, for
> half the class, or out in the hall or late coming back, and at the end of the day
> give you a shitty evaluation!

If mandatory participation is indeed associated with higher levels of resistance

than voluntary participation, it is perhaps not surprising that my participants experience

little resistance since the majority of their educational efforts are directed at individuals

who *choose* to participate. With the exception of Kelly and Cathy's diversity training

and the occasional training carried out by Jeff, participants did not describe facilitating

mandatory training sessions.

Another possible interpretation for the low levels of resistance that participants

reportedly experience draws upon Kumashiro's (2000) model. Most of the training

described by the participants matches Kumashiro's description of "education about the

Other." That is, participants primarily described efforts to teach Whites *about* the First

Nation, Métis immigrant, and refugee Other. Kumashiro points out that since the focus

in this kind of training is on the Other rather than on questioning White privilege, it is inherently less threatening to the dominant group. Kumashiro argues that education focusing more directly on questioning the dominant group's privilege and its complicity in oppressing Others (i.e., education that is critical of privileging and othering, and education that changes students and society) will evoke a stronger negative reaction from White people. Still, as Stephanie's teaching fits this latter description, how are we to understand the lack of resistance she reportedly faces? Perhaps the inherently hierarchical nature of the relationship between teacher and high school students, as well as the non-mandatory status of the course she teaches, are unique contextual factors that serve to minimize resistance in her case.

Issues of Morality. In addition to probing issues of resistance, I also explored specific moral dimensions of participants' experience as educators. Contrary to my expectations, in listening to participants I did not note an overtly moral tone in their talk. Specifically, there was little explicit reference made to moral imperatives for the way they carried out their work, or mention of specific moral dilemmas encountered. Indeed, the issues I discuss below are based primarily on comments that came as a result of my curious and insistent probing. Our discussions centered on three primary topics: methods employed, mandatory training, and issues of whiteness.

Participants' descriptions of methods they used, and their general emphasis on creating warm and nurturing learning environments, was in stark contrast to the more aggressive approaches I had previously read about and witnessed. In particular, just prior to conducting interviews for this study, a documentary aired on television that focused on an anti-racism workshop conducted in Regina by the famed Jane Elliott (she is best known for her brown-eyes/blue-eyes research with school children in the 1960s). The stated purpose of the workshop was to provide dominant group members with an experience similar to that of individuals who experience racism. To that end,

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the facilitator used highly controversial and aggressive tactics that were the focus of many call-in radio shows and letters to the editor in the following days. Given the geographical and temporal proximity of the workshop, the controversy over the methods used, and its obvious relevance to my research, I asked participants for their assessment of her approach. With the exception of Debbie,[55] participants' responses were highly similar; first, they voiced unease and uncertainty regarding the aggressiveness of the approach and distanced themselves from it; they then appeared to resolve their uncertainty by shifting to a pragmatic stance, suggesting that it could be justified if it were shown to be effective. Listen to the ambivalence in the voices of Grace and Joan below, and the pragmatic, ends-justifies-the-means logic both employ in resolving their dilemma:

> [M]any people say it's very effective. The thing about it is, the part I wonder about is, is it <u>ever</u> justifiable to be abusive to a person? And she's abusive to them, but she does that <u>deliberately</u> because she's trying to put people in the experience of what it feels like to <u>not</u> be treated like a human being, to be abused. So, I don't know. … But I think … in some cases people <u>need</u> it [in order to change]. (Grace)

> I got quite worried, concerned, about how does she debrief this with people. How does she debrief this? And it's one thing to put people through an incredibly provocative experience and I <u>will</u> push the envelope with folks in ways now that maybe I wouldn't have a few decades ago, so I can appreciate some of what I would describe as her tactics. Those are <u>only</u> justifiable however, if it's in the service of deep learning, and the deep learning comes from the processing and the debriefing of whatever the experience was. (Joan)

Participants' response to my question of the morality of mandatory anti-racism training followed a similar structure; first, they voiced ambivalence, and then they negotiated a stance based upon a pragmatic assessment of effectiveness. However, in this case, participants' stated unease seemed to focus on potential outcomes. That is, forcing people to take training was not described as immoral in itself; rather, the

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[55] Debbie voiced no strong feelings about the approach, stating simply "If it <u>works</u>, whatever, that's good."

tension revolved around whether more harm or good would result from using this particular strategy. Stephanie illustrates this point:

> Should it be mandatory? I want to say yes, because I think this is so important and I think everybody needs to hear it. But if you're not <u>ready</u>, if you're not open to it, if you're being forced, I think it can have a detrimental opposite effect, where you start to feel even <u>more</u> negative, and even <u>more</u>, if it's possible, sort of, you know, blatantly racist because it's being forced upon you. I guess that would be my big concern and my worry.

Using a similar pragmatic reasoning, four other participants described circumstances under which they felt mandatory attendance would be beneficial. Specifically, they suggested that there are occasions when all employees need to be taught appropriate behavioral boundaries for the workplace, regardless of their interest in attending sessions. For example, Cathy described a situation in which she was involved in providing mandatory training for an organization:

> I think that the benefits in <u>this</u> case far outweigh the cost. In other kinds of context that might not be true, but in this case [it was]. … There were a few people there who were quite threatened, but for <u>those</u> folks I think we have to begin to establish boundaries, so "This is going to be acceptable in our work place, this is not going to be acceptable in our work place, and those are the boundaries."

In addition to probing participants regarding their views on using aggressive methods and mandating training, I also questioned participants about their identification with whiteness in the context of their teaching. While several participants had referred to the benefits of being White in establishing credibility with their participants, I was curious as to whether there was a more explicitly moral dimension to their experience as well. In response to my questioning, three participants noted past discomfort in recognizing the privilege that whiteness afforded them in this regard, but explained that this unease had since dissipated. They explained that while it is unfortunate that "race matters," they came to see that it is their responsibility to "use" their whiteness if doing so could be shown to be educationally beneficial to their students. Note how this rationale is used by Kelly:

So, when you have … a White person going out and delivering that, more people may listen to you. You may have more credibility in their eyes. … And I mean, it's sad but it's true. … Now there's certain people within the multicultural and Aboriginal communities, well that may … not want that, but they have to get over their prejudices and stereotypes as well to see the benefit of that.

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In reflecting on participants' accounts of their efforts in this broad domain, it seems apparent that educating White people takes on many forms and meanings: from educating friends, family, and strangers in the varied contexts of their daily lives; to offering formal workshops and giving presentations to set groups of people; to integrating anti-racism into academic and workplace training; to educating the general public through community cultural events. Interestingly, this diversity of educational involvements emphasizes a commonality among participants in that they all spoke about educating Whites in multiple ways. Participants also spoke in similar ways about the challenges they faced: they spoke of difficulties associated with educating people in the contexts of their everyday lives, and their silence suggested they faced few challenges in the contexts of their formal efforts to educate Whites.

The theme of pragmatism in participants' narratives suggests another commonality among their accounts. Evidence of pragmatism lies in participants' articulation of the methods they employ to minimize resistance, and in their stated efforts to adjust their teaching to ensure it is viewed as relevant to their learners. Furthermore, pragmatism is apparent in the logic participants employ in negotiating moral domains, and in their evaluations of success that rely upon measures of effectiveness. In addition to suggesting a pragmatic stance, these examples also portray participants as highly attuned to both the many contextual factors relevant to their teaching, and to the specific characteristics of the various individuals and groups that they seek to educate.

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7. 'HELPING' THE RACIALIZED OTHER

Just as all participants described efforts to educate the dominant group, they all spoke of ways in which they seek to 'help' the racialized Other as part of their anti-racism efforts. The types of assistance described by participants can be grouped into three broad categories: (1) educating the Other; (2) assisting the Other through program development; (3) advocating for the Other.

Before continuing with a description of these involvements, I must address my own biases and discomfort with writing this chapter. I find offensive the colonialist and patronizing notion so prevalent in our society of needing to 'help' the racialized Other, and all that such a stance implies (i.e., the racialized as deficient and needy, and White society as superior and benevolent). In listening to participants speak about their efforts to 'help' the racialized Other, I found myself being critical and judgmental of them and not always listening as deeply or as openly as I might have. Ironically, I was guilty of the same patronizing and condescending attitude towards my participants that I was so quick to attribute to them! In re-reading transcripts I deliberately tried to set aside my moral pre-judgments of their comments as 'patronizing' or 'colonialist' in order to better understand their world from their perspective. As a result, I realized that my participants were neither ignorant of, nor insensitive to, a colonialist reading of their efforts to 'help' the Other. However, it seemed that they had found ways to carve out a moral space for themselves in which they could continue the work that they saw as important. From my academic position, I was struck once again by the messiness of addressing racism in 'real life,' and gained a renewed respect for the willingness of my participants to tackle this work rather than to take the politically safe position of doing

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nothing to address racism. Still, my unease with using the meaning-loaded 'helping' discourse persisted as I struggled with how to present ideas using participants' concepts and the conventions of language without endorsing a broader position that I find distasteful. My use of the single quotation mark at times in this section (e.g., 'help' and 'helper') is my way of personally negotiating this moral challenge.

7.1 Educating the Other

In most of the educational initiatives described thus far, the target audience has been dominant group members. If participants' primary goal is to reduce the racism of White people against racialized Others, this emphasis is hardly surprising. However, five participants also described ways in which they are involved in teaching *racialized* people, and they identified these activities directly as part of their fight against racism. Specifically, they presented education as a means by which racialized people could be provided the knowledge and skills needed to fight their own oppression more effectively.

Stephanie and Jeff's classroom teaching bears repeating in this context, since they explained that the anti-racism message incorporated into their courses is not only relevant to White students; it is also important that Aboriginal students become aware of systems of oppression hurting them. Debbie, Joan and Kelly described their efforts to educate the racialized Other in the context of mentoring relationships. Debbie describes her role as mentor to the racialized Other as follows:

> What I try to do myself, is I look around and I say, right now because I know some younger people who are Aboriginal or who are visible minority or whatever, I try and say … "What can I share with you?" And not to say that I'm all knowing, but, you know, "How can I benefit you to become … that leader, to become that person that's … gonna be able to advocate for people … because you know better than I do what your issues are, right?" So that's all we can all do, is maybe to mentor, or to - I don't really like that word 'coach' - but to mentor, and to have an obligation to, you know, to share some ways of doing things, some things that might work, some strategies or some ways to change processes, you know, and systems.

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While Debbie's emphasis in mentoring seems to be on sharing skills, for Joan

mentoring was described as an opportunity to pass on knowledge. Below, she

describes a mentoring relationship that she established with an Aboriginal woman:

> But isn't this ironic! … And of <u>course</u> I'll support her, to learn to do whatever she needs to, to do her work. I'm <u>happy</u> to do that. I'm excited to be talking about these sorts of things. Who'd a thunk it! That here <u>I'd</u> be the person educating an <u>educated</u> Aboriginal person, to broaden <u>her</u> perspective from Aboriginal issues, and she names it as that, she said, "I have trouble seeing beyond Aboriginal issues, to the broader diversity issues." <u>Whoa</u>! ..that was <u>enormously</u> satisfying to me, to be part of that for her. And to know enough about her culture to do it in culturally appropriate ways. For sort of added sweetness for me. But it just sort of, isn't this <u>ironic</u>! Here I am, "Hmm, okay, well I guess … we're not looking to the <u>Aboriginal</u> person to educate the <u>White</u> person in this instance."

It is interesting to note the different tones in Debbie and Joan's references to mentoring

racialized Others. The sense of obligation and unease that can be read in Debbie's

comments, contrasts with the feeling of excitement and opportunity in Joan's portrayal

of the mentoring role.

7.2 <u>Assisting the Other through Program Development</u>

Half of the participants described developing and running programs directed at

addressing the basic needs of Aboriginal, refugee, and immigrant populations. These

participants outlined programs that were designed to assist racialized individuals in

various aspects of their lives. The general rationale they used in framing these

activities as anti-racism initiatives was twofold: first, it was argued that the *impact* of

racism could be lessened if other challenges (e.g., poverty) could be addressed;

second, it was suggested that racialized individuals would be better able to *fight* racism

if their personal resources for doing so (e.g., economic, physical, psychological

resources) were not so depleted. Margaret illustrates this second point:

> I mean you look at the inner cities, you look at some of the immigrant populations. … They don't have enough energy to barely keep going day-to-day, never mind fight the struggles for equality, right? I don't equate, you know, the Aboriginal leaders we have in our union … or persons of colour who are leaders in our union, I don't put them in that group, because you know they've taken <u>control</u>, they've taken some ownership of the problem. … Whereas those

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that are totally oppressed, they just don't have the energy or the resources to do it. … Once they have the confidence, they have the resources, they have the tools to get out of the situation they're in … then you're going to have the knowledge and the confidence to take on the mainstream.

While participants described a variety of programs, most of them focused on offering employment assistance to racialized people. For example, Grace and Diane described a range of services they offer to refugees and immigrants in helping them to find employment (e.g., developing a resume, preparing for a job interview, obtaining necessary credentials). Liz also spoke of providing employment assistance but within the context of her job as a social worker. She explained that she works primarily with Aboriginal individuals on social assistance, required to accept her help in seeking employment. Rather than assisting with such concrete tasks as preparing a resume, she described her role more as a counselor and support person for these clients:

> I'm working with … the Aboriginal community, that experiences racism all the time, you know. They can't <u>get</u> ahead. They don't know <u>how</u> to get ahead. So it's education, it's teaching, it's working with their self-esteem, their image – no different than what we do in [the organization's name], same thing with visible minority people – it's that "you're just as good as the next person, you're just as equal," looking at people's strengths. … This is the <u>hardest</u> question for them to answer, when I ask them what their strengths are. "I don't <u>have</u> any." They've been <u>taught</u> they don't have any strengths.

Finally, Kelly and Margaret noted their involvement in developing mentoring and internship programs for First Nations people in their workplaces.

In addition to employment assistance, four participants spoke of providing other types of assistance to newly arrived refugees and immigrants adjusting to life in Canada. They told of efforts to welcome people in the community, of assisting them in finding housing, and of helping them learn how to negotiate other aspects of daily life in their new communities. Liz summarizes this work as follows:

> Where a new family's coming to town and someone will tell them "Well, contact ____," you know, they give them my name, and we help them get orientated to the community. So it's like a buddy system too. So we'll help them with, you know, opening up a bank account, going through the community, helping with the children, Christmas and Easter, we make perogies and cabbage rolls like

crazy and we make up baskets for new immigrants, including toys and a full meal.

While most of the programs were described as directed at adults, Kelly highlighted a program he designed, in cooperation with First Nations elders and organizations, aimed specifically at helping Aboriginal youth in trouble with the law. The program was reportedly designed to divert these youths from the justice system, and to reduce their chances of re-offending. In the excerpt below, Kelly outlines the rationale behind the program:

> So we developed a program together based on a lot of cultural input, us and the Tribal council and the elders. And the elders were saying, well, if you're gonna work with our kids you have to understand that they don't understand, you know they don't understand who they are as First Nations or Metis people. They don't know their culture. All they know is how to survive. They don't know what they're about. So you have to find ways of instilling that in them. So what we did is we took the medicine wheel component, which is, you know, four quadrants of mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and we tried to develop a program that would embrace all of that and take these kids after that circle process and put them into that situation where they start to learn about who they are, being responsible for their actions, being accountable, that type of thing.

As Kelly further explained, these lessons were woven into a program that saw youth taking part in wide-ranging activities together with a group of community volunteers including elders and law enforcement personnel. A key focus of the program was on encouraging relationships between the youth and the volunteers who were considered to be good role models for them.

7.3 Advocating for the Other

Most participants described instances in which they intentionally took on the role of "advocate" for racialized people; using the term in keeping with Van Esterisk's (1985) definition of it as "the act of interceding or speaking on behalf of another person or group" (p 60). As was the case with educational activities, my reading of participants' accounts suggests their advocacy work can be categorized according to their informal and formal involvements. That is, participants described situations in which they

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spontaneously advocated for racialized acquaintances, friends, and colleagues in their

daily lives; they also described advocating within their official capacity as a member of

an organization mandated to do so. While I use a lower case 'a' in keeping with writing

conventions, in both cases the form of advocacy participants described maps onto

what van Esterisk calls "large 'A' Advocacy." In contrast to the "gentle" and "relatively

passive … small 'a' advocacy" that focuses on broadly informing people about issues

of inequity, she describes Advocacy as "a more active position with regard to a well-

defined and often narrower goal" (p. 62-63); an action initiated either at the request of

individuals or groups, or undertaken for those who, presumably, cannot speak for

themselves.

7.3.1 Informal Advocacy

While half of the participants described instances in which they took on the role

of advocate in their daily lives, their specific advocacy involvements varied

considerably. For example, Cathy spoke of letter writing campaigns, and Diane

described phoning landlords on behalf of acquaintances who felt they were not being

rented apartments because of their race or culture. Both Margaret and Debbie stated

that they would at times speak on behalf of racialized individuals in meetings. Of all the

participants, the role of advocate seemed to be most fully embraced by Tom. He

explained that the lines between his formal and informal involvements were often

blurred; he then offered the following story to illustrate the centrality of advocacy in his

daily life. Tom told of how he witnessed an incident of police brutality by chance, while

biking through his neighbourhood. In the story, he describes spontaneously interjecting

himself into a situation that he portrays as potentially dangerous, in order to defend his

Aboriginal neighbour:

> I knew these people, and I knew them to be good people and the police were
> there looking for someone anyway, and … it went over the line anyway,
> roughing this person up and so I just was on my bicycle and I said, you know,

"You don't have to do that, you know." Anyway they recognized who I was and they told me, you know, abusively, told me "Get the fuck out of there," you know, and they were going to arrest me and I said, "Well, arrest me? I'm just on my bike here." … And I just said … "That's good community relations there." Anyway, … he was a plainclothes sergeant … he came <u>right</u> up to me, right up, and he was just foaming, you know, and he said, "This isn't about community relations," he said, "this is about <u>you</u> and <u>me</u>." And he said, "And you fuck with me and I'll <u>do</u> you." … It was getting dark at that point, and really the only people around were three police officers and a police dog, and I got <u>very</u> uncomfortable there and I got on my bike and went straight to the police station and did this complaint so it was on record anyway.

In the above examples, participants' actions are described as reactive, based on specific perceived injustices. As such there is an adversarial tone to these stories. Jeff's form of advocacy has a decidedly different flavour as he frames it more in proactive rather than reactive terms. He explained that he intentionally positions himself alongside Aboriginal colleagues in order that his perceived status might increase their status in communities where people have been "taught … to see White as better than Brown." He elaborated on his role as follows:

> Not really a formal role. Sitting in meetings, acknowledging work, working together, promoting shared presentations, those sorts of things. … But it's also something that I'm very cognizant of and when I go into a community I don't go in as a self-proclaimed expert. I go in as a partner, as an advocate, so in that way I don't continue to place myself above others, and reinforce that myth.

7.3.2 <u>Formal Advocacy</u>

Most of participants' formal advocacy involvements were constructed as voluntary efforts carried out in the service of not-for-profit organizations whose mandate is advocacy. The exceptions were two participants who said that their paid employment requires that they act as advocates for refugees and immigrants in employment settings. In this context, they described intervening on their clients' behalf when they ran into difficulties in their workplaces. For example, one told of an incident where a client felt she was unfairly fired and requested that the participant advocate for her during her grievance process.

Three other participants described their affiliation with various advocacy organizations. Cathy, while noting her involvement with two such organizations, did not describe this work in any depth. However, the stated goal of her efforts - "to raise the profile of situations which are racist" - suggests these efforts might be understood in terms of what Van Esterisk (1985) refers to as lower case advocacy. Cathy mentioned having advocated for an inquiry into the freezing deaths of Aboriginal men in Saskatoon, and described her involvement in the Stolen Sisters campaign in Alberta (i.e., raising awareness of the large number of missing Aboriginal women in that province). In contrast, Liz and Tom's advocacy work, of which they both spoke at length, is best conceptualized as 'Advocacy'; it involves providing leadership to organizations that offer advocacy services. Liz said that she does a lot of work with recent immigrants who experience racism in their employment settings and contact her with a complaint:

> And so then I'll get a call, and what I'll do is sit down and write a letter first, acknowledging this complaint with the employer. … And then we'll set up a meeting with them and we'll discuss the complaint and we'll follow it through. Nine times out of ten we can work it out, it doesn't have to go to the [Human Rights] Commission. It's just identifying that this person is feeling that they're being harassed or discriminated or whatever.

Tom's advocacy work deserves particular attention given that he frames it as his primary anti-racism involvement and positions it, within his narrative, as central to his life. In the following excerpt, he explains what being an advocate means to him:

> We help to bring the weight of our organization along with the person. We try and work with the person, see what they're trying to accomplish and they may.. usually come to us after they've tried a lot of things. So they've already got a lot of things happening and so … we don't want to take over, we want to support the person … So I think it's more to help bring our experience.. share our experience with this person, about other cases or about where we might advise them to go. Or they might tell us they have, you know, other ways that we could go and we'd help them do that. So we try … to be as supportive as possible, and not take over things *(chuckles)*.

While the organization with which Tom is affiliated is mandated to provide advocacy support to anyone in need of advocacy, he explained that it deals primarily with cases of racism. The structure of the organization is reportedly flat, and board members are said to work autonomously on cases. Reducing his paid employment hours in order to better juggle the 50 files he has open at any one time, Tom described a wide range of advocacy involvements. Advocating in a variety of settings, he spoke of his involvement in cases of alleged racism within educational, employment, law enforcement, prison, and community settings. While many of the situations he purportedly deals with involve complaints of First Nations people against dominant group members or institutions, cases are not always so straightforward. Tom also spoke of accepting cases that pitted First Nations people against First Nations organizations, and told of a situation where he defended a charge against Sikh men who were accused of discriminating against a disabled White man. Tom referenced a diverse range of advocacy activities, including the following: writing letters, making phone calls, going to court, documenting individuals' stories, speaking before the Human Rights Commission, organizing media events, and negotiating settlements for individuals.

7.4 The Experience of 'Helping'

In marked contrast to the overwhelmingly positive feelings participants described in relation to educating the dominant group, in participants' stories of helping the racialized Other more references were made to struggles and challenges faced than to rewarding aspects of this work. While it was suggested that success was possible, it was portrayed as more complex to ascertain and less often guaranteed.[56] Discussions also tended to have stronger moral overtones, as participants more

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[56] As was the case with education, 'success' was most often defined in terms of positive feedback, in this case from the racialized Other. However, in the case of advocacy work, more 'objective' measures such as whether cases were won or lost were also used.

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frequently alluded to the challenges of negotiating moral ground in their work. In this section, I explore these two broad topics: first, I consider the challenges participants identified in carrying out this work; second, I examine the moral issues they raised and consider the manner in which they describe navigating this moral terrain.

7.4.1 <u>The Challenges of 'Helping'</u>

The challenges described by participants in educating, assisting, and advocating for the Other can be grouped into three main categories: dealing with limited resources, feeling powerless to help the Other adequately, and coping with the stresses associated with the physical and emotional demands of this work. While presented as distinct categories below, interconnections among them were apparent in participants' talk.

The most common challenges and frustrations described by participants in their talk of 'helping' the racialized Other were related to limited resources. In particular, five participants spoke of the lack of money and time available to do the work that they felt needed to be done. In three cases, the frustration was directed at employers who were described as placing exceedingly high demands on participants' time. Two other participants spoke of the lack of volunteers available to help carry out their work in the volunteer sector.

Four participants described feelings of frustration, impatience, and helplessness in not adequately being able to address the needs of racialized Others due to external restraints imposed upon them. At first glance, participants' self-portrayals as being powerless may seem surprising given the typical association of power with the positions of 'helper' and 'advocate,' and given participants positions of structural authority in their work (e.g., heads of organizations, educators, law enforcement workers). However, their experience of powerlessness becomes more understandable

when noting the factors that are reportedly outside of their control in the context of these involvements, such as resource limitations.

Three participants spoke of the difficulty of influencing key decision makers to focus on the needs of racialized people to the extent, and in the manner, that they felt was necessary. Diane describes her frustration in this regard as follows:

> It's challenging to know that some of the things are out of your control, like with employers, I mean … how are you going to change if there's an employer who has had … one negative experience with an immigrant and he's washing everybody with the same brush.... I mean, it's really hard, and we don't have the resources to work with that person or … to help in some ways. … So that's frustrating … because it's sort of out of your control.

Kelly voiced similar frustrations, stating that the considerable time and energy he spent trying to garner support and "buy-in" from his superiors left little time for him to actually develop and run programs directed at helping the racialized.

Interestingly, in addition to feeling powerless in relation to organizations, participants also described feeling powerless at times in relation to the racialized Others they sought to help. As advocates, Diane, Grace and Tom spoke of the frustration of not being able to take action against an individual or organization that they felt was behaving in a racist manner if their client did not wish for them to do so. While they noted that it was important to them to respect their clients' wishes in how to proceed with cases (e.g., whether to pursue legal action), participants said it was difficult for them to leave perceived injustice unaddressed. Using a particular example to illustrate her point, Diane spoke of the difficulty in stepping back and letting clients make decisions that she did not think were in their best interests: "It was a very sad situation and it was out of control. … I realized that … some of that is because you can't make it right. I mean it's not for me to make it right, I mean he had to make his own decisions and he did, and all that, but … it stays with you." Similarly, Liz described feeling powerless to influence clients who were not receptive to her guidance. In the

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excerpt below, she describes her attempts to encourage Aboriginal and immigrant

individuals to become actively involved in the fight against racism:

> And it was like, <u>how</u> do you move these people? <u>Frustrating</u>. I'd get frustrated, "Well, don't you [Aboriginal people] want to <u>do</u> something about it?," you know, let's work <u>together</u>. ... I felt that a <u>lot</u>. Frustration. … Even like new immigrants that come over, you know, and I work with them … and try to get them involved and "No no no, we don't want to, we don't want to," you know, they don't want to stir the water. They want to just stay in the background, you know. So I continually <u>push</u>, and I feel the frustration then sometimes. "Ya, you'd … do a great job in this position, like why don't you run for it?" "No no no, we don't want to." You know, just that sort of thing.

Considering the limited resources that participants reportedly have to carry out

their work and their feelings of powerlessness, it is hardly surprising that many of them

made references to experiencing stress. Nine participants spoke about the stress of

juggling the many demands on their time, as well as the stress of dealing with the

complexities arising from their efforts to assist the racialized Other. Three participants

also referred to another kind of stress that they related directly to the emotional strain

of hearing the stories and feeling the pain of their oppressed, racialized clients. Diane

referred to this as "secondary trauma." In the following quote, Grace explains the

impact that this form of stress had on her life:

> I went through quite a long time where I was interacting with individuals and with groups from all over the world and being able to hear stories and stories and stories, and I did reach a point where I couldn't hear any more stories, any more refugee stories. There were too many, and I couldn't function. So I took a little time off. … I'm still trying to find a way to do that because I can't close my ears to the stories, so that's another challenge for me now.

7.4.2 <u>Negotiating a Moral Position</u>

Within the literature on advocacy, a number of researchers problematize the

notion of the 'helper' as one who simply works in a straightforward and altruistic fashion

for the benefit of others, suggesting that there are a number of complex moral issues

that need to be negotiated in carrying out this work. For example, Heyworth (1991)

notes the "paternalism" that arises from a "dichotomy" between "giver and … taker" (p.

107). She suggests that "Empowerment must be a relationship of equality, based on an understanding of reciprocal ties of different strengths" (p. 107). Patai (1991) also speaks to the issue of power differential, noting that differences in relative power increase when the helper is White and privileged, and the one being helped is a member of an oppressed group. To those who argue that they are simply giving a voice to people who might otherwise remain silent, Patai suggests they critically ask the question "Is it empowerment or is it appropriation?" (p. 147). Van Esterisk (1985) and Reese and Tator (1991) point to moral challenges facing advocates in negotiating their relationship with the individual or structure they hope to influence through their efforts. For example, they suggest moral dilemmas arise from the tension between the need to secure resources for advocacy work and the need to ensure that their efforts are not influenced by the interests of the funding bodies.

Given this literature, and considering my own unease with the notion of helping outlined in the beginning of this chapter, I had expected participants to voice many ongoing moral dilemmas relating to their efforts to help the racialized Other. While issues of morality were raised more frequently in participants' descriptions of this work in comparison to their talk of educating Whites, the primary use of the past tense in describing occasions of moral unease was noticeable. That is, while participants raised moral issues, including those noted in the literature, they generally presented these as past struggles that had since been largely resolved. In talking about these issues, participants told of how they had worked through them and found a place from which they could feel morally comfortable helping the Other, speaking in a tone that suggested moral certainty. [57]

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[57] Two participants did not reference any moral concerns (in either the past or present tense) in describing their efforts to help the racialized Other, even when I specifically probed in this domain.

<u>Speaking for the Other: Voice, Appropriation, and Representation.</u> There was

considerable discussion in the interviews regarding the issue of 'voice'. Specifically,

participants talked about who has the right to speak for whom, and questioned what

speaking for the Other entails. All participants touched on the subject, and there was

consensus that, ideally, White people should not speak for racialized Others (although

Debbie further questioned whether it was possible for any individual voice to represent

the interests of a group). However, participants also agreed that under certain

conditions, to speak for the racialized Other was not only permissible, but a

responsibility they could not ignore. Debbie, Margaret, Cathy, and Jeff discussed the

issue of voice the most, and they noted specific conditions under which they felt it was

their responsibility to speak for the racialized Other. As both the similarities and the

nuanced differences among the specified conditions are noteworthy, I have included

excerpts from each of these participants' interviews below.

Although she voiced unease in doing so, Margaret concluded that she was

obliged to speak for racialized Others when they were not present to speak for

themselves:

> And then there's also resentment then from some, like, "You can't <u>speak</u> for
> us," you know, "How dare you speak for us?" And it's a struggle to say, "Well,
> you know, I can't speak <u>for</u> you, you know, I don't know your voice, I mean, only
> you know that. But you know, <u>anything</u> is better than <u>nothing</u>." So, that's been a
> tough part, because there's been challenges where, you know, the argument is
> that you can only speak for your group … and I <u>support</u> that. But on the other
> hand, if there's no one <u>available</u>, if there's no one around, does that mean
> there's no voice? You know, if there's someone there and they're <u>capable</u>,
> that's great. But are you going to say it's a bad thing if somebody else goes out
> and, you know, they advance the goals, doesn't everybody win? But,
> unfortunately, especially a lot in the union circles, it's a we-and-them kind of
> thing, you know.

Debbie and Cathy also voiced unease with the prospect of speaking for the

Other, but suggested it was their responsibility to do so when it was framed as being a

support to the Other and done at their request. Debbie elaborates on this as follows:

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I'm <u>not</u> comfortable. Because I think that, like I said, you know, the voices of <u>those</u> people that are experiencing that racism first hand need to be the ones who are the voices of their greater group, right? <u>But</u> on the other hand, sometimes, because other people see you as a support, right, you're called upon to <u>be</u> that voice and to stand up, not in <u>front</u> of them, but <u>beside</u> them, you know, for whatever the issue is, right? Because it <u>is</u> hard if you're already oppressed and disenfranchised and whatever, to suddenly, you know "I'm gonna stand up and take on the world," you know. It <u>is</u> difficult, and you have to know that there's other people around you, whatever colour they are, to support you and assist you, you know, and know that you're not <u>alone</u>, right? Because that's part of that isolation and being rejected.

Cathy told of an incident in which she was reprimanded by someone in a meeting for speaking on behalf of racialized people. She defended her behaviour on the basis that "the refugees and immigrants had very clearly asked me to present, to speak on their behalf." Cathy went on to explain that the people for whom she was speaking were upset that her right to speak for them had been challenged.

Whereas Debbie and Cathy seemed to require an explicit request from racialized Others to speak on their behalf, Jeff emphasized situations where such a request could be read as implied. He spoke about his practice of using stories given to him by First Nations people in his own writings. He explained that individuals had challenged this practice on moral grounds, claiming that his actions represented cultural appropriation. In his reply below, note how Jeff turns this argument around, claiming instead that in this case, sharing to the stories of the Other was both culturally and morally the right thing to do:

People would say, "Well, what gives you the right to talk to Aboriginal people, and then interpret and translate what they say into <u>your</u> own documents?" And in the style of Aboriginal storytelling, really the story has <u>never</u> become mine, the story is always.. belongs to the person that told it to me, unless I was involved in it. And those people who told me the story were doing it with the <u>particular</u> understanding, and I wasn't aware but I am now, that it was <u>my</u> responsibility to share that. To tell other people those stories when <u>those</u> people couldn't <u>be</u> there. … ..so those people that asked me, I'd say it's not my story, people have told me things because they assume I was going to share it with others. So the work that I do, the way that I teach, the stories that I tell, have all been informed by those people that have talked to me. And I acknowledge that, as best I can <u>whenever</u> I can.

The Role of Advocate. The main moral issue participants identified in describing their advocacy work centered on ensuring that the clients' needs remained the first priority; anything that might compromise this priority was deemed morally wrong. Recall the feelings of frustration three participants voiced at needing to take direction from their clients when they may have wished to pursue a different course of action. While reportedly difficult, the necessity of setting aside one's own agenda and following the lead of the client in this context was presented as being of great moral importance to these participants because, they said, it showed a deep respect for the client.

For these participants, ensuring that they are truly advocating for the client alone, also means taking deliberate steps to block the influence of other parties that have vested interests in advocacy outcomes. Speaking with moral certitude, they explained that they can have no allegiances or ties to organizations that might influence them to act in a manner that is not in their clients' best interest. Tom explained that in the past his advocacy organization had received government funding to help cover operating expenses. He suggested that this funding was later cut because they had continued to take cases *against* the government. Debbie, having reportedly faced a similar situation, graphically outlined what is at stake in tying advocacy work to government funding: "[If] you're dependent on government money, they'll cut your throat the minute that you go out of line, right? So it's potentially … a disaster." Despite the incredible challenges that Tom suggested a lack of funding has created for his organization, Tom concluded that the funding cut was a "blessing," arguing that clients' needs are better served when the temptation to appease funding bodies is removed.

The Position of 'Helper'. Only Grace explicitly described any moral unease over the positioning of Self as 'helper'. While the issues she raised may be similar to

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the issues associated with being an advocate outlined above, her focus was slightly

different. She spoke of the tension she felt between recognizing that she had

something to offer to the racialized Other, yet not wanting to be caught up in the "traps"

of this positioning: "Being in a position where you are helping, I like to see it as

working together with someone. But the fact is … there's … things people want help

with, and I help to provide that. But I try to keep myself conscious of the traps involved

in doing that. There are many traps." In the following excerpt she elaborates on this

tension and explains her strategy for dealing with it:

Grace: Being a helper is a position of <u>power</u>. And to not give into that, to not <u>use</u> it as such, but to see that as more as a service rather than as a power thing. And … it can be very easy to slip into that, telling people what they should do, for example. Or not being careful about making sure that the person is <u>involved</u> in the process, and contributing suggestions….

Vonda: Do you sense that they [clients] are kind of pulling for that?

Grace: Oh absolutely! I've had people say, "I'll do whatever you say because you know <u>best</u>!" And that's a hard one, to deal with.

Vonda: So how would you react to that?

Grace: Some people feel that God has sent me to them *(laughter).* So, well, usually by saying, "Well, you'd better not expect <u>too</u> much," *(laughter)* by laying it out right away, that, "you know, this is the thing we have to do together. … You know better than I do what's best for you. I can help you with the way the situation is here because I've <u>been</u> here a long time, but other than that, you have to help <u>me</u> to do some of those things and then I can help you with some of those things." So that's usually pretty well understood right away - and appreciated.

<u>Balancing Idealism and Pragmatism in Personal Employment Choices.</u> All

participants suggested that a goal of their efforts to 'help' the racialized Other is to see

more racialized people involved in meaningful employment. Furthermore, many

participants suggested that it is important for particular positions of authority to be held

by racialized people, in part for the message it sends to society (i.e., challenging

colonialist notions of White superiority). For example, Jeff argued that Aboriginal

people should lead Aboriginal organizations, while Diane and Grace suggested organizations addressing the needs of immigrants should be led by immigrants.

While participants generally agreed with the goal of increasing racialized peoples' involvement in the workforce and with the need for them to be in more key positions of authority, this issue was portrayed as having particular moral significance for Jeff and Grace. These two participants explained that they had held positions that, ideally, should have been held by racialized individuals. In addition to questioning himself, Jeff said that he has faced intense criticism for holding these positions. Torn between their ideals and pragmatic concerns relevant to particular workplace contexts, both individuals voiced an intense desire to "do the right thing," and were adamant that they did not ever want personal ambition or gain to come before broader anti-racism goals for which they are fighting. While Grace and Jeff explained that they have found their way through this moral quagmire to a place where they can feel morally at ease retaining their positions without giving up their ideals, they did acknowledge some lingering discomfort. Given the moral complexities in their stories, and the fascinating ways in which they reportedly worked through them, I would like to briefly present each of their stories below.

Jeff explained that he has held several positions that have raised the ire of some individuals given his identification as a White male. While he notes ongoing criticism by some for holding his current position, he suggested they were fewer than when he was employed by a First Nations organization. It was during that time that he reportedly faced the most intense criticism and personal moral anxiety over his role; and it was also the period during which he claims to have largely resolved the matter for himself. Having chosen to leave the organization at one point because of the pressure he felt from some individuals to do so, he explained that he changed his mind after a discussion with other First Nations colleagues:

But then some of my colleagues came up to me afterwards and said, "This is the place for you. We want you to reconsider your ideas and we'd like you to stay." And for me that was a turning point, where my First Nations and Métis friends and colleagues said, "You're needed. Forget about the politics and rhetoric, and the one or two people that like to make life miserable for everybody. The rest of us like you here."

Jeff went on to explain that his decision to stay was based on his realization that the vocal minority did not represent the views of the larger group, and that he still had something unique and important to offer the organization. However, he said that he did resign at a later date when he felt there were First Nations individuals equally capable of doing his job. Note in the following excerpt how he shares the idealistic stance of those who wanted him to leave the organization, yet weights this view in relation to particular pragmatic considerations:

There was always one or two that were pretty - and for good reason - were pretty idealistic about wanting Aboriginal things to be Aboriginal. <u>Pragmatically</u> in the larger camp, we realized that a lot of work had to be done and it was going to have to include all sorts of people. But I understand too that – and I left ____ because of it – that eventually … I'd need to give up my place, if it's required, to an Aboriginal person to take over. And now there is a First Nations man who is the head of the program that I was head of.

Similarly, Grace explained that while she feels she still has a role to play in her organization, she too expressed a willingness to step aside when she feels it is in the best interests of the organization, and racialized people in general, for her to do so. Like Jeff, she described having put this ideal into practice by reducing her work hours to make more hours available to her racialized colleagues, and by declining a promotion since she felt the position offered her should be held by a racialized person. In describing her views below, note Grace's intriguing definition of career success:

Grace: I thought, well I had some responsibility here to see that those opportunities are there, that's part of what I'm <u>there</u> for. … I'm kind of working against my purposes and the mission of the organization if I put … my own <u>status</u> or role in such an agency <u>first</u>. And so … I've sort of had what most people would think of as ... a sort of downhill career path instead of an uphill career path *(laughter),* but I'm pretty happy with that anyway, I don't mind. I don't mind, and that was by <u>choice</u>, so.. knowing it

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was by choice is quite different than what some people experience, <u>not</u> by choice.

Vonda: So what you said … the career path that goes down … that would be a successful career path in the context of your work?

Grace: Oh, absolutely! Yes. Absolutely. <u>I</u> think so. … you know, I was offered the position of executive director at one point but … I didn't want it. That's not what I wanted to do. And also I think that image is important to an agency like that because it's a part of.. it's not <u>just</u> image, image is kind of a ... <u>weak</u> word. Part of the drawing in of newcomers, making people feel welcome, and modeling, modeling the kind of community that we want, is really important. And so <u>my</u> ideal was to have an agency that was a model of what we wanted to see in the whole community.

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In reflecting on the moral issues participants discussed in relation to their efforts to 'help' the racialized Other, what stands out for me is that they all tend to center around participants' positionings in relation to the figure of the racialized Other. Although most participants did not dwell upon it in great depth, all of them recognized that it is their whiteness and its corresponding privilege that allow them to claim the role of 'helper'. This recognition seemed to cause at least some degree of discomfort and unease for most participants, as they struggled to make sense of the inherent power differential made possible by racism, between the Self as 'helper' and the racialized Other as 'helped'.[58]

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[58] The two exceptions noted previously require comment. While both Kelly and Liz described involvements that focused directly on the racialized Other, and both spoke of challenges in doing this work, recall that neither explicitly described facing any moral issues. I found this particularly interesting as I would have expected that other people would have raised moral concerns about the appropriateness of some of the work that they do. For example, Kelly developed a program that involved teaching First Nations youth about their culture; while Liz 'helps' a highly marginalized Other (i.e., First Nations people on social assistance) from a powerful position of authority. Her clients must accept her assistance if they wish to continue receiving social assistance. I can only speculate as to the reasons for the apparent absence of moral dilemmas in their talk; however, based on the interviews and my impressions, I would guess that in Kelly's case moral unease might be mitigated by his emphasis on working in partnerships with First Nations people. Thus, while he is involved in educating First Nations youth, he suggests it is done with the support and input of a group of elders. Liz's entire narrative tended to be a more straightforward description of her anti-racism involvements; in general she offered fewer analytic or reflective comments.

Also noteworthy is the marked contrast between the ways in which participants tended to deal with moral dilemmas when the focus of their efforts was educating Whites versus 'helping' the racialized Other. Recall that in educating the White Other, participants typically relied on a pragmatic, and an ends-justifies-the-means logic. While this approach can be seen in some of the examples offered in this section (e.g., Jeff's and Grace's justification for retaining their positions draws somewhat upon this logic), it is far less prevalent in their talk of helping the racialized. Rather, their accounts suggest the most common strategy used to negotiate this moral terrain is a deliberate re-positioning of Self from the position of dominance, implied in the 'helper' role, to a position of servitude vis-à-vis the racialized Others they seek to help.

A quick review of the previous examples serves to support this interpretation. In her role as 'helper' to the racialized Other, Grace clearly states that she views her work as "a service rather than as a power thing." Similarly, speaking for racialized people is framed not as a right, but as a responsibility; participants argue that they must be willing to offer their voices to be used in the service of the Other. Note too how in their talk of advocating, the figure of the racialized Other is positioned as the leader, while Self is assigned the role of servant carrying out the work requested by the Other. Finally, participants' retaining of jobs that they suggest should ideally be held by racialized Others is also framed as a service of sorts. As they present it, they are in a sense holding the job in trust for the Other until the Other is ready to take it, at which time they will hand over the position even if it means facing personal loss. In each of these cases, participants can be seen to position themselves as being in service to the various racialized Others they encounter in their work, offering their unearned privilege as a gift to be used by these individuals as they see fit.

8. CHANGING STRUCTURES

In this chapter I explore anti-racism involvements that participants describe as directly focused on changing structures deemed, in some measure, to be racist.[59] The word 'directly' in the preceding sentence notes an important distinguishing factor between material covered in this chapter and material included in the two preceding chapters. That is, while educating Whites and helping the racialized might well be conceived by participants as part of their general goal of changing society (i.e., their utopian vision of society as structurally changed), in neither case did participants frame these efforts as *directly* addressing structural aspects of society. Thus, a key criterion in including anti-racism involvements in this chapter is that they are constructed by participants as efforts aimed specifically at changing structures.

While there was considerable variability in the degree to which participants suggested they are involved in this kind of work, ten of the participants described ongoing efforts to bring about structural change. [60] Margaret, Debbie, and Chris

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[59] A note of clarification regarding terminology in this chapter is needed. Recall that in talking about racism in Saskatchewan, participants tended to use the term 'systemic racism' when referring to racism operating at a broad, societal level. In identifying targets of their efforts to fight racism, they still used the term 'systems' on occasion, but more commonly referred to changing 'structures'. In this context, it seemed the word 'system' was used alternately as a synonym for 'structure'. Online dictionaries also suggested that the words 'systemic,' 'structural,' and 'institutional' may be used interchangeably in relation to racism. Thus, to avoid confusion and since 'structure' was the word most commonly used by participants, it is the term I generally rely on in this chapter. However, I have also been careful to use participants' own terminology wherever possible or to point out distinctions that were made by participants.

[60] Stephanie and Jeff are exceptions. While Stephanie was perhaps the most clear in framing her priority in anti-racism as systemic change, and spoke of her interest in working with the school board in the future to more broadly change the education system, her current efforts were entirely focused on education and described as an attempt to indirectly influence systemic change through influencing her students. In Jeff's case, while he made references to working towards institutional change, he tended to do so rarely and primarily in the past tense. Thus, his voice is largely absent in this section as well.

identified this clearly as their main priority in their anti-racism efforts. Tom and Liz also identified these efforts as central to their anti-racism involvements, albeit more as an offshoot of their advocacy work. That is, advocacy work was described as opening doors to additional opportunities to influence structural change. While the remaining five participants all described efforts to change structures, they did so to a lesser extent than these five participants.

At a broad level, participants seemed to be describing similar involvements (e.g., policy development related to hiring practices); however, their positionings in relation to the structure they hoped to change, and the corresponding experiences they related, varied considerably. Specifically, participants' efforts could be grouped into four categories based upon the way they positioned themselves in relation to the structure they hoped to change: as a member of an organization, as a member of a union, as an external consultant with particular expertise, and as a community activist.[61]

8.1 Working as a Member of an Organization

Seven participants described ways in which they work as insiders within an organization to initiate structural change. In all cases but one, the structure of interest noted was participants' primary workplace. For example, Kelly and Margaret described helping to develop specific recruitment policies and hiring procedures designed to increase the number of racialized individuals brought into their organizations. Chris also talked about working to change hiring practices, but focused primarily on his broader efforts to change the education system. In the following excerpt, he describes

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[61] To be clear, it is participants' involvements and not the participants themselves that are being categorized here. Indeed, it should be clear by now that participants generally defy discrete categorization since they typically work across a range of contexts and the boundaries between them tend to be fluid and varied. Thus, individual names may appear in more than one of the sections below depending upon the particular involvements being discussed.

his involvement with individuals from the education system and First Nations organizations who are working together towards structural change:

> We look at hirings. … As a system we need to promote more employment of Aboriginal peoples. How do we do that? … And trying to influence how our board makes decisions from a policy standpoint…. So finding the monies for that, and lobbying for the money, trying to change policy a little bit in terms of how school divisions and schools handle particular situations. There's been discussion around trying to have a discrimination policy, as well, and that's a policy that needs to be shared with all staffs at the start of the school year, and needs to be in our policy manual at the school division. So, I guess there's a systemic policy piece that I'm associated with.

Kelly offers another example of a way in which participants described working towards sweeping organizational change:

> And the other thing we're trying to do with that - and this really speaks to a lot of, of racism, even institutionally especially - is we want … [to] create our department so that it develops in a way so that whatever decision we make, it takes into consideration diversity. So not only is it a decision that's made within the culture relations unit, but within our planning unit, our ____ office, on the street, whatever, we take diversity into consideration. So that's a huge institutional change that we're trying to develop.

Grace and Diane also shared a vision of complete organizational change in their workplaces, but their accounts suggest they approached it differently than Kelly. Their approach was described as less formal and more tied to their efforts to help the racialized. That is, they explained how they supported racialized colleagues and worked behind the scenes to encourage the hiring and promotion of racialized individuals in their workplaces.

Liz was unique in that, when speaking as an insider working for organizational change, she referred primarily to her efforts to influence the structure of her political party rather than her workplace. She described her ideal of a party that was free of racism and included more racialized Others. To that end, her involvements included developing policies to ensure representation of various racialized groups in key party positions, and helping a Black woman run for nomination.

While the contexts and kinds of involvements described varied, many commonalities were noted in participants' accounts of their experiences in working for organizational change from an insider position. For example, in every instance participants' tone was primarily optimistic and upbeat, suggesting institutional change is possible). Furthermore, participants described methods that sounded gentle and conciliatory, rather than aggressive and confrontational. For example, they spoke of the need to lead by example, to be patient, and to gain the support of the members of the organization they hoped to change. While participants noted the need to move slowly in order to gain this support, they also voiced frustration with what they described as the slow pace of change and spoke of their sense of powerlessness to speed it up.

Kelly's comments were unique. While his talk was similar to other participants' talk in terms of its generally optimistic tone, he noted more challenges and frustrations in working towards his goal of organizational change than did the other participants. Specifically, he spoke of feeling isolated in his work, both because his work position did not fit neatly into the organizational chart of his workplace, and because he felt his co-workers generally did not share his vision of a transformed organization.

8.2 Working as Member of a Union

Three participants described their efforts to address structural racism from a position within their unions. While these participants also claimed an insider position of sorts, what makes this category of anti-racism efforts distinct from the previous one is the primary identification with the union that participants emphasized in these instances. Interestingly, each of these participants explained that they were first drawn to the union as they saw in its "principles" a basis for establishing the kind of structure they wanted in their workplace. Thus, they said that they joined the union with the intent of using it as a position from which to address structural issues in their workplaces. However, they explained that once they became involved in their union

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and realized that racism also permeated that structure, they took steps to bring about organizational change in it as well.

Unfortunately, describing in detail precisely what it is that these participants do to address structural racism through their union involvements has proven to be a considerable challenge for me for several reasons. First, participants tended to speak more in generalities than in specifics when discussing union involvements. Second, as one who has never been involved formally in a union, I was drawn into a world that was largely unfamiliar to me and somewhat confusing. I found myself trying to balance the need to ask for clarification (e.g., on terminology, structures, procedures, and other aspects of the union that seemed to them to be common sense notions) with the desire to not unduly hamper the flow of their talk.[62] However, I shall attempt at least a brief overview of their work.

As they described it, these participants' efforts seemed to focus primarily on increasing the number of racialized people in their workplaces and in positions of union leadership. To that end, both Margaret and Debbie described participating on several equal opportunity committees, and spoke of helping to make structural changes in their unions to ensure a greater voice for racialized people and other equity group members. Debbie describes what this meant in her case:

> When I first started … we had one equity committee. One equity committee. Now that one equity committee would serve, call it, the interests of the disabled, women, Aboriginal people, you know, First Nations and Métis, whatever. I mean, probably if they could have thrown in the kitchen sink they would have done that too - anybody that didn't fit into this square box. … Now equity is

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[62] My obvious confusion in following Margaret's 'union talk' led her to observe, "It is hard, and I sometimes forget, somebody always tells me that I talk in a different language, and you do because … when we're in a group we can say things and you know, people probably think we're talking in code but the structure is difficult. And that, I mean there is a barrier right there." Margaret went on to explore what this barrier might mean for increasing the involvement of equity group members, saying she had never really thought about the union structure itself as a barrier in these terms. As we spoke she jotted notes for herself regarding how this potential barrier to encouraging diverse groups to participate in the union participation might be addressed. I found this to be one of many examples that illustrates the dynamic nature of the interviews and reinforces the notion that we were co-constructors in the meaning produced.

core, on every single committee in our union right now we have one equity member.

Liz, who elaborated less on her union work, mentioned her role in forming anti-racism committees in her union and spoke of developing anti-racism policies for her workplace.

I found these participants' descriptions of their experiences in addressing structural aspects of racism from a union position to be both compelling and intriguing. They spoke of their frustrations and challenges, their ideals, and the methods they use to bring about structural change. Much of their talk centered on their sense of disconnect between what *is* and what *should be* within the union, and their impatience with the challenges in closing that gap. Stories were told with emotion and passion, and a strong moral tone rich in idealism and cynicism permeated their narratives. They described how they were drawn to the union because of its idealist principles, and noted their dismay in finding racism, sexism, and inequality operating at both individual and structural levels in their union. Note Margaret's sense of disillusionment and disgust in the excerpt below in which she labels this disconnect as hypocrisy:

> I mean the whole issue of union is, you know, basic union principles are about … solidarity … an injury to one is an injury to all, and it just absolutely blows my mind that within the labor movement, they'll walk around saying an injury to one is an injury to all. I mean it's on signs, it's on pins, it's on everything. But they don't equate that to equity. They equate that to, you know, somebody got locked out … that to them is an injury but not supporting equity they don't see that as an injury? You know, not promoting it, not supporting it, not validating the cause, so it's like totally hypocritical.

This sense of disillusionment and disappointment with the union for failing to live up to their moral expectations was also alluded to by both Margaret and Debbie as they voiced their disgust for the in-fighting that occurs among equity groups. Margaret suggested that various groups expend their energies fighting over limited resources, rather than working together as they should against their shared oppression:

The equity groups. I mean they all have a vision. Like this one wants this piece of pie, this one wants this; if one group gets something more than the other then it becomes we-and-they <u>amongst</u> themselves, and you want to just smack them silly and say, "You know, this may have no impact for you, but it really benefits, you know, the Aboriginal group. So be happy for them, and next time if there's something pressing, we'll all work together on <u>your</u> issues."

The slow rate of change was another frustration voiced by two of these participants, who spoke of their annoyance with the length of time and the energy required to bring their unions to the place where they were more actively living out their union values. Whereas Margaret seemed particularly discouraged with the lack of rapid change, Debbie spoke of the slow rate of speed with a tone of resignation:

And, when you're dealing with the type of organizations that <u>I've</u> dealt with, they're <u>very</u> highly - I won't say <u>un</u>changeable - whether they're government, whether they're schools, whether they're unions, they don't change overnight. Transition is <u>very</u> <u>very</u> slow.

In their references to their union involvements, the 'anti-racism as warfare' discourse was prevalent. Interestingly though, the discourse seemed to be used differently when participants spoke of their efforts to change their unions versus their efforts to change their workplaces. Margaret emphasizes this distinction in saying, "I expect to fight those battles with the employer but it just annoys me to no end when I have to fight it in the union." Despite the tensions they described within the union, there was a strong sense of shared identity with other union members and a clear feeling of Us in their stories. The fights within the union that they described were framed more as family squabbles or "struggles" between "factions," whereas in addressing racism in their workplaces they spoke in terms of all out warfare.[63] For example, in referring to the in-fighting between equity groups, Margaret says she would like to "smack them silly"; the image this evokes for me is of an annoyed parent dealing with bickering children rather than a soldier in full battle. This distinction between efforts directed at

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[63] This aggressive tone is in stark contrast to the conciliatory and non-aggressive tone of other participants who described working within their organizations without a clear union affiliation.

changing the union versus the workplace was also evident in the methods participants describe using in each context. For example, Margaret spoke of addressing racism "head-on" in her workplace and offered examples of direct confrontation; yet in the union context her efforts seem to be more cunning and calculated. Note the strategy she describes using to move a resolution forward in a union meeting:

> So the discussion is going on … a few of us had a strategy, okay, you know, we're going to stack the mikes, you know, meaning have so many people in line at the mikes, and then the fifth person up was going to call the question, which means debate stops and you vote. If it was going well. … It's a <u>game</u>. That's how you play the game… It's <u>all</u> political maneuvering … Then you start playing the Rules of Order game. And you know, if you're a good strategist and you know how to deal with Rules of Order on a convention floor you can get things done.

<u>8.3 Working as an External Consultant</u>

In the two preceding sections, I described participants' accounts of their attempts to change organizations of which they could be considered members. In this section I consider three participants' descriptions of their efforts to influence structural change in *other* organizations from the external position of a consultant.[64] Joan described working for organizations that hired her to help bring about organizational change; Grace spoke of working in a less formal relationship with individuals from Human Resource departments in various organizations; Cathy told of her experience as a volunteer on an advisory committee for an organization of which she was not a member. I consider briefly each of these participants' involvements below.

Working with a wide array of public, private, and not-for-profit organizations, Joan explained that her focus is on helping clients make "system changes" in their organizations. Typically, she said, potential clients contact her with a "presenting request," which she explores further in order to make her own assessment as to the "real" problem and to develop an appropriate plan of action. If the client is open to

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[64] While only one of these participants explicitly referred to herself as a "consultant," the label seems to fit well with the position described by the other two participants as well.

participating in this process, a contract may be negotiated. While she reportedly takes

into account issues related to diversity and equity during this process, she explained

that they are rarely the focus of organizations' presenting request to her:

> The presenting <u>problem</u> … is <u>rarely</u> "the presenting problem is our lack of diversity." I don't think anybody's ever said that. … They might say something like that later on in conversation about how bogged down they are in strategic planning, or that, you know, "We've got some labor shift deficits here," <u>that</u> they might whisper to me sometime much later in the relationship, but nobody really comes forward [with that] … and nobody <u>White</u>, let's be clear about that.

Unlike the general focus on policy development in other participants' talk, Joan

explained that her interest lies in carrying out organizational interventions at the level of

the group (e.g., conflict resolution work) or the individual (e.g., leadership coaching).

Still, regardless of the explicit target of her attention, she was clear that her primary

goal in this work is on initiating change at an organizational level.

Within the context of her efforts to assist the racialized Other in finding

employment, Grace suggested that she is sometimes able to encourage structural

change in organizations other than her own. She explained that, as part of her job, she

occasionally works with individuals in Human Resource (HR) departments and

encourages them to remove employment barriers for newcomers to Canada. She

pointed that that organizations with employment equity policies in place are sometimes

the most resistant to her suggestions. As she elaborated, having a policy in place

sometimes leads HR personnel to assume that the "problem" of racism is being

addressed and no more work needs to be done:

> It's kind of like the smelter having their own environmentalist, you know, it's.. "Well, we're taking care of it." But the numbers don't usually play out. So a lot of things can get hidden in there. Doesn't mean I think they should get rid of them, but I don't know, and I think that's a good role for <u>us</u> here, to try to get people together to look at it, and say "Okay, so what's happening here?"

Grace went on to describe a plan she has been working to facilitate discussions with HR employees in organizations with employment equity policies in order to improve the job prospects of the individuals these plans are designed to help.

Finally, Cathy described her work on an advisory committee charged with helping an organization become more diverse, in part by helping to identify and address issues of structural racism within it. As she described it, this work involves regularly meeting with key members of that organization and working in partnership with them. Cathy explained that the committee has identified several racist practices in the recruitment and application processes used.

The way in which these three participants talked about their involvements was decidedly different than the way participants described their union work. The tone of this talk was detached and logical, less passionate and intense; the discourse of warfare was largely absent, and the emphasis in their descriptions was more on cooperation than confrontation. While they described in greater detail their particular activities, they spoke less about their feelings and personal experience in doing this work.

However, one aspect of these participants' talk that bears further discussion is the relationship between their references to power struggles and the notably tenuous nature of their relationship with the organization they are seeking to influence. In the cases described, participants' involvement requires the invitation, or at least the permission, of the host organization. Participants seemed cognizant of this in describing their work. Cathy spoke about the power struggles between her committee and organizational leaders and the challenge to be seen as equal partners by these leaders. (As she reportedly told them, "If you want an advisory committee, then this is going to be an advisory committee.") While she explained that the relationship between the committee and these leaders is currently positive, she voiced uncertainty as to the

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future of the committee if organizational leaders were to ever withdraw their support. Joan also alluded to power struggles with potential clients, stating that if they demanded that she simply address their "presenting problem" she is likely to turn down the work. Grace's relationship with HR personnel is perhaps the most tenuous and her position the most lacking in power as it is not formally recognized in a structural relationship or contractual form. She spoke the most openly about feeling powerless to influence change in other organizations.

8.4 Working as a Community Activist

Like the participants just described, three other participants also spoke about attempts to bring about structural change within organizations of which they were not members. However, in these accounts, participants did not seek anyone's permission to become involved; rather, they seemed to position themselves deliberately as *outsiders*, challenging racism on their own terms. Both Tom and Liz used the word 'activist' to describe themselves in this context, and it is a word that often came to my mind in hearing them talk. These three participants positioned themselves in their talk as members of a broader community, or as part of a grassroots movement, and their talk had a decidedly political flavour to it. In addition to addressing specific structures, participants spoke more about influencing broader systems (e.g., justice and education systems) than did participants in other contexts. Interestingly, participants in this context also seemed to rely more upon story-telling to describe what it is that they do. I found the stories these participants told are the ones that have remained with me, both because of their unique content as well as the vivid way in which they were told.

Debbie most explicitly identified herself with grassroots and community level organizations in this talk, and framed her particular activist involvements as part of a broader challenge to education, law enforcement, and justice systems. For example, she described how a group of women had organized demonstrations in response to a

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decision to close an inner-city elementary school. In the excerpt below, she explains

how she views the closure as a racist act, and describes one way in which her group

responded to it:

> I believe systemic racism is going on clearly in the inner city schools because
> what schools are they closing? Inner city schools. … They basically had one of
> the schools in the inner city, as they were closing it, there's probably about 80%
> little brown faces on the buses of the kids they were moving. They weren't
> White kids moving in, you know. And the reason they closed the school? The
> school board said in Regina it was because … they were paying more in utilities
> and the cost of light bulbs was going up. So, we took a bunch of kids and went
> down in front of the school board and put light bulbs around their neck, because
> obviously the light bulbs were more important than the school kids that were
> there, right? *(chuckles)* [65]

Debbie also spoke of publicly protesting reported cases of police brutality

against Aboriginal men; marching against legal decisions she felt were unjust; assisting

in legal cases in which racialized individuals were seeking justice; and working to

establish a free legal clinic for women that would help them to better maneuver through

a justice system that too often operates in a racist and sexist manner.

Tom's and Liz's efforts to influence systemic and structural change were

presented as offshoots of their advocacy work. That is, they explained that they might

be brought into an organization through an individual's complaint, but would then use

their position to try to bring about broader organizational change. For example, Tom

described how he had been involved in advocating for an individual who had

experienced racism in the workplace. The case was heard by the Human Rights

Commission and Tom's client won the case. However, Tom said that he and the client

were looking for more than just an individual victory; they also wanted to set a clear

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[65] What struck me in the telling of stories such as this one was the way in which participants
could at the same time convey the seriousness and darkness of racism, yet also point out the
humour in these situations in such a way that did not diminish the seriousness of the issue. This
was most apparent in Debbie's interview. In telling about the various activist antics (such as the
light bulb incident) she often laughed and seemed clearly amused. While participants varied
considerably in this regard, I found there was generally more humour and laughter in the
interviews than I had expected.

legal precedent and thereby change the broader legal system. Thus, as there were stipulations in the ruling that could be challenged, they took their case to the Supreme Court of Canada and won, setting an important legal precedent in the process.

Liz elaborated on how she uses her position within a human rights organization to 'force' organizations to make changes, such as developing harassment policies. Note in the excerpt below the veiled threat she issues in order to have an organization make the changes she recommends:

<u>Liz:</u>   Then I just tell them, "It's real simple, like we can solve this and it doesn't <u>have</u> to go to the [Human Rights] Commission, <u>or</u> I can refer it to the Commission, you know, so you basically have two choices. Let's look at dealing with this at a much lower level, and I know that <u>you'd</u> like to get through this problem because it's causing you and your staff some problems, and maybe we can resolve it." …

<u>Vonda:</u> So are employers - I don't know if there is such a thing as 'typically' - do they welcome your involvement or are they resistant to it?

<u>Liz:</u>   *(chuckles)* They're resistive, they're usually resistant. Some I guess would say that they welcome … because they haven't been able to get through the mess, you know, and sometimes it really is in a tailspin and if you've ever been in a workplace where, you know, there's such a, you know, anger and fighting going on, it's hard to work, you know.

Liz went on to explain that she will follow up with organizations later to ensure that the required changes have indeed been made. For example, she describes "going back and seeing how the quota has changed, you know, where there was one Aboriginal person in the workplace and now there is several…."

Participants' stories of their efforts to fight systemic and structural racism from a community activist position were similar in their tone, in the methods they described employing, and in the challenges they identified. As in participants' talk of their union involvements, participants in this context spoke passionately and with the moral certitude of being on the side of truth, and voiced skepticism that structures would be changed if intense pressure were not exerted. For example, note the cynical tone in Debbie's comments:

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Governments are really big on talk but not a lot on walk, and that's just the nature of the beast, right? So they pretend equity, I call it, a lot, but they really haven't initiated any change and they only scramble when they're forced into admitting they haven't done anything and they look bad. And that's really they're motivation, rather than "Let's really get in there and let's see what a difference we can make."

Given this view, it is not surprising that participants took a decidedly confrontational, in-your-face stance in their work. In addition to relying heavily on the discourse of warfare, they described using primarily aggressive methods to bring about change, such as Liz's apparent use of threats in getting organizations to comply with her demands for organizational change. In another example, Tom described how he and his partner had aggressively and publicly confronted a government department that they viewed as racist, despite the fact that their advocacy organization was trying to secure funding from it at the time. In the excerpt below note both the aggressive methods Tom describes and his tone of moral certitude:

They [the government department] would have all these [anti-racism] celebrations and we would go there and hand out pamphlets, you know, showing the hypocrisy and giving quotes from the very people that were in charge of this. And it became irritating to some of the _____ board that wanted funding from there, but _____ said, "No, you confront this wherever it is, and you don't ever compromise, because then you can start picking and choosing." … I certainly believe that now too. But … it's hard to do, it's hard to do with friends and colleagues.

While aggression might be implied in Tom's account, Debbie is more explicit in describing her approach as such:

People have different approaches. Mine is basically to kick the door down. Some people have better approaches. They have more solution focused approaches. I think there's times for kicking the door down - I don't think that's a solution all the time. … And I mean by kicking the door down not physically kicking the door down, but I mean, you know, sometimes you have to go to media. You have to get them on the bandwagon about some awful thing that's happened to initiate a change. You have to speak out.

The main challenges that these participants identified in carrying out this work revolved around feelings of powerlessness. They noted the frustration of not being taken seriously by gatekeepers they needed to influence, and of being shut out of

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decision making processes. They also described the difficulty of obtaining the necessary finances to carry out their work. These themes are illustrated in Debbie's story of how she was involved in trying to secure funding for a free legal clinic for marginalized groups in society. She described how she and her friends approached different levels of government and various departments for funding, each time being refused since their proposal didn't seem to fit into any neat "little box." She says of this experience:

> You feel like that little kid with the bowl, you know, "Please sir, can I have a few crumbs."… Like, you're continually chasing the almighty buck to get somebody to write up a proposal for you to get two cents! You know? *(chuckles)* It's bizarre! And that's what I mean. It's all <u>about</u> money. There's no way you can say it isn't. And if the people that are in power positions are <u>not</u> from those groups, guess what, those groups are <u>not</u> gonna get the money.

8.5 Conclusion

In an effort to construct a more global picture of participants' experience in working towards structural change, it may be useful to consider the similarities and differences of their accounts across the four domains discussed (i.e., as a member of an organization, as a member of a union, as an external consultant with particular expertise, and as an activist). While participants in each of these contexts described wide-ranging efforts to change structures, a common theme running through their accounts was a focus on changing policies and practices related to the recruiting, hiring, advancement, and retaining of racialized people in organizations. Despite this commonality in focus, clear differences in methods and tones were noted in their described approaches. Depending upon the context, methods described ranged from gentle and conciliatory, to highly aggressive. Furthermore, seemingly aggressive methods took different forms in their talk, sometimes appearing subtle and cunning (i.e., appearing gentle and conciliatory) while at other times appearing more blatantly

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aggressive. Tones similarly ranged from positive and optimistic, to passionate and moralistic, to cool and detached.

Similarities and differences are also apparent in participants' references to issues of power in this talk. Specifically, while participants described feeling powerless in each of these four contexts, the meanings of powerlessness seemed to vary. When speaking as a member of an organization, powerlessness was related primarily to the slow rate of change. Powerlessness was described in more dynamic terms as power struggles in participants' work as external consultants. Both the slow rate of change and power struggles were noted in participants' descriptions of their union involvements. Finally, powerlessness was described by participant-activists as an inability to access critical sources of power.

I would like to conclude this chapter by commenting on participants' goal in bringing about structural change. Interestingly, regardless of their positionings as insiders or outsiders, or whether they are focused on influencing their own organization or another structure, all participants' accounts suggest that their efforts can be understood primarily as attempts to improve existing structures, rather than radically dismantling or fundamentally changing them. For example, they spoke of "removing barriers" facing racialized people in order to ensure there is a more "even playing field"; they did not talk about dismantling existing structures and/or rebuilding radically new structures in their place.

Consider the following accounts in this light. Kelly suggested his efforts are directed at making his organization more welcoming and accepting of the racialized Other. Liz recounted her attempts to have a vice-president position for visible minorities added to her political party so that the needs of this population could be better served. Margaret, Debbie, Liz, Grace, Cathy, and Diane all spoke about their efforts to remove

the barriers that hinder racialized people from fully participating in the workforce.

Debbie presents this position as follows:

> You know, you have to get over that assumption that everybody starts at the same race line. They don't. And literally 'race' line *(chuckles),* you know? They do not begin at the same line. And so it's not treating them special, it's understanding that there's barriers, that there's all kinds of obstacles that happen that create the fact that, you know, the person walking in for a job isn't gonna get one because of their race.

Debbie also spoke of her efforts to establish a free legal clinic that would ensure marginalized people receive the same legal opportunities available to other members of society, and Joan said she wanted workplaces to be more welcoming of otherness. Finally, Chris's work with the school board is another example of an effort to change an existing system, in this case the education system. In the quote below, note his passionate defense of the public school system and his rejection of the suggestion that entirely new structures are required to meet the particular needs of Aboriginal students:

> I've been exposed to people who … feel that the school system that I'm a part of is very much a racist system, and that they need to create their <u>own</u> system, outside the box of education that we have now, and that they can't see it working within the current context. They have to really create their own First Nations schools for example, or Muslim schools, and that a public system really can't be all things to all people. It fails because it always <u>will</u> favor the majority group. And so the various minority groups, … a lot of them want to create their own reality and not have anything to do with it if they can. I'm not sure how easy that is to do. … I of course have always – maybe naively – thought that public education, that's it's greatest gift, is it is capable of trying to be so inclusive of all, and try and be, even though it's impossible, to really be all things to all people, to strive for that, is really admirable. So I'm in public education because I really believe that – it's not perfect – but it's always striving to try and learn from various groups, cultures, etc., etc., and that's what makes it so rich, … as opposed to trying to somehow stay separate. … That's just a continuation of what made the reserves such a bad concept to start with.

Viewed from this perspective, all of these efforts could be considered assimilationist in the sense that the focus is primarily on helping racialized Others to adjust to pre-existing structures and systems by making relatively modest changes and ensuring better access is secured. Indeed, this goal is in keeping with participants' utopian depictions of a non-racist society in which structure is altered rather than

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abolished. As I write these words, I imagine my participants' indignant response to having their work considered an assimilationist enterprise; indeed, the word 'assimilation' is loaded. However, my point is not to 'uncover' secret assimilationist aspirations of my participants, but rather to highlight once again the complexity of their experience and to explore seeming contradictions. For example, the same participants who appear to take an assimilationist stance in certain contexts of their work (e.g., Kelly, Grace, Debbie), in other contexts criticize assimilationist efforts to 'fit' racialized Others into dominant systems and structures. In the excerpt below, note how Kelly takes a decidedly non-assimilationist stance in voicing his frustration with academia's failure to recognize First Nations governance structures:

> The biggest … frustration that I have in that is that, even within the realm of political studies there still isn't the understanding. First Nations people, for instance, had their own governance system, they had all of this. They didn't look to Hobbes or Locke or Plato or Aristotle. They had their own forms, and yet I find that it's just nonexistent … in the studies.

How are we to make sense of this apparent contradiction? I would like to suggest a tentative interpretation based on the previous assertion that participants can be understood as relying primarily upon a pragmatic mode of thinking. Perhaps the relatively minor structural changes that participants seem to be working towards are not conceptualized by them as an end point, but rather as a necessary step towards a more significant redesigning of structure. At different points in the interview, several participants suggested that as long as positions of authority are held primarily by White males, little is going to change. Furthermore, most participants claimed to be working to increase the number of racialized people in organizations, in particular within key positions of authority. Rather than viewing the increase of racialized people in organizations as an end in itself, perhaps this is seen as the starting point for more radical structural redesign led by a new and diverse group of leaders. Viewed in this light, participants may well reject an assimilationist perspective in general while at the

same time recognize its pragmatic benefits in the short term. Further, in keeping with a pragmatic perspective, one might argue that tackling more 'manageable' projects such as changing existing structures in specific ways (e.g., changing a hiring policy) rather than attempting to deconstruct them and rebuild them in radically new ways has a more immediate and measurable impact on the lives of racialized Other. Based on this reading of participants, it may not be a coincidence that the participant whose expressed views seemed to be the most idealistic, the least pragmatic, and the most committed to radical societal restructuring (i.e., Stephanie), was also the one who described being the least involved in tackling structural issues directly, choosing rather to do so indirectly by focusing on education. These hypotheses could be explored further in future research.

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In focusing narrowly on the details of the preceding three chapters, it is easy to become preoccupied with the richness and diversity within, and among, participants' accounts. However, new meaning can be found in taking a more global view that spans participants' talk of educating Whites, helping the racialized, and changing structures. Interestingly, the commonalities I note challenge essentialist interpretations of participants (e.g., as having stable personality traits or set behaviour patterns across varied contexts); rather the patterns noted emphasize an *absence* of stability. For example, in reflecting on what has been covered in these chapters, the words that come to mind include fluidity, flexibility, negotiation, change, and adaptability. One area that illustrates these themes well is participants' references to negotiating power in the varied contexts in which they seek to address racism. It is to this topic that I would like to direct my attention in these concluding comments.

As a basis for discussion, consider what has been said both explicitly and implicitly regarding participants' experiences of power in the preceding chapters. In

describing their efforts to educate White people in the contexts of their everyday lives, participants described feeling generally powerless to bring about meaningful change. In talking about their formal educational involvements, fewer direct references were made to power, but participants' assessments of their success suggested an experience of Self as powerful. That is, success was defined in part by the level of resistance in their students, and they credited themselves for the minimal resistance they encountered. In their descriptions of helping the racialized, participants made more explicit references to power. They described feelings of powerlessness in two key areas. First, they expressed feeling powerless in relation to external limitations, such as limited resources and a lack of institutional support for their efforts. Their accounts suggest they resist this experience of powerlessness by actively struggling to access needed resources and support. Second, participants described feeling powerless in relation to the racialized people they were trying to help. However, in this case the sense of powerlessness they described was constructed in terms of a self-imposed restraint, a conscious and principled choice to submit themselves to the will of the racialized Other. While participants spoke about power in the sense of feeling power*less* in relation to the racialized Other, they also acknowledged themselves as power*ful* in their ability to be of service to the Other. Finally, in describing their efforts to bring about structural change, participants portrayed themselves as most actively and overtly engaged in power struggles, and again noted feelings of powerlessness.

How are we to make sense of participants' varied accounts of feeling both powerful and powerless in their anti-racism work? Clearly a traditional, essentialist, top-down understanding of power that positions participants simply as powerful - given their whiteness, their socio-economic status, and their positions of structural authority - is too simplistic to fit with participants' descriptions of their lived experience. According to participants' narratives, the spaces in which they work can be understood as places

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where power is constantly being negotiated, claimed, and contested; their positioning in these domains is not static. A Foucauldian conceptualization of power in constructionist terms fits much better with their context-dependent and ever shifting experiences of being both powerful *and* powerless. Foucault (1977, 1978) conceptualized power as being produced through a clash of forces; thus, both strong and weak parties are implicated in its generation and contribute to the specific form that it takes in any particular context. In this vision of power, participants can be understood to be intricately involved in the circulation of power, regardless of their shifting positionings as oppressed and oppressors.

In the above review, participants clearly show themselves to be acutely attuned to contextual factors and savvy negotiators of power. Now consider the portrait that emerges when this picture of participants is combined with other key themes in the preceding two chapters. For example, consider how they seem to skillfully draw upon a wide array of positionings and methods deemed appropriate to specific situations and meeting particular goals; recall evidence of their pragmatism in their moral reasoning and their use of ends-justifies-the-means logic; note their apparent ability to adapt their message of anti-racism to different situations; reflect on the overall tone of confidence in their talk. The image that comes to mind as I write these words is less often of the noble and moralistic warrior of truth that I had expected to encounter in this research, and is more often in keeping with the portrait of a crafty and street-smart fighter.

Given the shifting positionings of Self from positions of relative strength to relative weakness in their accounts, one might expect participants' efforts to suggest a reliance upon both strategies and tactics in their fight against racism. However, this did not appear to be the case, as methods described by participants were primarily in keeping with de Certeau's (1984) definition of strategy. To clarify, a strategy is defined as an action used by the dominant group to control and discipline populations (i.e.,

Foucault's "techniques of power"). A tactic, on the other hand, reflects the efforts of the

weak to resist that power using the weapons of the dominant social order.

> I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated…. By contrast with a strategy … a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus…. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to *keep to itself* … it is a manoeuvre … within enemy territory…. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. In short, a tactic is an art of the weak…. (de Certeau, 1984, p. 35-37)

While the general impression I have of participants is of being crafty and pragmatic,

their primary reliance on strategy highlights their positionings within structure and their

idealism. That is, their reliance on strategies is in keeping with the position taken by

people who have their sights set on changing the world. In contrast, those who rely on

tactics are not focused on purifying the system, but rather they seek to subvert it to

their particular advantage. Thus, while participants may also use tactics, it makes

sense that the use of strategy is more central to their purposes and their lives as anti-

racism educators.

PART IV: SELF AND OTHER

In this section of the thesis I explore the broad domain of participants' experiences of Self and Other, in particular racialized and White Others. Much has already been said both directly and indirectly about participants' constructions of Self and various Others in the preceding chapters. For example, the sense of Us-Them that emerged in participants' descriptions of approaches to addressing racism, as well as the various subject positionings alluded to in their discursive productions of anti-racism, speak to the relationship between Self and both White and racialized Others. Furthermore, reports of success in educating Whites were presented as directly related to participants' ability to manage their relationships with their students, while descriptions of efforts to 'help' the racialized in a morally appropriate fashion involved a particular discursive positioning of Self in relation to this Other. Finally, the recurring theme of power relations running through the talk of their anti-racism involvements discursively positioned participants alternately as powerful and powerless in relation to various racialized and White Others. In the following four chapters, I build upon the blurred portraits that have begun to take form by delving further into participants' varied accounts of the Self, the racialized Other,and the White Other.

In exploring the concepts of Self and Other, I rely upon Singer's (1984) semiotic understanding of them. The theoretical framework used to structure this portion of the thesis requires further comment, since it highlights the conceptual relatedness of the various topics covered and illustrates the epistemological consistency of the approach I have taken in making sense of these data. Furthermore, clearly specifying the theoretical framework is necessary to avoid essentialist assumptions regarding the meanings of concepts such as Self and Other.

Recall that constructionism is the epistemological perspective guiding this research, and that a basic constructionist premise is that "meaning is not discovered

but constructed. Meaning does not inhere in the object simply waiting for someone to come upon it" (Crotty, 1998, pp. 42-43). Crotty illustrates this point using an example of a tree:

> What the 'commonsense' view commends to us is that the tree standing before us is a tree. It has all the meaning we ascribe to a tree. It would be a tree, with that same meaning, whether anyone knew of its existence or not. We need to remind ourselves here that it is human beings who have construed it as a tree, given it the name, and attributed to it the associations we make with trees. (p. 43)

Crotty concludes, "Before there were consciousnesses on earth capable of interpreting the world, the world held no meaning at all" (p. 43). In brief, constructionism posits that there is no object without a meaning system.

Singer's (1984) semiotic conceptualization of the Self, based on Peirce's philosophy of the sign, is clearly grounded in this constructionist perspective; it rejects any essentialist notions of meaning as it pertains to our understandings of Self.[66] Just as a tree cannot exist in any meaningful form in isolation, neither can the Self exist in isolation without a consciousness to conceive of it as such. Furthermore, Singer adds, there can be no meaningful Self without another meaningful unit to which the Self can be linked in consciousness (e.g., You, Us, Them). That is, the Self only exists in relation to something or someone else.

As Singer explains, what we conceive of, and experience as, the Self can be understood as I in dialogue with another. For example, the Self can exist in terms of I in dialogue with You, Them, Us, or even Me. Thus, Singer points out, the Self must not be conceived of as existing in singular form as a unitary entity, but rather we must think in terms of the existence of a multiplicity of Selves that vary by context. Thus, different Selves can be seen to emerge depending upon the context and the particular partner

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[66] Singer's (1984) conceptualization of Self is also perfectly in line with the critical interpretive approach of my research and is in keeping with Kleinman's notion of the intersubjectivity of experience.

with whom I is engaged in dialogue at that moment; the experience of Self is assumed to vary accordingly.

But what about those experiences of Self that have traditionally been viewed as the 'inner' Self, or the Self that is not typically described as being in relation to someone or something else (e.g., the Self that lives in isolation on a deserted island)? How are we to understand this experience of Self according to Singer's (1984) conceptualization? Singer suggests that these experiences of Self can be understood as I (the subject) being in dialogue with Me (the object). For example, Self may be experienced in terms of I in dialogue with a past Me, an idealized Me, or a future Me. Therefore, even experiences of Self that might be conceptualized as experiences of an isolated Self, can be understood as a Self produced through dialogue between two entities.

While I have been focusing on Singer's discussion of Self and personal identity, I should specify that he does not limit his theory to that domain. Singer also demonstrates how these same principles apply to collective identity. For example, he points out that neither Us nor Them can exist in isolation, but only in relation to something else (e.g., each other).

Based on Singer's (1984) semiotic perspective, understanding my participants' experiences of Self requires a recognition of the interconnectedness of concepts such as I, Me, You, Us, and Them. That is, there can be no discourse on the Other (White or racialized) that is disconnected from a discourse on I, nor a discourse on Us apart from discourse on Them.[67] Given these interconnections, no one part (e.g., Self or Other)

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[67] To apply Singer's (1984) model beyond the sphere of the Self, one might also point out implications of this reasoning for understanding relationships between Others as well. For example, there can be no talk of racialized people that is unrelated to talk of Whites, and there can be no discourse about the racist that is disconnected from a discourse on the racialized object of racism.

can be understood outside of a broader network of meaning, and all of these parts must be viewed as interrelated pieces of a cohesive system.

With Singer's (1984) framework in mind, in the following four chapters I explore participants' constructions of Self from four perspectives. In the first chapter, I consider participants' portrayals of Self in relation to racialized Others. In the second chapter, I ask how participants conceive of their relationship with White Others. In these two chapters, my primary focus is on participants' experiences of Self in terms of an I-You dialogue, and to a lesser degree in terms of I-Them. In the last two chapters I explore participants' accounts of Self in terms of I-Me. First, I consider descriptions of Self offered in the present tense (i.e., I Am), including those framed as I-Me and as I-Us. Second, I explore participants' constructions of their past (i.e., I Became) and future (I Will Be) Selves. Specifically, I examine their narratives regarding how the present Self came into existence as well as their visions of the future Self.

9. SELF AND THE RACIALIZED OTHER

Participants' constructions of various dimensions of the relationship between the Self and the racialized Other can be found throughout the preceding chapters. First, recall the subject positions identified for the racialized Other in participants' commonly used discourses of anti-racism include victim, commodity, one who is culturally lost, and teaching aid. In contrast, the Self is offered the positions of warrior, salesperson, teacher, spy, police officer, and lawyer in these discourses. Second, consider the relative structural positionings of Self and racialized Other in participants' talk of their efforts to 'help' the racialized Other. In this talk, the Self accepts the role of the educator, the helper, the advocate; the racialized Other is offered the positions of student, the one in need of help, and the voiceless one requiring advocacy. Based simply on these discursive and structural positionings, it seems the relationship between Self and racialized Other being constructed by participants is based upon a series of dichotomies: strong-weak, active-passive, voice-silence. While this interpretation may be useful in situating participants accounts within sweeping discursive and societal contexts, to leave it in this form would be to offer the reader a colourless, one-dimensional, composite sketch that ignores the complexity and variability that are also apparent in participants' talk of their relationships with racialized people. As will be shown in this chapter, in participants' narratives the racialized Other takes on many forms; interacts with the Self across a range of contexts; and is Other to varying degrees depending on numerous factors.

In exploring participants' talk of the relationship between Self and racialized Other, I first consider their descriptions of their interactions that occur in a variety of

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contexts of their lives (i.e., workplaces, the neighbourhoods in which they live, their social lives, the domestic sphere, and international contexts), and explore the shifting meanings of race in each of these contexts. In the second section, I use Todorov's (1984) typology of the Other as a general framework for structuring my analysis of their accounts. Specifically, I explore references that speak to their regard for, knowledge of, and identification with, the racialized Other.

9.1 Encountering the Racialized Other in the Contexts of Daily Life

Prior to examining the data, a few clarifications are required. First, the identification of individuals as racialized Others in this chapter is based upon participants' constructions of them as 'not me,' rather than my conceptualization of them as such. In making sense of their talk, it is useful to recall participants' broad use of the word 'race' to distinguish among groups based on factors such as skin colour, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and culture. Second, throughout their interviews, all participants distinguished between Aboriginal people (i.e., Métis and First Nations) and non-Aboriginal, racialized people (e.g., refugees, immigrants, people of colour, and visible minorities). For example, this distinction was made by participants in noting the racial hierarchy in Saskatchewan, as well as in their accounts of particular efforts to address racism directed at a particular racialized group. While participants did not always specify the racial identity of the Other in their descriptions of their interactions, their broader narratives suggest that, in most cases, this Other was an Aboriginal person. Diane and Grace were exceptions in that they described having more interaction with refugees and immigrants than with Aboriginal people. Margaret, Joan, Cathy, and Liz described interacting roughly equally with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal racialized Others.

9.1.1 <u>Work-Related Contexts</u>

I have chosen to include in this section all interactions with the racialized Other that are described as occurring within any type of work context (e.g., paid employment versus volunteer efforts, or efforts to address racism directly versus indirectly). While this framing is rather broad, this section can be divided into two subsections based upon participants' distinction between two types of racialized Others encountered in their work. First, there is the Other whom I help (i.e., the object of their work efforts); second, there is the Other who works alongside me (e.g., a colleague).

<u>The Other Whom I Help.</u> In discussing their relationships with racialized Others in the context of their work, participants focused primarily on the Other identified as being in need of their help. Given that considerable attention has already been paid to discussing the relationship between Self and this Other in the context of a preceding chapter, in this section I simply highlight a few relevant points from those discussions.

All participants (except for Margaret) were employed in 'helping' professions (e.g., education, social work, nursing), and each of them specified their wish to help racialized Others in these contexts as well as through additional volunteer efforts. Participants described a range of ways in which they work to help this racialized Other such as working with youth in trouble with the law; teaching high school and university students; assisting immigrants and refugees with their settlement in Canada; formally mediating in situations of conflict involving their racialized clients; mentoring racialized individuals; working with clients in the mental health system; offering advocacy services for individuals; working to help Aboriginal clients get off of social assistance; and working with racialized inmates. Based on participants' descriptions, the positions assigned to Self in relation to this Other might be understood as that of guide, mentor, or helper to one in need of assistance. With the exception of references made to racialized high school and university students, the Other in these contexts tended to be

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presented as distinctly 'not me'. That is not to say that participants did not describe

caring deeply about the individuals that they spoke about; rather, a clear distinction

was made between themselves and this Other in their talk.[68]

Race clearly plays an important role in participants' conceptualization of their

relationship with this Other, since the relationship is defined, at least in part, by race.

That is, to some extent, participants suggest that they are interested in the Other

because of their racial identification and the oppression that has resulted from it. In

discussing their efforts to help this Other, participants' comments suggest they are

acutely aware of race as both a source of oppression, and in their case, a source of

unearned privilege.

The Other Whom I Work Alongside. Whereas participants' accounts suggested

they are in distinct positions of structural authority in relation to the racialized Other that

they help, this was not apparent in their talk of interactions with racialized individuals

with whom they reportedly work. Furthermore, racialized colleagues were described

primarily as individuals with whom they *chose* to interact in some professional capacity,

rather than as individuals with whom they were *required* to work. Participants'

references to these racialized individuals suggest they can be grouped into four

categories: professional colleagues, Aboriginal Elders, community leaders, and

academics.

Across their varied work settings, all participants described frequent interactions

with racialized colleagues. While half of the participants mentioned at least one

important relationship with a racialized colleague, few described these relationships in

much detail. Margaret and Chris noted relationships in primarily professional terms that

were largely task-focused, in which they described working on particular projects with

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[68] Tom's is unique in that there seemed to be less distance between Self and the racialized Other in his talk, and a stronger sense of identity with the Others he helps than was evident in other participants' narratives. I will return to consider this point further in a subsequent section.

racialized individuals. Jeff, Stephanie, Joan, and Grace spoke of relationships that

were based more on a sense of friendship and support than on completing a particular

task together. They further described these colleagues as close friends, confidantes,

and key figures in their social support networks.

Six participants described interacting regularly with Aboriginal Elders. The tone

of this talk was highly respectful; they portrayed these Elders as a personal source of

wisdom, guidance, and inspiration, as well as a source of cultural information they

might draw upon in their anti-racism work. While Stephanie, Chris, Grace, and Tom

described occasional interactions and more general feelings of appreciation for Elders,

they were central figures in Jeff and Kelly's narratives. These two participants spoke of

frequent interactions, and described close, personal relationships built on a mutual

sense of trust. As illustrated by Kelly below, Elders were positioned in this talk as

personal mentors and guides:

> And I was given a lot of teachings, which a lot of people aren't given until you
> do have that trust, especially from Elders. … I guess the greatest experience
> came from just the Elders themselves and being able to take part in discussions
> with them. Like hundreds of hours of time spent with Elders, in ceremonies, and
> talking circles, and feasts and round dances, and all these types of things.

Tom, Debbie, and Liz suggested that the racialized Other with whom they work

the most is a community leader. These colleagues were described as deeply

connected to their local communities and able to speak to issues of racism with

integrity. Participants referred to them with respect, and held them up as valuable

sources of personal guidance and support in their anti-racism efforts. Liz tended to

refer to individuals who hold a formal position in the community, such as a leader of a

cultural association. Tom and Debbie primarily described individuals they identified as

grassroots community leaders; individuals, they suggested, who might not be

considered 'leaders' by mainstream society.

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Finally, four participants said that they interact regularly with racialized academics in post-secondary settings. They spoke of studying, conducting research, and teaching classes together with racialized individuals, whom they identified as their students (Stephanie and Kelly), fellow classmates (Stephanie and Kelly), and instructor-colleagues (Jeff and Joan). In describing their interactions with these individuals in academic settings, participants presented only warm and respectful relationships. For example, Stephanie described a First Nations professor as a personal mentor; Kelly spoke of an Aboriginal classmate as the only person in the class who shared his perspective on First Nations issues; Jeff referred to a First Nations colleague's move to another institution as a personal loss for himself; and Joan described intellectually stimulating and respectful discussions with a culturally and racially diverse group of fellow instructors.

In comparison to participants' descriptions of their relationships with racialized people that they help, there is a much stronger sense of Us in their references to interactions with these professional colleagues, Aboriginal Elders, community leaders, and academics. In these instances, the Other is portrayed more as 'my equal', one with whom I have much in common. Recognizing the seemingly decreased distance between You and I in these instances, does race still matter in these relationships? My reading of participants' comments suggests that it does. All participants commented that as White people involved in anti-racism, the support and affirmation of respected, racialized individuals was important to them. While they valued the support of White colleagues, the support of racialized people whom they worked alongside was described as crucial to their ability to work with confidence in the field of anti-racism. Previously I noted that participants valued having a racialized co-facilitator in educating White people as they suggested it increased their credibility in their *students'* eyes. What I am referring to here is different; they spoke of the impact affirmation by the

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racialized Other had on their *own* sense of legitimacy in claiming a place in the fight against racism. Joan illustrates this point in talking about her experience of being invited to work alongside a First Nations colleague on a research project that focused on Cree culture:

> So working with _____ [was] an incredible gift … Her honoring of <u>me</u>, in that process as well … was a whole.. much deeper personal level of sanction, and not only permission but <u>encouragement</u> that there are unique perspectives that <u>I</u> can bring to bear that are of value not only to Euro-Canadians but also to Aboriginal folks in her instance.

The value participants placed on affirmation by the racialized Other may provide an insight into participants' sense of moral certainty and the general absence of moral dilemmas that have been noted throughout the thesis thus far. When asked how they came to reside in a place of moral certainty, participants such as Joan, Jeff, and Stephanie noted a link between their sense of certainty and their affirmation by the racialized Other. For example, recall how Jeff said he overcame his unease as a White man working in a First Nation's organization when several colleagues directly affirmed his place in it. He says of that experience, "And for me that was a turning point." Similarly, Stephanie described how uncomfortable she had felt in realizing that she had offended a First Nations classmate in stating publicly that, although she was White, she taught from a First Nations perspective. At the end of the term, this classmate had reportedly changed her view of Stephanie and affirmed her in her stance. This experience of affirmation is described by Stephanie as "one of the <u>big, big, big</u> moments in my life." While not all participants so explicitly made the link between affirmation and certainty, my sense is there may be an important link between the two variables that warrants further exploration.

9.1.2 <u>Neighbourhood</u>

Four participants spontaneously described their neighbourhoods as an important context within which they interacted with the racialized Other.[69] In fact, the racial and cultural diversity of their particular neighbourhoods was said to be an important factor in their choice of where to live. Joan, who purportedly lived in a culturally and racially diverse neighbourhood, described the pleasure she feels in being surrounded by people from different cultural, linguistic, and racial backgrounds:

> The languages, I can still get just a <u>thrill</u> when I'm out and about in <u>my</u> community and I'm hearing languages being spoken that I don't understand – I can't even identify what the hell the language is, that is <u>so</u> cool to me! And that people are just going about their world in my neighborhood or their community, our community, in those kinds of ways.

Stephanie similarly spoke fondly of the diversity in her neighbourhood. Tom and Debbie both explained that they made a conscious choice to live in inner city neighbourhoods where there are high proportions of Aboriginal people, many of whom live in poverty. Both of these participants described being actively involved in their communities and making a point of getting to know their neighbours.

In this context as well, race seems to matter to participants in that they describe intentionally choosing to live in neighbourhoods based on its cultural and racial compositions. For Joan and Stephanie, the attraction seemed to be based on the pleasure experienced in being surrounded by diversity and otherness. Tom and Debbie suggested their decision was based upon a desire to live alongside the oppressed in order to better identify with them and help them. As Tom explained, seeing the profound effects of racism on people in his neighbourhood has spurred him on to fight it all the harder.

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[69] Given that these four participants brought up this topic on their own, it seems to be a potentially important issue. It would be interesting to know how the remaining eight participants feel about where they live in relation to their stance on anti-racism.

9.1.3 <u>Social Life</u>

With the exception of Margaret and Chris, all participants described interacting regularly with racialized Others in social settings, and noted many close, personal friendships with racialized individuals. Indeed, based upon their accounts, five participants' social circle appeared to be comprised predominantly of racialized Others. As Liz put it, "If you were to come to our house you'd say it's a multicultural house. Whenever we have, you know, something going on, a party, a dinner party, whatever … our guests, they're <u>all</u> different colours." Most of these interactions were described in terms of everyday social encounters with friends. For example, participants spoke of going to weddings (Kelly); attending wakes (Tom); sharing meals (Kelly, Jeff, Diane, Joan); going for coffee (Debbie, Stephanie); hosting friends in their homes (Liz, Debbie, Jeff); and simply spending their leisure time together (Cathy).

As noted, Margaret and Chris were unique in stating that they had little interaction with racialized Others in the context of their social lives. Chris suggested he is not so different from other White people in this regard, adding, "Who's … my sphere of friends and supports? I don't have any First Nations <u>friends</u> that I call upon regularly. I have lots of acquaintances and people that I would phone and go out for lunch with, but not people that are my <u>main</u> support network." Neither Chris nor Margaret mentioned being bothered by the absence of racialized Others in their social sphere. Chris' comments had a 'that's just the way it is' tone to them, while Margaret suggested it is a meaningless coincidence that most of her friends are White, since race is irrelevant to her.

Margaret's comment raises the question yet again: To what extent, or in what way, does race 'matter' to participants in the context of social settings? On one level, race seems irrelevant in this talk; the discourse of friendship was dominant and the Other was identified as a *friend* first and foremost. Indeed, when asked about their

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relationships with racialized Others, four participants seemed momentarily confused, commenting as Joan did, "It's funny because now I have to stop and think about colour, because I don't usually do that." Yet, indirectly, their narratives suggest that race *does* matter in many of these relationships. Seven participants explained that their friendships with racialized Others meet certain needs that their friendships with dominant group members cannot. As will be considered further in a following section, they described feeling more comfortable with the racialized Other in the margins given their own sense of marginality, than they do in mainstream society. Joan's comments are illustrative in this regard:

> I feel more at home with people of colour, with people who have been marginalized than I do with the stuffed shirts and blue suits. I identify more with them, frankly I'm more interested. I think if anything I've become biased about boring, straight White guys. *(laughter)* … It's like I just know them too well, I can predict what they're going to say, but over here we can have an interesting conversation. That's part of the difference.

In addition to feeling more at home with the racialized Other, there was also a sense in their talk that this Other offered them something uniquely exotic, interesting, and ultimately desirable. Comments such as Joan's above, remind me of hooks' (1992) observation, that "ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (p. 21).

9.1.4 Domestic Sphere

For seven participants, the racialized Other also took the form of a family member in their narratives.[70] Four participants explained that their life partners did not identify as White, but as Métis, First Nations, Black, or Middle Eastern. Five individuals also described their children or grandchildren as racialized. In one case these children were presented as the participants' biological offspring, while two participants described being foster parents to Aboriginal children. A fourth participant described

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[70] I have opted not to use any pseudonyms in this section as doing so may make participants identifiable.

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himself as the step-father to his partner's children and said he was helping to raise his Aboriginal grandchildren. The fifth individual explained that she has both a biological grandchild who identify as Aboriginal, as well as an "unofficially adopted" racialized grandchild that she has claimed as a part of her family. One participant, who did not have children of her own, said she cares for her Métis niece on a regular basis.

What struck me in many of these participants' descriptions of their family relationships was the sense of intentionality in their accounts. There is a common saying "You can't choose your family," yet that is precisely what these participants seem to have done in choosing to foster and adopt children and in choosing to claim step-children as their own. This notion of intentionality can also be read into two additional participants' use of familial metaphors in describing their friendships with racialized Others. One referred to an Aboriginal friend as a "soul sister," while another spoke of her "family of choice," going on to explain that this includes "friends that we consider family. … And frankly I like them better than my family anyway."

It feels crass to ask whether race matters to participants in the context of their family relationships. According to their portrayals, they are spouses, parents and grandparents first and foremost; and they describe feelings and emotions typically associated with familial relationships. At the same time, their stories suggest that issues of race *do* matter a great deal in these relationships to the extent that racism is described as hurting those individuals whom they care about the most. Participants with racialized spouses, children and grandchildren described not only the impact of racism on these members of their family, but also spoke about what it means to them personally to witness racism directed against those they loved. Specifically, seeing their family members marginalized and discriminated against was described as a significant and personal motivator in their fight against racism. As one participant explained, "Because ... my present wife … has just had to battle racism all of her life, it

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gives me ... the spinal fortitude, I guess, to go to challenge [racism]." Another

participant told of an experience in which his child faced significant racism that had

potentially major consequences for the child's future. While the participant was able to

intercede for his child and the issue was resolved, he suggested this experience made

a lasting impression on him and continues to motivate him in his fight against racism:

> But at the same time it was a learning lesson for me that racism – systemic and intentional racism – can be like that, devastating, can take away your livelihood, can take away ... everything that you thought you could achieve and can destroy your sense of optimism. ... So racism goes to the extent that it actually can tear apart your own family. And so that for me is, is worth working on and worth fighting for.

9.1.5 <u>International Domain</u>

The inclusion of a category that focuses on international contexts is based not

on the fact that it was a strong theme in participants' talk, but rather on the fact that it

was *not*. I had assumed that my participants would be individuals who were well

traveled and who interacted frequently with the racialized Other outside of a North

American context. Perhaps because I first 'discovered' the racialized Other through my

childhood experiences living and traveling abroad, I expected this to be a strong theme

in my participants' narratives as well. This clearly was not the case. When participants

spoke about their relationships and interactions with racialized Others there was a

strong emphasis on local contexts. Participants focused almost exclusively on

interactions with people residing in Canada, and usually in Saskatchewan. Diane is a

noteworthy exception in this regard: stories of encounters with otherness in her travel

and experiences working abroad were central to her story and were woven throughout

her narrative. In these contexts, the racialized Other was most often constructed in

relation to her own national identity as being 'not Canadian'. While Jeff, Joan, and

Chris also referred to occasional past encounters with the racialized Other outside of

North America, the remaining participants did not. Not surprisingly, the person

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encountered internationally was typically constructed as more Other (e.g., 'exotic') than the racialized person living in Saskatchewan.

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The portrait of the racialized Other that has emerged in the preceding sections is not a simple one-dimensional sketch; rather, it is a multidimensional and complex image. In contrast to participants' depiction of a racist view of the racialized Other (i.e., as a homogenous being defined solely in terms of race), the racialized Other whom they describe has many faces. Furthermore, this Other is integrated in a variety of ways into the many contexts of participants' lives, and is constructed as Other to varying degrees depending, it seems, upon their many intersecting identities. However, this is not to say that race is an irrelevant factor in these relationships. While race may be largely meaningless to participants in a traditional and racist sense of it creating barriers to interaction, my reading suggests that race *does* matter and that what is at stake for participants varies according to shifting contextual factors.

<center>9.2 Feelings, Knowledge, and Identification</center>

Having introduced the reader to the variety of racialized Others in participants' narratives, in this section I offer a deeper analysis of the relationships portrayed in their accounts. Todorov's (1984) typology of the Other is the primary theoretical tool I draw upon in organizing and making sense of these data.

Using a vast collection of 16th century writings by Spaniards, (e.g., letters, diaries and reports), Todorov (1984) explores the relationship between Self (i.e., the Spaniard Self) and Other (i.e., primarily the Indian Other) within the context of the conquest and colonization of America. Todorov argues that since the White European identity is shaped in large part by the conquest of America, much can be learned about the identity of the European Self by examining the lives of the early conquistadors. Of particular relevance to my research is Todorov's interest in the positioning and

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experiences of Spanish priests. Like my participants, many of these individuals chose, to varying degrees, to reside both physically and symbolically in the liminal space between groups (i.e., the Indians and Spaniards). While I reject certain ethnocentric and evolutionist aspects of Todorov's theory and will take a broader view of otherness in my research to include the White Other, Todorov's typology is still a useful tool for constructing a portrait of my participants' moral experience.

Todorov's (1984) typology is based on three axes. (1) The first axis involves a value judgment of the Other. This axis references how an individual feels about, and views, the Other in terms such as good/bad, love/do not love, my equal/my inferior. Todorov is vague in specifying precisely what he means by this axis, and the illustrative dichotomies he proposes do not seem to explicitly map onto each other (e.g., it seems to me that it is possible to view someone as good yet not love them, or simultaneously to love another and regard them as inferior). Still, in reading his entire description, it seems that what Todorov is referring to here falls primarily within the domain of the emotional. What he commonly refers to as love versus hate, might be read as a distinction between a sense of positive regard and feeling towards the Other versus a sense of negative regard and feelings towards the Other. In any case, this is how I shall be interpreting and applying this axis in the context of my research. (2) Todorov's second axis refers to a distancing of Self in relation to Other, which is described as the degree to which someone embraces the values of the Other and identifies with them (i.e., identification) *or* imposes ones own image on the Other (i.e., assimilation). (3) The third axis speaks to the degree of knowledge someone has about the Other. To clarify, Todorov uses 'knowledge' not in an essentialist sense, but rather in reference to the level of understanding someone has of another's identity and worldview. Todorov points out that each of these three axes involves a range of possible positions, and a stance on one axis does not imply a relative position on any other axis.

While staying true to Todorov's basic ideas, my approach is to use his framework as a starting point for exploring the complexities surrounding participants' accounts of their relationship with the racialized Other, resisting any simplistic application that a shallow reading of Todorov's model might suggest (i.e., love *or* hate, know *or* not know, identify *or* not identify). At times it may be appropriate to comment broadly across all participants' accounts and across all the contexts in which they reportedly encounter the racialized Other. More often, however, participants' experiences are better understood by grouping individuals' accounts according to a broadly stated position, or exploring emotions, knowledge, and identification as they relate to particular contexts or situations.

9.2.1 Feelings Towards the Racialized Other

While I did not specifically question participants regarding their feelings toward racialized Others, both their constructions and the tone of their talk generally spoke of a sense of positive emotional regard towards these Others. However, the particular type of emotion described seemed to vary by context. Not surprisingly, in contexts where the Self was described as being in a position of structural authority in relation to the racialized Other, their expressions of positive regard had a more patronizing flavour than in other contexts of their talk. For example, when participants spoke about racialized Others whom they helped, their comments denoted a sense of protectiveness, responsibility, and concern for the Other. In contrast, when participants referred to racialized colleagues, the tone of their talk could be characterized as respectful and admiring.

In addition to context-specific differences, general differences among participants' expressions of emotion towards the racialized Other bear noting. First, Liz is unique in that few references to feelings were made beyond generalized expressions of pity. While she voiced concern about the plight of the racialized, her tone sounded

harsh to my ears, as when she spoke of her efforts to mobilize immigrants to become involved in anti-racism efforts: "How do you move these people?... I'd get frustrated, 'Well, don't you guys want to do something about it?'"

Second, Jeff's uniqueness in this domain also bears noting. His talk tended to emphasize feelings of respect and gratitude towards racialized Others, even in contexts where he was in a position of relative structural authority. For example, note his comments regarding his experiences as a teacher: "I thank the Aboriginal students I had in the beginning for making me better at handling students and difficult issues. I've been very lucky to have been taught by First Nations and Métis students, the first five or six years of my career."

Finally, using graphic and visceral terms, five participants voiced empathy for the racialized Other. Specifically, Stephanie, Joan, Grace, Tom, and Debbie expressed an intense empathy in terms of physically feeling the pain of the racialized Other suffering injustice. In the following collection of quotes, participants describe their anguished reactions to witnessing the pain of the racialized Other: "In my heart I was there" (Grace), "When I see that kind of injustice, it hits my belly first and there's a … sick feeling that comes with it" (Joan), "This is an issue of the heart for me" (Stephanie), "It hits me like a … knife" (Grace), "It was gut-wrenching" (Joan), "It frankly makes me sick" (Debbie).

9.2.2 Knowledge of the Racialized Other

Given the importance participants placed on teaching White people about the racialized Other, it is not surprising that all of them suggested it was important to them to *personally* know and understand the racialized Other. While the object of their study and their approach to gaining knowledge varied, all participants clearly described concerted efforts they made to learn about the Other. In exploring the topic of knowing this Other, I will consider three key questions. First, what is the specific object of

participants' study? Second, how is learning pursued? Third, what does it mean to them to know the Other?

The racialized Other that participants described making an effort to know alternately took the form of the cultural Other and the oppressed Other in their talk. First, with the exception of Margaret, all participants described efforts aimed at better understanding the cultural Other. These efforts tended to be described as experientially-based rather than the result of 'book learning'. For example, six participants described attending and participating in Aboriginal cultural events such as pow-wows, sweats, and pipe ceremonies in an effort to learn about, and experience, the world of this cultural Other. Several participants, such as Liz, emphasized their participation in cultural celebrations involving a broader range of cultural groups (e.g., Folkfest), while Diane, Jeff, and Joan claimed travel experiences provided them with valuable learning opportunities in this regard. All participants noted the importance of personal relationships (e.g., with Elders, colleagues, and friends) as opportunities to learn about the cultural Other.

All participants also described efforts to learn about the oppressed racialized Other and the forces of that oppress them. Four participants emphasized the efforts they made to better understand the history of Canada in terms of the colonization of First Nations peoples; they referred to classes they had taken and readings they had done. Five participants suggested that reading biographies and watching movies about individuals who experienced and fought against oppression, such as Martin Luther King, had been important learning experiences for them. Finally, all participants described learning that occurred through listening to the personal accounts of individuals who had suffered racial oppression.

While participants were apparently united in their desire to know the racialized Other, their portrayals on what it *means* to know this Other varied. While I am not

suggesting a simple either/or position, participants did seem to differ in the degree to which they emphasized knowing the Other as being a matter of "the head" (i.e., as objective facts to be learned) versus "the heart" (i.e., something to be felt and experienced). In the first case, Kelly, Diane, Chris, and Jeff emphasized more of a cognitive, intellectual knowing of the Other; this involved learning such things as historical facts, cultural norms, and demographic information. For example, Jeff notes: "I work on it all the time – I want to be better able to argue my points. I want to be better equipped with statistics, knowledge and experience, when somebody says something that sounds ludicrous I'm able to break it down and to discuss it and to argue it." In these cases, 'knowing' tends to be related to one's effectiveness in addressing racism.

In contrast, other participants (i.e., Stephanie, Joan, Grace, Tom, and Debbie), suggested that knowing the racialized Other was based primarily on feelings and experiences. In their talk, the line between their feelings towards, and their knowledge of, the racialized Other was somewhat blurred. That is, they spoke about knowing as something that is more organic, intuitive, and emotional; suggesting that knowing is achieved primarily through introspection, empathy, and an emotional connection to the racialized, more so than through the learning of facts. The following excerpts respectively illustrate these emphases on empathy and on emotional connection in this conceptualization of knowing:

> I've never been to residential school, but does that mean I can't understand it? So I think a lot of it has to do with capacity for empathy. Genuine compassion, and how can I truly resonate with somebody else's pain? ... Do I have the capacity to do that? Well, I do if I'm a tempered vessel myself, right? (Joan)

> I think you always have to be humbled by the fact that people are going to know more than you, and people are going to have different experiences than you. I think that… the confidence comes from just … my feelings, not my knowledge. … I feel so strongly... (Stephanie)

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9.2.3 Identification with the Racialized Other

I found the dimension of identification to be the most fascinating aspect to explore in participants' talk about the racialized Other. With the exception of Chris, all participants spoke of identifying closely with this Other on some level; however, they also explicitly outlined parameters on their ability to identify. I have organized the material in this section using participants' distinction between their identification with the cultural Other versus the oppressed Other.

In participants' narratives, the cultural Other was usually the First Nations Other, and culture was defined in terms of a worldview that differed from the worldview of mainstream society. This worldview was described as being uniquely holistic, spiritual, and cooperative. While Joan and Debbie's comments suggested that they identified in limited ways with the cultural Other (e.g., incorporating meaningful First Nations spiritual practices into their daily lives), Kelly, Jeff, Tom, and Stephanie seemed to identify more closely with this Other. They claimed to have a First Nations outlook on life, identified with First Nations spiritual beliefs and values, and said that they used First Nations approaches in their attempts to fight racism. Stephanie offers an example of what she means by having a First Nations outlook:

> There is no one First Nations perspective, there are many. But you can generalize about certain things, like views about the land, views about community and the importance of community, views about education and how education is approached. There are some links between all the different Nations here in Canada, and even indigenous people throughout the world, and their ideas, and their vision and their worldview on how some of these things should be approached. That's how I look at it. And it doesn't matter what your skin colour is, or what your ethnic background is, you can think this way. You can believe in these things, you can feel this way. … And so when I look at the way I think, I can think in a First Nations perspective.

Regarding spirituality, Kelly says "The forms of spirituality that I see practiced within a lot of the First Nations cultures … I see them as having a lot of value. And, [it] … is how I try to guide my life." Finally, Jeff explains how First Nations cultures have influenced

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his approach to fighting racism, which he describes as "more shared, more integrative, more inclusive."

Interestingly, while all of the female participants suggested that they explicitly identified to some extent with the oppressed Other based on their personal experiences of feeling marginalized, none of the male participants did so. The most commonly identified basis for these women's identification was their firsthand experience of sexism. As Debbie's comments below illustrate, they explained that they identified with racialized people given a shared, though distinct, experience of oppression:

> So, women have more of a tendency to appreciate the fact of oppression - not appreciate it, but understand it - because they live it. They live it every day! They live it every day when they're in a meeting and they say something that some guy finds offensive and they're treated in a demeaning, disrespectful way. You know, whether the girl child that's brought up to believe really you're not going to grow up to be quite as successful as whoever. … So you get the message very early in life. From this aspect I think that women have that … ability to really understand oppression because they're living it. They are.

While Diane, Liz, Cathy, and Grace tended to speak more briefly and generally about the impact of sexism on their lives, Stephanie, Margaret, and Joan spoke at length and with passion about the impact of sexism on their past and present lives. These three women spoke of the sexism they faced in their homes and schools while growing up, linking it directly to their ability to identify with the racialized Other today. Stephanie's comments are representative in this regard:

> I felt like this, you know, sort of strong female that could do anything, but I was given messages constantly that that wasn't necessarily appropriate or that I couldn't. Particularly from my dad, who was a male figure in my life who wanted to be an authority over me and then I fought like tooth and nail, and from male teachers that I had over the years. It's like the pat on the head and, you know, just go on your pretty little way, and I really found that really degrading and annoying.. and so I think I always fought that, and maybe that's why I can relate so closely. That … could be why I can relate so closely because there's nothing worse than somebody telling you who you are and what you can be.

In addition to identifying with the racialized Other based on experiences of gender oppression, Debbie and Liz claimed to identify with this Other based on their experiences of poverty. These women described growing up in poverty, and suggested that this experience led them to identify with the racialized Other. Debbie explains this identification as follows:

> We were, a very poor background. And so, <u>poverty</u> really doesn't have a <u>colour</u>, it pretty much hits <u>everybody</u>, you know. And so, I think.. …Ya, I think the poverty is the - I hate to say <u>equalizer</u>, which sounds almost <u>positive</u> - but it is, it <u>is</u>, you know? … It doesn't have any colour, you know, it doesn't have any colour boundaries on it. And I think <u>because</u> of that background, because a lot of people that were around me that were all different colours and groups, and <u>whatever</u>, growing up, that identification came <u>somewhere</u>, you know. I'm guessing that's where it came from.

In contrast, Kelly, Margaret, Diane, and Chris identified poverty as a factor that *distanced* them from the racialized Other, who all too often live in poverty. Their comments suggest that socio-economic differences are more significant than racial distinctions in their construction of otherness.

Liz noted two additional experiences of personal oppression and otherness that she directly related to her ability to identify with the oppressed racialized Other. First, she described how her family suffered from racism when she was a child, due to her parents having immigrated to Canada and speaking broken English. She told of her childhood experience of being teased and labeled a DP (i.e., displaced person), and explained that that as a result "very often we would come home crying from school." Liz also spoke of her experience of living for several years as an adult with a severe physical handicap following a critical accident. She noted the way people treated her differently and the many barriers she faced, concluding that this experience allowed her to identify more closely with the daily challenges facing racialized people.

Finally, five participants emphasized their identification with a particular 'type' of racially oppressed person, referring to a figure they described as particularly resilient,

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adaptive, pragmatic, and optimistic. Participants voiced respect and admiration for this Other and spoke of feeling a sense of connection and identification with him. Four of these participants spoke in more general terms that highlighted a stance more so than a real person. For example, in speaking of racialized people, Liz and Margaret respectively, made references to individuals who have "taken control" and "taken some ownership of the problem." Jeff, however, described this version of the oppressed Other in terms of actual people he had encountered: He spoke of Aboriginal elders who are "always optimistic about the ability to get along and to coexist, peacefully"; and also of Aboriginal youth leaders who are "very much more forward-looking, optimistic." Jeff was explicit in stating his sense of identification with both of these groups. In contrast, he noted the existence of a "middle group," comprised of middle-aged Aboriginal people who are consumed with a "deep sort of frustration and anxiety and concern and anger" due to residential school experiences. Jeff said that while he understands this group, he does not identify with their outlook.

While most participants were quick to point out that they identified with the cultural or oppressed racialized Other on some level, all but a few of them were equally clear in placing limits on it. For example, in talking about his cultural identification, Jeff clarifies what he means by saying he is "part of the Aboriginal community" in the following excerpt:

> I don't think anybody is ever a 100% a part of any community any more, so the traditionalists that would hear me saying "I'm from the Aboriginal community" would take offense perhaps in saying that I was a part of both and could bridge them. But that's not what I mean, at <u>all</u>. And I would never pretend to be, a <u>real</u> part of that community. But at the same time I must be part of it in <u>some</u> way to know people, to work with people there.

Similarly, after arguing for the connection between sexism and racism, all of the women, except for Liz, suggested that the impact of their oppression was small in

comparison to the impact of racism on the racialized. Stephanie, who was the most

vocal in challenging the sexism in our society, illustrates this point below:

> You know, I have a lot of factors in place that would definitely give me the leg up, in terms of my quote-unquote oppression in society. I wouldn't ever dream of saying that I have ever felt the kind of oppression that First Nations people have felt, but I think I've had glimpses of it, and I really hated it. And I hated it <u>enough</u> to want better for other people.

<div align="center">*****</div>

While the many distinctions noted above certainly highlight diversity among

participants, they also point to commonalities. Specifically, in no case was the

racialized Other construed as a unitary entity. Rather, in all participants' narratives the

racialized Other took on many forms and was encountered in a wide array of contexts

in participants' daily lives. Participants described a range of feelings towards,

knowledge of, and identifications with, these varied figures and individuals.

Furthermore, the meanings attributed to race differed according to the specific contexts

and types of relationships described.

While I suggested that race mattered in participants' accounts of these varied

relationships, it is also noteworthy that race seemed to play a relatively minor role in

determining the degree to which someone was positioned as Other. That is, unlike a

racist perspective in which the racialized Other is defined primarily by an essentialist

reading of race, in their narratives otherness seems to have had relatively little to do

with noted racial distinctions. Rather, for them otherness may best be conceptualized

in terms of a complex interaction of many factors, including socio-economic status,

respective structural positionings, worldviews, and values.

In conclusion, contrast the portrayal of the relationship between Self and

racialized Other that was offered in the opening lines of this chapter with the portrait

that emerged in the pages that followed. In participants' discursive productions of anti-

racism and in their talk of 'helping' the racialized Other, the relationship between Self

and racialized Other appeared clear-cut: the racialized Other was a unitary, weak, and passive being, in contrast to a strong and active Self. In this chapter, embedded in their descriptions of real people encountered in the many contexts of their daily lives, a range of complex and nuanced relationships between Self and a variety of racialized Others emerged that defy simplistic categorizations. Once again it seems Good's (1994) theory of multiple worlds of experience and Veyne's (1988) notion of programs of truth may be applicable to making sense of these distinct portraits. Just as participants' framings of race and racism seemed to shift when they switched from talking about generalities and abstractions to describing their actual experiences, so a distinction can be noted in participants' talk of the racialized Other in these two contexts. It seems that in the world of general discourses and subject positionings, clear demarcations between Self and the racialized Other are possible, yet these absolute divisions and clear-cut distinctions appear difficult to sustain in the world of 'real' people and 'real' relationships.

10. SELF AND THE WHITE OTHER

I have chosen to structure this chapter around the three distinct figures of White Others consistently alluded to by participants. Using participants' terminology, I have labeled these figures 'the racist', 'the ignorant', and 'the powerful'. Before describing participants' constructions of these figures and exploring participants' relationships with them, a few preliminary comments are in order. First, by way of introducing the racist Other and the ignorant Other, an intriguing excerpt from Debbie's interview is provided. Her clear conceptualization of these figures, though more elaborate than most, is broadly representative of participants' talk about White people. (Note that she uses the label 'ignorer' to refer to a figure in keeping with what others called 'ignorant'.)

Debbie: I think you have, basically you have maybe three kinds of people. One is people who are racist. … and [second] those people when confronted with those people who are racist, are ignorers. And they just … look the other way. And then there's the other people on the other side, who explore. And those explorers will … initiate an action that changes that. The ignorers will see the racist and say, "Oh God, that's making me feel uncomfortable, and, you know, I'll just put my head in the sand and forget it." There's a lot of those people. Cause it's not … comfortable to take a stand. And the racist will just continue on and be the bullies, because that's just who they are and what they do, frankly. And sorry to put them all in one category, but I don't think there's much hope for them. … And so I think that their motivation for changing, is not good, because their behavior is really attitudinal, it's a bully, it's aggressive, it's "I've got to put you down to put me up." How do you change that? I mean, I don't know. I'm not really sure how you change that attitude.

Vonda: Can you change that second group?

Debbie: The second group? Ignore group? Ya, you can motivate that group I think, a lot more. I think you have to make them feel safe. That this bully isn't gonna run them into the ground and that they feel that they're not, you know, they're not alone. They're not gonna be the one that's running over the hill, ok, with you. *(chuckles)* Don't count on that *(chuckles)* 'cause they'll be

backtracking and you'll lose the war. <u>But</u>, there's a very real place for them because you can influence them <u>through</u> education. [71]

While the figures of the racist and the ignorant were explicitly identified by participants, the figure of the powerful Other was not as immediately apparent to me as participants did not name it in the same manner. Rather, I came to label it as such through my interaction with the data. In reviewing participants' accounts, while many descriptions fit neatly into the categories of 'the racist' or 'the ignorant,' some descriptions of White individuals did not; I set these instances aside for future reflection. When I later read through this collection of 'left-over' excerpts, I was surprised to note that, in nearly every case, the Other described was done so in reference to a position of dominance. Thus, in this third case, the gathering of their descriptions into a single category is more directly a product of my analytical involvement with the data than in the first two categories, which were more explicitly produced in participants' accounts.

After outlining the characteristics participants attributed to each of these figures, Todorov's (1984) typology of the Other will be used to explore participants' accounts of their relationships with individuals they suggest fit these descriptions. While Todorov (1984) developed his typology specifically to explore the relationship between the White and the racialized Other, I argue that it applies equally well to exploring the relationship between Self and White Other.

10.1 <u>The Racist Other</u>

10.1.1 <u>Characteristics of this Figure</u>

All participants, with the exception of Chris and Grace, made reference to a minority of White individuals whom they described as profoundly closed-minded; individuals who are unwilling to question, explore, or learn about the operation of

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[71] Debbie's reference to "explorers" suggests it is a group best conceptualized in terms of Us. As such, it will be further examined in the following chapter.

racism or the racialized Other. Joan used the term "willful ignorance" to describe these individuals, going on to explain that they are "unwilling to accept any information as credible about this [i.e., racism], and just react, react, react." Similarly, Margaret explained "They just don't want to know"; Stephanie described them as illogical; Kelly said they are "completely closed-minded"; and Margaret described them as "rednecks" from the "far, far right." Even when faced with "incontrovertible evidence" of racism (Joan), these individuals are said to respond with anger (Kelly) or denial (Stephanie, Jeff, Joan, Debbie).

The notion of intent was also a recurring theme in participants' descriptions of the racist, an individual defined in large part by her ill-intent towards the racialized Other. Debbie spoke of "Bullies … looking for someone to beat up on"; Joan describes their behaviour as "more overt…really extreme stuff … out-and-out above board, unabashed bigotry"; Diane, Jeff, and Margaret suggest that factions within this group are potentially "dangerous."

This willfully ignorant, ill-intentioned White Other is further described as being beyond hope of changing. Debbie pointed out, "There's not much hope for them"; and Stephanie concluded, "I would try and sort of argue sometimes, and I might as well have been beating my head against a brick wall." Thus, any effort to influence or educate this Other was generally deemed to be a waste of time. As Margaret stated, "You can answer the questions 'til the cows come home, it's not going to make a difference. … It's no use even targeting your energy there."

10.1.2 Interacting with the Racist Other: Feelings, Knowledge, and Identification

Based on what has been written thus far, the racist Other sounds more like a caricature than an actual, multifaceted, and complex human being. This picture changes little when considering participants' descriptions of their interactions with this

Other. The face of the Other retains the characteristics of an abstract composite portrait, a devil-like figure that is decidedly 'not me'.

With the exception of Margaret, participants described having very little direct contact with the racist, who was depicted typically as an indistinct person somewhere 'out there'. For example, Stephanie shared second hand stories about extreme "resistors" described to her by anti-racism colleagues, and Jeff talked about racist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, of which he was aware but admittedly had little firsthand knowledge. Still, the racist, taking the form of a resistant learner, did appear in the narratives of Kelly, Jeff, and Joan in the context of discussing their educational efforts; and Liz described several colleagues that fit the description as well. Margaret alone made frequent references to actual encounters with this Other in the contexts of her workplace. While no participants described frequent social interaction with the racist, several did suggest family members fit the description. For example, Stephanie referred to her parents-in-law as "very racist"; Joan described her brother as "a redneck … incredibly homophobic, racist, sexist guy"; and Diane said of her reportedly racist brother-in-law, "My God, this guy's related to me!"

While participants did not speak of having a relationship with the racist, several of them did describe their strategy for dealing with him when he is encountered. Margaret and Jeff suggested that ignoring this Other is sometimes the best approach, since challenging him can have unexpected and negative outcomes. Specifically, Jeff explained that challenging these individuals can lead them to becoming more entrenched in their views, while Margaret pointed out that confrontation can inadvertently further the cause of the racist: "You're giving him a chance to spout his stuff and people start thinking about it, you know, and they start processing it. So why give him an opportunity? He can find his soap box somewhere else." Rather than ignoring this Other, Cathy, Liz, and Margaret advocated the setting and enforcing of

clear behavioural boundaries to minimize the potential damage that could be done by the racist.

While participants said very little about how the racist views, or feels, about them, several (e.g., Jeff, Kelly, Joan, Margaret) did mention receiving negative reactions from these Others in the form of poor workshop evaluations or hostile comments. However, participants did not dwell on these reactions in the interview, mentioning them in passing in what appeared to be a dismissive manner.

Reading across participants' accounts, the relationship between the Self and the racist described is hardly complex: there is little nuance, few conflicting feelings, and a distinct demarcation between I and Them. Described feelings towards this Other could be summarized as disdain and repulsion, with a definite absence of positive regard.

Not surprisingly, no participants suggested that they personally identified with this Other.[72] In fact, they seemed to make a point of distancing themselves both physically and symbolically from the Other in their talk. On a physical level, they reported very little actual contact with, and deliberate avoidance of, this Other. At a symbolic level, this Other is portrayed less as 'not me' than as the 'opposite of me'; a one dimensional, animal-like being, defined solely by her racism, and sharing nothing in common with the Self.

While none of the participants described a desire to learn about this Other, they varied in the extent to which they claimed to know him already. While participants such as Joan and Debbie suggested that they understand this Other well (Joan: "Oh, I can understand how they've come to be the way they are, … I just have no tolerance for

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[72] While Tom explicitly identified himself as a racist in the interview, his meaning differed from the way it is used here. As he explained, he applied the label to himself both as a way to recognize tendencies within himself to view racialized people as Other, and as a strategy for reducing resistance in those he was trying to influence.

their attitudes."); other participants such as Kelly and Jeff were less sure. As Kelly put it, "What in their life has made them so upset with people who are coming from another race, especially after knowing the facts? … Like, that I don't know." Despite these differences in participants' accounts, I had the sense across all the interviews that participants felt that they knew all they needed, or wanted, to know about this White Other. Their comments suggested a confidence in their view that this Other was beyond hope of changing, and as such, was not worthy of their further attention.

10.2 The Ignorant Other

10.2.1 Characteristic of this Figure

The ignorant Other was the White Other referred to most frequently by participants; this figure has already been introduced in the context of discussing participants' efforts to educate White people. In contrast to reports of minimal interactions with the racist, they described frequent interactions with this Other and suggested that contact is both unavoidable and desirable. Indeed, their talk suggests that the label 'ignorant' might be applied to most White people in our society, and they described interactions that occur in the context of their family, work, social, and community lives. I offer here a brief summary of the ignorant Other, without extensive quotes, simply to remind the reader of the characteristics that have been described in previous chapters.

All participants described highly similar versions of what I have labeled the ignorant Other. Ignorance and innocence were described as the defining characteristics of this individual. The majority of White people were portrayed as ignorant about the racialized Other, matters of racism, and their own position of privilege within a racist society. However, rather than laying blame on individuals, participants explained that society at large (i.e., the education system in particular) has

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failed to teach White people about the racialized Other, and has not encouraged

necessary interaction between different racial groups.

While the racist was portrayed as beyond hope of changing, the ignorant Other

was not. Participants suggested that the well-meaning intentions of ignorant White

people towards racialized individuals gave them hope that the ignorant Other could

change (i.e., become more knowledgeable about the racialized Other, thereby adopting

more egalitarian views and behaviours). Stephanie offers a useful summary of

participants' depiction of the ignorant Other:

> I do believe that most people, the majority of people are basically good, and I
> think that the majority of people are not just looking out for self-interests. I think
> that this attitude comes from ignorance. … I think it comes from sheer lack of
> knowledge. And so if people knew, and I think education could make some
> huge, huge changes in the way things are done and how they're done. I really
> do.

10.2.2 <u>Interacting with the Ignorant Other: Feelings, Knowledge, and Identification</u>

Without exception, participants' narratives suggested feelings of positive regard

for the ignorant Other who was portrayed as friend, family member, student, and

colleague. Recall that in describing their efforts to educate the White Other,

participants reported feelings of warmth and respect for this Other that they suggested

were reciprocated. Furthermore, they reported few experiences of resistance from this

Other and little conflict in their interactions. Thus, while stated feelings regarding the

ignorant Other varied among participants and shifted depending upon the specific

individuals being discussed, these variations seemed to be more in degree than in

kind.

The primary positionings of Self as teacher, facilitator, and guide to the ignorant

Other in participants' talk suggest a sense of responsibility for moving the ignorant

Other towards a state of greater enlightenment. Portrayed as different from Self in

degree rather than kind, participants' descriptions suggest this movement could be

conceptualized as a journey, whereby education is the vehicle for moving the ignorant White person from a position of Them to a position of Us, alongside the Self.

While the strong themes of innocence and ignorance and the brief summary offered may suggest a simplistic caricature akin to the racist Other, the ignorant Other was described more in terms of a real and multi-dimensional person than was the racist. In addition to being given a face (e.g., brother, friend, colleague), this Other was described in less absolute terms that allowed for more diversity than did their descriptions of the racist Other. Variations in this Other were apparent in the level of ignorance ascribed them, their supposed intent, and their reported openness to learning. Participants attributed this diversity to factors such as demographics and life experiences. For example, participants explained that factors such as the home environment in which people are raised (Kelly, Liz, and Debbie); their age (Debbie, Kelly, Diane, Joan, and Jeff); their socio-economic status (Joan); and whether they are from rural or urban areas (Margaret), all influence the degree to which someone is knowledgeable, open to change, and accepting of the racialized Other.[73] The descriptions offered, and the confident tone of participants' talk, suggested that participants felt they knew the ignorant Other well.

In participants' narratives, knowledge of, and identification with this Other seemed to go hand-in-hand. That is, participants' suggestions that they know this Other seemed to be linked in their narratives to their constructions of a past Self, implying some kind of identification. All participants noted that they too were products of the same faulty educational system that was deemed primarily responsible for the ignorance they saw in the White majority. This sense of shared experience was described by participants as pertinent to their ability to relate to the ignorant Other.

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[73] The composite portrait that emerges in this talk, suggests that young individuals raised by liberal middle class parents in urban areas are most likely to be knowledgeable about ,and open-minded towards, the racialized Other.

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Participants such as Jeff, Diane, Tom, Chris, and Kelly were particularly explicit in stating that they saw themselves, especially their younger Selves, in this Other. They explained that they too had also been innocently unaware (i.e., ignorant) of the Other at one time in their lives, and noted the racist implications of past behaviours. In the following excerpt, note the similarity between Jeff's depiction of his youthful Self and participants' description of the White Other:

> I mean I had a good upbringing in a family that taught Christian values …
> around tolerance and understanding, but I even think about some of the things I
> used to say and the way that I used to think when I was a teenager … and
> some of the things that came out of my mouth were racist and I didn't even
> realize it 'til later. So it's interesting that you can say things, you can think things
> and not really understand it. And I think that happens a lot with a lot of people...

In reflecting on relationship between the past Self and the White Other alluded to in participants' accounts, it seems that both knowledge and positive regard are closely interwoven with identification: I know the Other; I love the Other; and to a certain extent, I am the Other.

10.3 The Powerful Other

With the exception of Kelly, Chris, and Diane, all participants described some version of the 'powerful' White Other. As the label implies, this form of otherness was emphasized a sense of power imbalance at either an individual level (i.e., I-You) or a collective level (i.e., Us-Them). It is primarily from the commonly described positioning of Self alongside the oppressed, that the powerful Other is portrayed as Other to Self. In my reading of their descriptions, this Other seemed to take two distinct but related forms. I have labeled these versions of the powerful Other as 'the White male' and 'the gatekeeper'.

10.3.1 The Figure of the White Male

Six of the eight female participants referred to the White male as a symbol of the highest level of unearned privilege and power in our society. Given the overt

emphasis on sexism in this talk, its relevancy to this research requires comment. In keeping with participants' broad constructions of race and racism in terms of otherness and oppression respectively, the lines between racism and sexism become blurred in the figure of the White male. While similar in some respects to the racist, this figure is constructed as distinct in that he embodies racism *and* sexism; as such, he is described as having a unique relationship with the Self. Whereas the racist was defined primarily in terms of his relationship to the racialized (i.e., in Them-Them terms), the White male was presented in contrast to Us, the gender and racially oppressed. As a source of their own oppression, the White male was positioned as decidedly Other at a very personal level in their accounts. As Stephanie explained it, "I'm still fighting against 'the man.'"

Like the racist, the White male Other, was similarly constructed in caricature-form; however, this Other was described also in concrete terms, as specific individuals participants encounter in their daily lives. At an abstract level, the White male was depicted both as someone who is unfairly privileged due to his gender and racial identification, and as someone who is oblivious to his privilege and the corresponding oppression of others. Portrayed as a highly homogenous group, White males were described as boring (Joan, Cathy, Debbie); predictable (Joan, Debbie); and primarily concerned with protecting their privileged status (Stephanie, Margaret, Liz). These participants described feelings of disdain and dislike for him.

The privileged White male took on a more human form when participants spoke of their actual encounters with him. Stephanie, Margaret, and Joan described growing up with the White male in their homes (i.e., in the form of their fathers or brothers). As Margaret put it, "My dad is old school. … I was supposed to be in the kitchen and … in the garden and … not on the tractor … and it annoyed me." In their stories, the White male also took the form of childhood teachers (Stephanie) and current colleagues

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(Joan, Cathy, Stephanie, Margaret, Liz, and Debbie). Depending upon participants'

assessments of their intent, these White males were presented alternately as similar to

the racist in terms of being beyond hope, or akin to the ignorant Other in their well-

meaning intent.

At risk of breaking the flow of the chapter, I would like to interject an interesting

counter perspective at this point. While participants spoke with disdain about the White

male, Jeff (a White male participant) referred, with apparently equal disdain, to White

females. During his interview, Jeff referred on several occasions to his "critics," whom

he described as White women who identify with the oppression experienced by the

racialized. He explained that these women challenge both his ability to identify with

racialized people and his right to work in an Aboriginal organization on the basis of his

gender.

> *Jeff*: Interestingly enough in the early days, the strongest critics were non-
> Aboriginal <u>women</u>. Who, for some reason thought that they were <u>different</u>
> enough than non-Aboriginal <u>men</u> to be a part of a community to then tell
> them that they couldn't be. Does that make sense?

> *Vonda:* So they were part of the marginalized?

> *Jeff:* Ya, that's right, that's right. So they felt that they then could also speak on
> behalf of who should and shouldn't be there.

Like Patai (1991), Jeff questioned the validity of this stance, suggesting that the

significant privilege enjoyed by White women precludes them from speaking for the

racialized. Although participants were obviously not referring directly to each other in

their interviews, the juxtaposition of their comments suggests an interesting tug-of-war

over the right to align oneself with the oppressed. In talking about the White male

Other, female participants seemed to suggest they have more in common with the

racialized than they do with White men, positioning themselves as 'Us the oppressed,'

in relation to 'Them White males'. Jeff rejects this Us-Them offering, suggesting that he

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is no less entitled to a place alongside the racialized since White women are more alike White men than the racialized in terms of conferred privilege.

10.3.2 <u>The Gatekeeper</u>

What I have labeled 'the gatekeeper' includes four participants' descriptions of White people who, regardless of gender, were portrayed as powerful due to positions of authority they hold, and described as motivated by "self-interest." The decisions and actions of the gatekeeper were said to have direct implications for the racially oppressed.

In participants' talk, the gatekeeper was described both in the abstract and as someone encountered in their work. In discussing their efforts to change structures and systems, the gatekeeper took the form of the resistant person participants needed influence in order to bring about systemic or structural change. For example, Grace spoke about people working in human resource departments who do not do enough to ensure equitable hiring practices; Margaret focused on people in positions of authority in the workplace and in the union who resist the hiring and advancement of racialized people. Tom made reference to people in the fields of education and law enforcement who have access to considerable power, yet too often use it to the detriment of the racially oppressed. Debbie's comments focused on the political realm, referring to the small group of individuals who "control the money" and look out for "self interest" rather than improving the lot of the oppressed.

While participants did describe interactions with the gatekeeper Other, this individual was usually presented as a faceless entity, described more in terms of the position held (e.g., "a HR person") than as an individual person. Interactions with this faceless Other were typically described as confrontational in nature, the gatekeeper being portrayed as standing in the way of their efforts to bring about structural change. While described as confrontational, the tone of participants' talk seemed cool and

detached in comparison to the emotional and personal tone noted in their references to the White male. These distinctions in tone suggest possible differences in what is at stake for participants in each of these relationships.

In summary, participants did not describe feelings of love for the gatekeeper nor did they suggest that they identify with him. In terms of knowledge, participants suggested the gatekeeper could be understood to operate based on the principles of "self-interest." In comparison to the ignorant Other, participants described having less patience or empathy for the gatekeeper. Participants pointed out that given their access to power, these individuals have a particular moral responsibility to become informed and to use their power appropriately for the good of all people, including the oppressed.

10.4 The Self, the Racist, the Ignorant, and the Powerful

In participants' narratives, the ignorant Other is presented as the White Other most like the Self; with proper guidance, it is suggested that this Other may follow in the footsteps of the past Self and be transported from a position of Them to a place amongst Us. In contrast, both the racist and the powerful White Other are described as fundamentally different from Self, and decidedly 'not me'. While participants may explicitly distance themselves from these Others in their talk, there are intriguing similarities between participants' portrayals of Self and their portrayals of these two figures.

Like their depictions of the racist, participants describe themselves as passionate, stubborn, not easily swayed, and certain of being 'right'. Furthermore, both the anti-racism Self and the racist Other are defined by participants in terms of their views of, and relationship with, the racialized Other: the racist is defined as hating the racialized, while the Self is portrayed as being loving and accepting of the racialized. Finally, both the racist and the Self are positioned as members of minority groups vying

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for the hearts and minds of the impressionable majority. As Margaret put it: "So you have those [i.e., racists] whose mind is never going to be changed, you have … <u>our</u> group who we're not going to compromise for anything, and then you've got this group in the middle that's just looking for someone to make the right argument."

Consider now the similarities among participants' portrayals of the anti-racist Self and of the powerful Other. Participants' broader accounts of Self can be read as portrayals of savvy, experienced, and readied fighters. Just as they describe the powerful Other, they depict themselves as adept at playing power games and fighting strategically. While what is reportedly at stake for each differs in their accounts (i.e., personal gain versus the rights of the oppressed), both parties are positioned in their narratives as evenly matched, and equally motivated rivals.

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I began the preceding chapter by suggesting the two following chapters would include an exploration of the racialized and the White Other in participants' lives. The structuring of participants' experience in this manner seemed to suggest that two distinct categories of Other exist for them. In reflecting back over what has been discussed in the preceding pages, this framing appears rather misleading given the wide-ranging variations of otherness described. Indeed, the racialized Other and the White Other have been shown to exist in many different forms in participants' narratives, reportedly eliciting a wide range of responses from them. Interestingly, the degree to which these Others are constructed as 'not me' seems to have relatively little to do with race. Indeed, the racist and the powerful White Other, though sharing a racial identification with participants, were described as the most decidedly Other, based primarily on perceived differences in worldviews and values. On the other hand, racialized colleagues sharing participants' worldview were arguably constructed more as Us than Other by participants. In the following chapter I explore additional

dimensions of Self, including a further consideration of the meanings of Us in

participants' narratives.

11. THE PRESENT SELF: I AM

In the preceding chapters, I considered participants' constructions of Self in relation to racialized and White Others. In this chapter and the one that follows, I shift the focus to exploring I-Me and I-Us dimensions of the White, anti-racism educator Self. In the life history interviews, participants described themselves using past, present, and future tenses. I have chosen to structure these two chapters around those temporal groupings, beginning in this chapter with the present (i.e., *I AM*). This was participants' primary focus during the interview and, as they suggested, it provides the context for understanding their past and future Selves.

Three primary constructions of the present Self emerged in participants' narratives: they referred to an anti-racism Self, a White Self, and a Self that I have labeled the liminal Self. In addition to exploring these three constructions, the three forms of Us that participants described will also be considered.

11.1 The Anti-Racism Self

In the semi-structured interview I asked participants what anti-racism means to their understanding and experience of themselves. Specifically, I asked (1) to what extent and in what ways anti-racism is central to their sense of who they are as a person; (2) how their stance on racism relates to who they are, what they do, and what they believe, in the varied contexts of their lives. Two dominant themes emerged in participants' responses to these questions, themes which were also evident in their life history interviews and are interwoven throughout their talk on other topics. First, all participants were quick to emphasize the centrality of an anti-racism identity to their experience and understanding of themselves, describing it in terms of a specific and

decontextualized set of values held. Second, participants emphasized the interconnectedness between this central, anti-racism identity and all other aspects of their lives. I explore these two broad themes in the following sections labeled according to their commonly used phrases: "It's who I am," and "It's all connected." [74]

11.1.1 "It's Who I Am"

When I asked participants how central they felt anti-racism was to their understanding of themselves, there was a remarkable similarity among their responses. In every case, participants suggested that anti-racism is integral to their vision of Self; it is not portrayed merely as something they *do* (i.e., a specific action) but is described as a critical aspect of who they *are* (i.e., a generalized way of 'being' in the world)*.* In talking about what anti-racism means to their experience of Self they used a frame of reference that is common in the West (Shweder & Bourne, 1991); they described a cohesive, stable, de-contextualized, and core Self, and they did so with a tone of certainty. Note how this theme is expressed in various ways in the following quotes:

> It's not like I turn it on at nine o'clock when I get here *(laughter)*, and shut it off when I go home at three. It's something that I think about a lot and I teach my girls, and it's part of who I am and my character and my life and everybody knows it … because I wear it all the time. So ya, it's just me. (Stephanie)

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[74] Note that while I use the term 'anti-racism educator' in this section, recall that it is not the way several participants preferred to identify themselves despite their willingness to participate in this study about anti-racism educators. That is, recall that some participants felt uncomfortable with the narrow framing of their involvement as "anti-racism" work, framing it alternately in terms "fighting against oppression," "fighting for justice and equity," "promoting diversity," and "encouraging cross-cultural understanding." The unexpected diversity of concepts and terms used by participants resulted in my uncertainty as to how to word questions of identity in the semi-structured interview. I resolved this dilemma by addressing it directly with participants. I instructed them that while I would use the term 'anti-racism educator' in the questions, they were to interpret and answer the questions using the terminology that they felt was most appropriate to their situation. Participants seemed to be comfortable with this approach and none voiced any discomfort with the arrangement. Thus, in reading this section, the reader should keep in mind the broad and varied ways in which participants interpreted and applied 'anti-racism educator' to themselves and their work.

[It's] just sort of a constant.. sort of a constant way of <u>being</u> for me… (Grace)

I just do it because that's part of what I'm <u>supposed</u> to be doing. And so I do it just because … it's who I am. (Jeff)

What do participants mean in asserting anti-racism is "who I am" or refer to it as a "way of being"? What is the structure of this Self they are referring to, and how is it conceptualized? Rather than relying upon the common discourse of traits, participants described this 'core' Self primarily and consistently in moral terms, as a collection of deeply held values. As Chris said, "It's an underlying base of what I'm about. … it's a large part of who I am. It's part of my value system. So I see it as an important part of who I <u>am</u>…."[75] While not all participants so explicitly stated a link between their experience of Self and their values, they all similarly described themselves in terms of values held, portraying the anti-racism educator Self as a decidedly moral being. Depicted as central to their sense of Self, these key values were attributed with guiding their behaviour, providing them with purpose, and helping them to make sense of their lives.

While participants varied somewhat in the particular composition of values they suggested made up the 'core Self,' there was also considerable overlap in their accounts.[76] In an attempt to organize the data, I have grouped the values noted by participants into broad categories. Recognizing the inherent risks of categorizing concepts such as these (i.e., suggesting seemingly clear demarcations among

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[75] While most participants used the term "values" in this context, on occasion they would speak of "beliefs." For example, in describing what anti-racism means to her, Debbie states: "It's who I am. … Like, my drive to eliminate it, call it, is not separate from who I am. It's the core of who I am and what I believe in. It's a belief." Given that participants primarily referred to "values" in this context, and since they seemed to use the notion of "beliefs" as a synonym for "values" (e.g., in other places Debbie makes similar comments, replacing "beliefs" for "values"), for simplicity's sake I will speak of "values" in this section unless another term was explicitly used by participants.

[76] In this section I rely on participants' explicit references to particular values held. The absence of any participants' names in discussing particular values should not be interpreted as them not holding to the value under discussion, but rather indicates that they did not explicitly refer to it in describing themselves.

interconnected concepts), I have endeavored to use participants' own conceptualizations in making these distinctions wherever possible. The six core values identified in participants' accounts include (1) fairness, justice, and equality; (2) commitment to the collectivity; (3) collaboration and cooperation; (4) valuing the person; (5) integrity; (6) independence and strength.[77]

Fairness, Justice, and Equality. Given their involvement in anti-racism work, it is hardly surprising that all participants emphasized a commitment to the broad values of fairness, justice, and equality. However, while all participants expressed a commitment to these values, eight participants emphasized these values as critical to their sense of Self. These individuals described both their present Selves and their childhood Selves as being highly aware of, and sensitive to, issues of justice and injustice. For example, in talking about her childhood reaction to injustice, Joan explained that while she didn't know where it came from, a "little voice" and a "feeling in my gut" would tell her "this isn't right."

These concepts of fairness, justice, and equality tended to be used together or interchangeably, as illustrated by Diane's comments:

I have a sense of justice which is sometimes too strong, because I can't let things go. … If I don't think it's fair, like that's a real big issue … for me. And I mean it can be with everything. … Like, "Okay, you're telling me that this is the way you're doing it but this isn't fair! You know, it's not equally done for everybody. … How can you rationalize that? Like, what's the reason behind that?" That sort of thing.

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[77] The framing of these dimensions of 'core Self' in terms of values (i.e., rather than through alternate lenses, such as dispositional traits) is based upon *participants'* constructions of them as such. I point this out because it is a structure that I found difficult to grasp at times and awkward to write about, a limitation due in part I expect, to my psychological training. I realized in writing this chapter just how little we spoke of the 'experience of Self' in my undergraduate studies, and how peripheral values were in our overall constructions of the person. While I embrace a constructionist view of the person and intersubjective understanding of experience in this research, it is interesting to note the subtle ways in which I continue to be a product of my discipline. However, it is hoped that any awkwardness on my part will not hinder the reader from gaining an understanding of how participants construct themselves as anti-racism educators in terms of a set of core values.

Furthermore, these values tended to be defined in concrete and individualistic terms.

For example, Margaret, Cathy, and Liz assessed equality in terms of legal

requirements set out in human rights legislation. Fairness, justice, and equality were

also related to the value of inclusiveness; participants suggested a commitment to

these values would result in a society which would be more inclusive of everyone.

Commitment to the Collectivity. Nine participants described themselves as

having a commitment to the well-being of the larger group (e.g., community, society,

etc.) over narrow self-interest, noting this as an important personal value and core

aspect of the Self. They used terms such as "community-minded" (Margaret), having a

"cooperative point of view" (Tom), and "socialist" (Margaret, Diane, Joan, Tom) in

describing themselves in this regard. In contrast, they described those who did not

share this value as self-centered, individualistic, or selfish. Margaret, reportedly

committed to the union movement and "union principles," seemed to identify the most

strongly with this value, referring to it frequently throughout the interview. While her

comments below are illustrative of the general positions put forward by other

participants, I chose this particular excerpt as it also highlights the connection Margaret

made between being "community minded" and her anti-racist stance:

> You're either self-centered or you're community-minded. You know? So if
> you're into your community, chances are you're not going to have a strong
> racist attitude, you're not going to because it's not all about you. … [In] all the
> little everyday things, you know, it's when they call and say, "Hey, can you
> canvas for Cancer Society?" and you're the type of person who says, "Ya, you
> know what, I can do a block," versus "click." You know, it's the same in the
> workplace, it's the same in the union, it's everywhere.

Jeff and Grace's stated willingness to step down from their positions in their

organizations if, and when, it were deemed to be of benefit to the broader community

to have a racialized person doing their job, further illustrates this construction of Self as

committed to the collectivity. As Grace explained, "I'm kind of working against my

purposes and the mission of the organization if I put … my own status or role in such

an agency first."

     <u>Collaboration and Cooperation.</u> A majority of participants suggested that

working collaboratively and cooperatively was an important personal value tied closely

to their sense of Self. Previously I outlined participants' position of valuing the needs of

the collectivity over the needs of the Self. In contrast, the emphasis here is on *process,*

and participants' stance regarding how the members of the collective *ought* to work

together in meaningful partnerships towards a common goal.

     While 10 participants clearly espoused this value, there were subtle and

interesting differences in their discussion of it that suggested differences in its

relevance to their experience of Self. In the cases of Grace, Diane, and Jeff, this value

was linked to the value of inclusion: working collaboratively was framed primarily as a

way of ensuring that everyone would be included in the process and that all voices

would be heard. Jeff explains this position as follows:

> And so for me, my approach is more <u>shared</u>, more <u>integrative</u>, more <u>inclusive</u>
> … How do we work together? … And that's very consistent actually with the
> Elders' teachings. I don't think the Elders would be very big on separating
> people into two camps. The Elders would be much more into – the ones I know
> anyway – into bringing people together, working out things in a shared and non-
> conflictual, sort of way.

In contrast, for Tom, Debbie, and Margaret, working collaboratively was primarily

associated with their commitment to the values of fairness, equality, and justice. That

is, they linked the marginalization and oppression of certain groups in society to their

exclusion from decision-making processes, arguing that the involvement and equal

participation of everyone is required to bring about a just society. Despite any

differences in their framings of cooperation and collaboration, this value was portrayed

as integral to each of these participants' core sense of Self.

While Chris, Cathy, Liz, and Kelly also emphasized the value of working together, they spoke of it specifically in relation to their practice of anti-racism, framing it less explicitly as part of their 'core' Self. For Chris, Liz, and Cathy, working collaboratively was described in terms of how they *do* anti-racism (e.g., they participated on boards and committees designed to include representatives from various groups). Kelly spoke frequently and passionately about working collaboratively, but he tended to describe it as a useful tool for achieving a particular outcome (i.e., inviting participation from all stakeholders leads to "better solutions" that benefit everyone).

Valuing 'The Person'. Participants described themselves as respectful of others (n=11); open-minded and accepting of difference (n=11); empathic (n=8); compassionate, sensitive, or caring (n=11); and valuing relationships above material gain (n=6).[78] These characteristics were framed as positive ones that were essential to working effectively in the field of anti-racism. While each of these characteristics could be understood in terms of personality traits that map onto the Five-Factor model of personality (e.g., see McAdams, 2006), they were not presented in this manner. Rather, these characteristics seemed to be held together within a broader humanist perspective in which participants described the Self as one who values people and views them as having intrinsic worth. Furthermore, rather than having some kind of innate basis in keeping with a trait perspective, participants suggested that these were values available for anyone to claim and to practice.

Integrity: "Walking the Walk." The notion of integrity suggests a sense of living in accordance with a moral code. As such, 'valuing integrity' is an apt description for a

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[78] Given the high proportion of participants included in each of these groupings I have simply provided a numerical summary of the number of participants endorsing each concept. Each participant is included in at least one of the categories listed.

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dimension of Self outlined by six participants[79] who described themselves as striving to behave in keeping with their stated values. They further spoke of their desire to honestly and openly examine themselves to ensure there was no discrepancy in this regard. Joan illustrates this point in stating "I <u>really</u> believe we have no business doing this work if we're not living it in some really authentic way. It doesn't have to be living it loudly, but <u>living</u> it."

In addition to embracing the value of living with integrity, five of these participants voiced sharp criticism for people they suggested *lacked* integrity; those they deemed "hypocrites." Debbie described individuals and organizations who "haven't done anything" but "pretend equity" so that they don't "look bad" as being "big on talk but not a lot on walk." Margaret, who was particularly vocal on this topic, illustrates the contrast between the construction of Self as having integrity, and the disdained hypocrite in the quote below. To put the quote in its proper context, just prior to this excerpt Margaret was pointing out the common discrepancy between peoples' supposed belief in union principles of solidarity and their actual behaviors. She contrasts this with her own behaviour, couched in the language of Us:

> And there's the rest of us who are saying, "We don't shop at Wal-Mart," you know, "We participate in things, and we listen and we learn and we ask questions and, you know, if there's a picket line, I go; if there's a protest, I go; if there's an educational, I go." You know, you do it because you <u>have</u> to do it. … There's <u>nothing</u> worse than a hypocrite, there's <u>absolutely nothing</u> worse than a hypocrite, especially in the union. To stand up there and say, you know, "Solidarity forever," and "An injury to one is an injury to all," and then you vote no on a resolution that's going to make the union more inclusive or help workers in the global setting. That's being a hypocrite to me.

<u>Independence and Strength.</u> All participants, with the exception of Chris and Grace, described themselves as valuing personal initiative, courage, confidence, non-

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[79] While all participants noted a clear connection between an 'inner Self', made up of values and beliefs, and other aspects of their lives (as will be considered at a later point in this chapter), these six participants were unique in describing what I have labeled 'integrity' in value terms and presenting it as essential to their sense of Self.

conformance, hard work, and the willingness to stand alone and be strong when facing resistance. In telling stories about their experiences, these attributes were positioned as positive ones and were commonly ascribed to the Self.[80] As I reflected on all these stories and descriptions, I noted a common individualistic thread running through all these concepts that seemed to point to a general valuing of independence and personal strength.

For example, Kelly, Liz, Diane, Stephanie, and Margaret told stories that highlighted acts of personal initiative and told stories of overcoming obstacles. Liz's narrative perhaps best illustrates this point. Liz spoke with pride about how she had overcome significant obstacles in her life such as poverty and a major disability to become a significant force in her community. She described times she had been discouraged by others from pursuing a particular course of action, only to prove them wrong by succeeding through her own strength and determination.

Independence and strength were most commonly discussed in the context of fighting racism, as participants all spoke favourably about people willing to stand up against perceived injustice. Used in this way, talk of being strong, independent, and taking initiative was often tied to participants' stated commitment to the collectivity, as illustrated in Debbie's comments: "If everyone sat in their homes and watched TV and said 'Oh, geez, we should do something about that,' what the hell would change?"

In Tom, Debbie, and Margaret's accounts, the notion of being strong and independent in the face of injustice was also closely linked to the value of integrity. Specifically, they argued that to compromise one's position in a fight against racism and injustice for any reason was paramount to hypocrisy. Tom explained further that

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[80] Recall that these were also common descriptors participants used in discussing individuals they admired, or with whom they identified. For example, recall how Jeff, Kelly, Debbie, Liz, and Margaret admired and identified with racialized people whom they described alternately as resilient, adaptive, or having "taken control" of their lives.

regardless of how difficult it might be to stand alone and despite personal cost, it is necessary to "never waiver" and to "confront [racism] wherever it is, and you don't ever compromise." Indeed, the woman he referred to throughout his interview as his role model in anti-racism work was portrayed as embodying precisely these values.

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The composite portrait of Self that emerges in the preceding pages is of a person who embraces the values of justice and equality; is committed to the collectivity over narrow self-interest; approaches life in a spirit of collaboration; sees the inherent value of people; strives to live a life of integrity; is independent and takes initiative; and stands up to injustice with strength and courage. When viewed through a values lens, this portrayal has something of a common sense feeling to me in that I would expect that most people in our society might claim a similar set of values; yet participants seemed to suggest that this core Self was unique. However, given the emphasis on integrity in participants' narratives, and their suggestion that they integrate these values in all domains of their lives (as explored further in the following section), what they construct as being unique may not be the tacit *agreement* with these values, but rather the centrality of them to their experience of Self.

My initial sense that the values described by participants fit together naturally and unproblematically, caused me to pause and question this portrayal further. Upon reflection, I realized that the combination of communal values (i.e., commitment to the collectivity, collaboration) and individualistic values (i.e., independence, initiative, and integrity) combined with values that speak to how one ought to view and treat other people (i.e., valuing the person, treating them fairly) fit with descriptions I have heard of rural Saskatchewan and references to the pioneering history of its Euro-Canadian occupants. While I can only speculate, I am curious as to the possible connections between this particular construction of Self as comprised of values, and the specific

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cultural context of the prairie province in which most participants were raised, and all now live and work. Marsella (1985) and Shweder and Bourne (1991), who argue that culture plays a key role in determining how the Self is conceptualized and experienced, are several theorists whose work might be relevant to such an investigation. While I have already mentioned that the portrayal of a core, stable, and decontextualized Self might be considered a product of western cultural understandings of the person, it would be interesting to explore more specifically how the particular constellation of values described by participants might be understood from a cultural perspective.

Finally, the certainty with which participants claimed their values as 'right' and 'true' and used them at times as an absolute standard in evaluating their own and others' behaviour, is noteworthy. While claiming to be committed to open-mindedness and diversity, these values were presented as non-negotiable. Furthermore, no potential conflicts between these values were noted. However, this moral certitude regarding values at an abstract level did not mean participants always voiced certainty as to how these values ought to be *applied* in specific, real-life settings; most participants admitted to struggling at times in this regard. Joan offers perhaps the most poignant example of this in her description of her experience in visiting a close and respected friend in an African country who reportedly shares her value of equality and justice, but understands and applies them in a strikingly different manner. In the excerpt below, note how Joan struggles to understand how these deeply held values ought to be applied in practice:

> _____ treats his servants with great respect, he helps pay for their kids' education, he gives them time off unlike a lot of other people do there, but he also demands servitude! … And when he sticks his head out the back door and yells for _____, if she doesn't come running from her little flat there's hell to pay. And I'm just aghast at this, eh? So from my worldview, this is pretty fucked up! From his worldview, this is … essential for her to stay alive, she wants this structure. But this is a guy, he grew up in a family where the cupboards were kept locked because the servants might steal things. The servants weren't allowed to eat off the same cutlery and plates! So from his perspective he's

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<u>hugely</u> egalitarian, with these folks. And yet completely part of this whole class system. … Two-and-a-half-years later, Vonda, and I think about this stuff and I just start reeling.

11.1.2 <u>"It's All Connected"</u>

In the semi-structured interview I asked participants to talk about the relationship between who they are and what they do as *anti-racism educators*, and who they are and what they do in *other* contexts of their lives. Note the similarity among the following responses given: "It's perfectly correlated. One. It's a one. …my stance is who I am." (Jeff); "It's all interconnected, you can't sort of separate it … because it's all one part of a big sort of life picture." (Stephanie); "It all goes together." (Margaret); "It certainly is an underpinning of … how [I] approach things in general…." (Chris); "D<u>efinitely</u>, it connects to everything." (Grace); "It's part of my life <u>every</u> day" (Tom); "It's <u>who I am</u> and it's <u>what I do</u>. There's no separation for me in the two. … It's so much a <u>part</u> of me, so I can't separate the two" (Debbie).

As these excerpts illustrate, participants all emphasized a connection between their anti-racism Self and other significant dimensions of their lives. Specifically, the core values associated with their anti-racism Self were portrayed as key to making sense of the varied identities, involvements, and beliefs noted in previous pages. First, consider participants' reflections on what anti-racism means in the context of their work. In describing their anti-racism involvements, many participants spoke of going beyond their job descriptions in order to integrate anti-racism into their paid employment. Other participants mentioned dedicating much of their free time to addressing racism through volunteer work. Furthermore, when participants talked about doing anti-racism education their efforts were not limited to a specific setting, but included ongoing efforts to educate people in the varied contexts of their daily lives. Second, most participants described having culturally and racially diverse social circles, explaining that they feel more comfortable in these settings in light of their

particular values and beliefs. Some participants also linked their anti-racism Self to where they lived, explaining that they chose their neighbourhood given its particular demographics in order to "stand alongside" the oppressed or to immerse themselves in diversity. Third, participants emphasized the importance they placed on raising their children to share their values regarding anti-racism and spoke of the pride they feel in attaining that goal.

Most participants also spoke of a strong connection between their experience of Self as anti-racism educator and their political and religious beliefs. Of the nine participants who spoke about their political views, all of them identified themselves as being on the political 'left,' and directly tied that positioning to their values and stance on racism. For example, Jeff described himself as "left of center," pointing out that this position "allows for diversity and for open-mindedness. The more right you get, the more close-minded you have to be, whether it's about same-sex marriage or whether it's about Aboriginal rights, so … that's why I'm not on that side of things." Diane identified specifically with the New Democratic Party, suggesting that this party had a more "inclusive view," while Chris explained his refusal to support the Conservative Party as follows: "Certain parties … articulate my value system better than others do, and when it comes to cultural issues, especially when it comes from the Aboriginal community … the Conservative Party platform, to me, is not as accommodating and accepting of the historical realities of our society." Finally, Margaret, Joan, Tom, and Diane suggested their socialist values influence their political choices.

Participants also linked their religious beliefs to their anti-racism stance, albeit in different ways. Of the 11 participants who spoke of their religious beliefs, only Cathy described herself as having a strong religious affiliation; seven participants suggested the word "spiritual" better described them. In discussing their beliefs, seven participants emphasized inclusiveness and openness as important elements of their spirituality.

Kelly, Stephanie, Cathy, and Joan criticized the exclusive nature of organized religion, using words like "hierarchical," "sexist," "racist," "dogmatic" in making their points. Jeff, Tom, and Kelly described themselves as being drawn to Aboriginal spirituality, in part because of its inclusiveness. As Kelly explained, "It's more accepting, it's not a religion telling you how to act." Liz and Cathy were unique in invoking specific religious teachings to support their anti-racist efforts. Liz explained, "We're taught in the faith that everyone's <u>equal</u> and everyone should be <u>treated</u> equally." Cathy, an ordained minister, emphasized teachings that span religions: "Commonalities that I see in <u>all</u> religions are the desires for justice and peace. And … that's where my own faith is. … And for <u>me</u>, God's vision is one of right relationship amongst people." Thus, in looking across participants' accounts, anti-racism was associated with both the rejection and the embracing of a spiritual or religious position.

These many examples of interconnections in participants' constructions of the anti-racism educator Self and what they do, who they are, and what they believe in the many contexts of their lives, suggests that 'anti-racism educator' is experienced as a key identity for them. However, the focus of this research is not merely on anti-racism educators, but more specifically on *White* anti-racism educators. In the following section I look at how participants conceptualize the Self in terms of being White.

11.2 <u>The White Self</u>

By way of introducing the topic of whiteness in relation the experience of Self, note the following observations: Stephanie eagerly agreed to participate in research explicitly described as focusing on the experiences of *White* people working in anti-racism; in the course of the interview, she prefaced several of her comments with the line, "As a White person…"; however, on other occasions Stephanie asserted emphatically, "I'm <u>not</u> a White person." Liz also said, "I don't see myself as White"; and Joan and Debbie referred to themselves as "colourless." Yet on other occasions all

three of these women clearly identified themselves as White and, like Stephanie, none voiced concerns about participating in research focusing on White people. Of further note, none of these participants exhibited discomfort with what at first glance may appear to be the stating of contradictory positions. In contrast to these women, Diane, Chris, and Margaret were emphatic in identifying themselves solely as White. The remaining participants offered less clearly articulated positions regarding their acceptance or rejection of a White identity. While a surface reading of all these comments may suggest considerable variability in participants' identification with whiteness, a closer reading suggests participants' conceptualizations of themselves in this regard may not differ significantly. Once again, context becomes the critical factor in making sense of these complex data.

Through successive readings of participants' transcripts, it became clear to me that the concept of whiteness did not reference a singular meaning in participants' narratives; rather, particular dimensions of whiteness seemed to be associated with distinct meanings. Indeed, in considering the varied characteristics associated with groups of White Others noted previously (i.e., the racist, the ignorant, and the powerful), it is hardly surprising that whiteness would carry with it a range of associations for participants.[81] Still, a pattern could be seen in participants' references to their whiteness; despite the different words they used to express themselves, participants seemed to understand their whiteness, identify with it, and reject it in broadly similar ways. The two primary meanings of whiteness referred to in participants' talk that have allowed me to make sense of the seemingly contradictory ways in which they speak about themselves, include (1) understanding whiteness as

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[81] I smile to think of participants being asked to complete a forced choice survey question so popular in psychological research, regarding their identification with whiteness. I suspect they would fall into that category of 'difficult participants' who refuse to circle a single number as directed, writing lengthy qualifying comments in the margins.

an external marker, a meaningless yet significant social distinction based primarily on skin colour; (2) conceptualizing whiteness as a mindset or a particular way of thinking, described by several participants as "internal" whiteness.

11.2.1 <u>External Whiteness: "I Am White"</u>

In participants' talk, whiteness was sometimes associated with phenotypic characteristics such as the colour of skin, hair, and eyes; furthermore, it was related to a position of immense and unearned privilege in our society. All participants seemed to be using this referent of whiteness in agreeing to participate in this research and in asserting "I am White." Participants explained that whiteness in this sense could not be chosen but was socially imposed on them at birth. Therefore, to be White in this sense was presented as falling outside the realm of personal morality since it is not something one can choose or reject. That is, while the identification of whiteness and its corresponding privilege was portrayed as morally reprehensible from a societal perspective, participants were adamant that they can't 'help' being White. As Joan explained with reference to racialized people, "I am no more responsible for the colour that my skin is than they are of theirs."

While a White identity in this sense may be considered imposed and amoral for the individual thus labeled, all participants clearly suggested that morality comes into play in how a person chooses to respond to their whiteness and its corresponding privilege. Claiming one's whiteness and privilege was presented as the morally right thing to do; participants suggested that this move acknowledges both the arbitrary nature of that privilege and the correspondingly arbitrary nature of racialized people's oppression. However, participants all agreed that White people must go beyond simple acknowledgement of their privilege and use it responsibly for the greater good. As Stephanie explained, "I was just born … into that privilege and then it's up to us to

decide whether we want to pursue that and continue in that lifestyle or whether we want to fight against it."

11.2.2 <u>Internal Whiteness: "I Am Not White"</u>

In contrast, on other occasions whiteness was framed by participants as being internal rather than external, chosen rather than imposed, and personally immoral rather than amoral. When participants described White people as Other to Self (e.g., the racist, the ignorant), whiteness referred to a particular mindset that was related to an individual's values, beliefs, and attitudes.[82] Whiteness, in this usage, was associated with the varied characteristics of the White Other outlined in the previous chapter, such as being closed-minded, self-interested, unaware, and believing in one's superiority and entitlement. Margaret describes it as an "It's for me, I deserve it, I should get my fair share'" mentality, "[and] if they have anything left over after, then 'okay, somebody else can have it.'"

Used in this sense, whiteness is presented as a morally reprehensible position that one may choose to reject. It is this form of whiteness that participants reject and from which they distance themselves in their talk, as Stephanie does in explicitly stating, "I am not White." The following quote illustrates the distinction between these two meanings of whiteness, and suggests how it is possible to experience the Self as *both* White and not White without experiencing this as contradictory:

> I don't <u>feel</u> like a White person. I'm <u>not</u> a White person. White to me is a state of mind, it's a state of thinking, it's – and I'm fully aware that with this light skin and blonde hair and blue eyes come certain privileges, I'm fully aware of that, but I don't at <u>all</u> consider myself to be White. And the people who get to know me really well, white, nonwhite, would agree with that, they would say, "You're not a White person." (Stephanie)

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[82] Interestingly, Jeff, Stephanie, Joan, and Liz all chose to label this "internal" whiteness.

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If participants conceptualize the Self in terms of an external/internal dichotomy, and if only the external Self is associated with whiteness, one might ask whether participants experience the internal Self in some form as being racialized. In fact, this is precisely how two participants described themselves through the voice of the racialized Other. Liz explained, "People in the Black community describe me as 'the White sister with the Black soul,'" while Stephanie told me "I had a student once say … to my colleague … [Stephanie's] brown on the inside." However, other participants' comments do not support so straightforward an interpretation. While some participants did specify that their worldview is akin to a First Nations perspective, talk of race was largely absent in their descriptions of the internal Self.

11.3 The Liminal Self

Although participants did not use the word "liminal" in their self-descriptions, at times their constructions of Self suggested the appropriateness of this label. Two dimensions of this liminal Self are discussed below.

11.3.1 "I Am Different"

The construction of Self as different, unique, and not fitting into traditional categories in society was a strong theme running through the interviews. While this theme can be seen in the depiction of Self presented thus far (i.e., a 'core' Self that is unlike members of mainstream society, the Self as both White and not White), all participants (with the exception of Chris) also described themselves more explicitly in these terms. Jeff's comments illustrate this point:

> I'm different. Although somebody who sees me for the first time, thinks I'm the same as everybody else. White, male … professional. But I'm not at all. I mean I live an interdisciplinary life and … I've done all sorts of things that no one else has ever done. … I've traveled, I've lived in another country, I've married a woman … who is different, I have children that are biracial, I work in Aboriginal communities. I mean, *(laughter)* that's not your normal sort of set of things that you would find on a resume. … I think it just centers me in a different place….

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For eight participants, being different was constructed in terms of the Self being "in the margins, "outside the mainstream" or "on the fringes of society." [83]

These portrayals of Self as unusual and not fitting in to the typical structures of society fit well with Turner's (1969) description of "threshold" people, individuals who reside in a state of perpetual liminality:

> The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ('threshold people')
> are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or
> slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and
> positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they
> are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law,
> custom, convention, and ceremonial. (p. 95)

While Turner (1969) offers a useful concept for understanding participants' portrayal of Self, he does not speak to the *experience* of *being* a liminal person; my participants, however, did. Participants' accounts suggest their experience of liminality is not restricted to their professional identity as White anti-racism educators, but rather is experienced as an integral part of 'who I am' that permeates their sense of Self. As Joan explained, "I've felt marginal my whole life, ya. I've been marginal in my <u>family</u>, I've been marginal in my <u>community</u>, I've been marginal my whole life."

Being 'different' was described in positive terms, as an identity to be celebrated and embraced, and the margins were typically depicted as a preferred space within which to reside. As Margaret said, "Oh, I'm on the margins. I don't <u>want</u> to be in the

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[83] When asked, four participants stated that they did not identify with this notion of being in the margins. One of these participants interpreted my reference to the margins as being 'irrelevant,' and told of an incident in which he had been offended when a friend described him as "too much on the fringes." Another participant interpreted the question in terms of a rejection by the dominant group, and claimed that contrary to this idea she is accepted by the majority as being "on the inside." A third participant interpreted a place in the margins as being "undefined," and explained that while others may view her as such "I feel very comfortable in my own skin." However, in other contexts, all three of these participants described positionings of Self that sounded very similar to other participants' descriptions of residing in the margins. Only one participant clearly distanced himself from the margins on all levels. Chris described "marginal people" as White people who "really get involved" in anti-racism and "are fully accepted by both groups," adding that this description does not apply well to him since he is not "fully accepted" by Aboriginal people.

mainstream." This marginal space was described as a comfortable place; a place of freedom from the restraints imposed by "mainstream society"; an exciting place of opportunity. In the context of these discussions, half of the participants specifically mentioned the role of choice in their experience of marginality.[84] They noted that, unlike racialized people who are forced into the margins, their whiteness affords them the choice to move in and out of the margins, allowing them to identify with the dominant group if ever wanted to do so. For example, Margaret explained that in relation to mainstream society, she had always been "a bit on the fringes." When I asked her the degree to which she felt she had been forced into the margins, she was quick to reply, "No. … I've never <u>ever</u> felt excluded, like I always felt if I wanted to go to anything I'd just <u>go</u> there." Similarly, Tom explained that while "it's not my choice," he could easily "blend in" with mainstream society if he so wished.

11.3.2 <u>"I Am Between"</u>

With the exception of Chris, all participants suggested that they have a unique and special relationship with *both* White people and racialized people. In reflecting on what this meant, eight participants described it in terms of a positioning of Self 'between' these two groups.

The notion of Self as 'between' was most commonly expressed using the metaphor of Self *as bridge*. A bridge connects two separate bodies; while it may be a distinct structure, in a sense it belongs to, and is an extension of, both entities. Half of the participants drew upon this metaphor for Self, as Jeff did when he said, "I actually act as a bridge, a bridging agent between the First Nations, Métis and non-Aboriginal communities. I bring people together, to talk about common issues, common problems, develop common solutions, and it's nice to be in that position." In addition to the bridge

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[84] While the remaining participants did not explicitly refer to "choice" in this context, this theme can be read into all their broader narratives, with the exception of Chris.

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metaphor, participants described themselves as "a mediator" (Kelly), a "boundary spanner" (Joan), and a "liaison" (Margaret). Like the bridge metaphor, these images suggest a special connection, or a privileged relationship, between participants and each of the parties being brought together.

Margaret provides another interesting perspective on the function served by Self in this position between groups. While emphasizing the Self as a bridge bringing people together, she also spoke of her role in keeping groups *apart*:

> There's the totally oppressed on one side, you know, they just can't dig themselves out, they just have nowhere to go. And we're kind of in this little strip in the middle, just trying to hold back the mainstream without losing ground on the other one … because if the two were to meet, I think it could get ugly.

Given participants' stated identification with both whiteness and the racialized Other, these portrayals of the Self as *between* suggest a construal of Self that is in some way an experience of being *both.* However, participants' descriptions of Self as *both* can also be read as a construction of Self as *neither.* That is, participants did not describe it as an additive relationship; rather all of them (except for Chris) suggested their dual identification led to a new and distinct identity. As Tom explained, "I may have a little bit of the feeling of how someone who has mixed parents feels, where they can't fit in. They're seen as an outsider from everyone." Joan voices a similar experience in likening herself alternately to a bisexual and a Métis person:

> I think because on the <u>face</u> of it, we <u>look</u> like part of the dominant culture. The inner experience is not that, nor is it being a full-fledged member of the oppressed. It's, you know, similar to how I've described bisexuality, it's.. A Métis person, if you're <u>both</u> Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian, you're <u>something else altogether</u>.

Given this construction of Self, I expect Todorov's (1984) notion of the cultural hybrid and Kristeva's (1991) description of cosmopolitanism would resonate with participants' experience of Self in terms of being *both* and *neither*. Heralded as an ideal to strive towards, the metaphor of the cultural hybrid is used by Todorov to describe

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someone who understands and identifies with more than one culture, and in so doing is able to experience difference in equality. Note the parallels between participants' constructions of Self as both and neither, and Todorov's description of the Spanish explorer, Cabeza de Vaca:

> Cabeza de Vaca also reached a neutral point, not because he was indifferent to the two cultures but because he had experienced them both from within – thereby, he no longer had anything but 'the others' around him; without becoming an Indian Cabeza de Vaca was no longer quite a Spaniard. His experience symbolizes and heralds that of a the modern exile, which in its turn personifies a tendency characteristic of our society: a being who has lost his country without thereby acquiring another, who lives in a double exteriority…. (Todorov, 1984, p. 249)[85]

The being described in the last part of this quote (i.e., the one who has no country), is the focus of attention in Kristeva's (1991) exploration of the ever-changing construction of 'the foreigner' through time and space; in this context, she traces the meanings of cosmopolitanism. Presented pejoratively or positively, depending upon the context, cosmopolitanism challenges the idea of nationalism and its borders, and is associated with such utopian possibilities as being a "citizen of the world" and "nowhere a foreigner" (Kristeva, 1991, p. 140). Cosmopolitanism's dual respect for universalism and diversity echoes Todorov's ideal of embracing difference in equality. Participants' constructions of a Self that rejects the boundaries of rigid social identities (e.g., Self as White *or* racialized); their embracing of their own otherness as seen in their identification with the racialized Other; and their experience of a Self that resides in the marginal spaces between groups suggest that Kristeva's concept of cosmopolitanism might be appropriately applied to understanding a dimension of their experience of Self. Thus, what could be read from an outsider's perspective as contradiction and the absence of a strong identity on one hand, might better be

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[85] Interestingly, Kelly described his position in relation to racialized and White people in similar terms of neutrality. As he put it, "You do have to be in-between. … I feel I have a loyalty to all those … groups. … So, the way I try to carry myself … is (to be) completely neutral."

understood as a particular kind of identity which is based on a sense of plurality rather than singularity. That is, participants appear to understand and experience themselves on occasion as cultural hybrids and as "citizens of the world", individuals whose identity is constructed in relation to more than one culture.

<p style="text-align:center">*****</p>

In talking broadly about what it means to be both White and an anti-racism educator, 10 participants pointed out that, in comparison to their racialized colleagues, they are better positioned to carry out the work of anti-racism. As members of the dominant group, participants explained that they are more effective at delivering the message of anti-racism because they can "say things differently" (Diane) and "get away with it" (Joan); and "play both sides a little easier" (Chris), since their whiteness not only increases their credibility with the dominant group, but may also increase their credibility with Aboriginal people who have "internalized racism" (Kelly, Jeff, Tom). In contrast, participants suggested that racialized anti-racism educators are at a distinct disadvantage given White society's racist vision of them. Specifically, it was suggested that their colleagues are unable to get the same "buy-in" (Kelly, Chris); they are not "taken as seriously" and are viewed as merely "bitching" (Stephanie) or "having attitude" (Debbie); and that they experience more "vitriolic attacks" (Cathy) because they are assumed to be pushing their "self-serving" agendas (Margaret).

<p style="text-align:center">11.4 <u>The Us in Anti-Racism Education</u></p>

While participants constructed themselves as unique individuals in comparison with most people in society, this is not to say that they only described themselves in terms of I-You and I-Them. Participants also referred to I-Us relationships, suggesting there are others sharing at least some of their characteristics or experiences. In this section I explore further the meanings, experiences, and expressions of Us in participants' narratives.

<p style="text-align:center">290</p>

While not the direct focus of attention thus far, many references to Us can be found in sifting through the material covered in previous chapters. In particular, participants alluded to several forms of Us in describing their identification with various groups (e.g., Aboriginal elders, the oppressed), while a privileged Us is also apparent in their discussion of their whiteness.[86] In this section, my focus is specifically on participants' depictions of Us that are relevant to their anti-racism efforts and their experiences of the Self as an anti-racism educator.

In participants' accounts, Us is not constructed simply in terms of *all* anti-racism educators. Recall the distinct Us-Them binary that structured participants talk about approaches to anti-racism (i.e., moral, business, liberal, and cultural awareness approaches). What then constitutes Us in participants' narratives of themselves as anti-racism educators? What is the connection between constructions of Us, and their descriptions of who they *are* and what they *do*? Finally, what is participants' experience of Self in relating to Us? These questions are explored further in this section.

Participants' descriptions of Us can be categorized according to what they identified as common or shared by its members. The three forms of Us that participants referenced included (1) an Us that is task-focused and built around shared anti-racism work goals; (2) an Us based upon shared values and beliefs; (3) an Us that is the product of a particular shared experience. Note that differences between these three forms of Us in participants' accounts tend to be a matter of degree rather than kind (e.g., a primary emphasis upon shared values does not preclude a shared focus on task), and that many participants referred to more than one Us.

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[86] The privileged Us is the only significant form of Us I detected in participants' references to White or mainstream society in the interviews. It would be interesting to explore further whether participants indeed feel no common connection with mainstream society beyond shared privilege, or whether this is an omission resulting from the particular context of the interview setting.

11.4.1 <u>The Us of Shared Tasks</u>

For Liz, Cathy, and Kelly, Us was described predominantly in terms of a professional network of people working together in various capacities towards a common anti-racism goal. For example, as Cathy's comments illustrate, they spoke of working collaboratively with boards and committees that were comprised of key, local stakeholders who shared a common goal:

> There's a lot of collaboration in Saskatchewan with the cultural associations, Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, the Global Gathering Place, the Open Door Society, Refugee Coalition, Amnesty International, and we're <u>all</u> intersecting with the police these days because the police are <u>out</u> there, wanting to learn more. And we work together as well around employment issues.

While these participants spoke in terms of Us, they did so in a somewhat detached and impersonal manner; the connection to Self was described more in terms of 'what I do' than as 'who I am'. As apparent in the above quote, faces and names tended to remain blurred, as members of Us were referred to in relation to their organizational affiliation rather than as a collection of individual, living people. In talking about their experiences of this Us, participants spoke less about their own feelings and emotions towards the group than about issues relating to its effectiveness in working together. Furthermore, while shared values were identified as important to this Us, they were described primarily in terms of their usefulness in ensuring the group operated smoothly and effectively. In this context then, the function served by Us was constructed as directly related to the ability to do anti-racism more effectively.

11.4.2 <u>The Us of Shared Values</u>

A very different picture emerged when the remaining nine participants (and Kelly) described an Us based upon a sense of shared values. While in many cases this Us included individuals with whom they described working on specific projects, the commonality emphasized was not a shared professional affiliation, but a shared set of

values. In contrast to the detached tone noted above, participants spoke with emotion about the importance of their relationships with members of this Us, and offered rich and detailed portraits of these people as individuals with whom they shared deep, meaningful interactions and personal relationships.

These 10 participants agreed broadly with Joan's assessment that the basis of Us is "<u>absolutely</u> shared values." While individual participants emphasized different values to varying degrees, what was striking was the similarity in their accounts. Not surprisingly, the kinds of values that participants referred to as shared and central to creating the sense of Us, read very much like the list of values they used to describe the Self. Debbie spoke perhaps in the greatest detail about Us in telling me about of a group of friends and acquaintances from her community with whom she regularly associates. I asked her to describe this group further, and I use her response to illustrate how several of the values described previously as central to Self might be read loosely into her description of Us. As a reminder to the reader of these values, I have included them, where relevant, in parentheses.

> [They are] <u>very</u> exciting, and very crazy. Very <u>rebellious</u>. *(independence and strength)*… They <u>obviously</u> have, I believe, hearts of <u>gold</u>, I mean, hearts of <u>gold</u>. *(valuing the person)* And, they are people who <u>really</u> are searching for <u>all</u> the sides of every equation. *(integrity)* … They have many faces, and they have many races.. … The ability to have <u>fun</u> together, ability to enjoy each others' company, the ability to open up and want to learn <u>more</u> about the other groups. *(valuing the person)* And then from that, when there's <u>injustice</u>, then that usually initiates an action, *(integrity)* because obviously if it's a <u>friend,</u> or a friend of a friend, and they're going through some kind of tragic situation, maybe in the workplace there's some discrimination happening, they've been fired, suspended - that's usually how I hear about people - or it could even be in the community, that's there's some things going on, then people phone each other, they link up with each other, they're involved in community groups who also know each other through <u>that</u> kind of venue. *(collaboration and cooperation)*… I think we think alike, for the most part - we have common belief systems.

In addition to the emphasis on shared values, several other themes emerged in participants' talk of this Us. First, this Us included a relatively small number of individuals (e.g., a few co-workers, members of a particular board, other individuals

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positioned in similar work roles across the country, a few Aboriginal Elders). Second, the relationship with these individuals was described as being a long-term one; it was not bound by a set time frame or limited to a joint involvement in a particular task. Third, while described as highly similar in terms of shared values, this Us was presented as racially and culturally diverse. Fourth, in all but one case, group members were described as involved, on some level, in participants' anti-racism work. That is, they typically described Us as a core group of individuals from their community or workplace that assisted each other on an as-needed basis in their varied anti-racism efforts and activist involvements. Joan was unique in this regard; she described a women's spirituality group that had formed to address a common longing for spirituality, inclusion, and ritual that she suggested could not be met through organized religion given its hierarchical structure and sexist teachings. When I asked Joan to talk about Us in relation to her anti-racism work, she referred to this spirituality group as the most critical and relevant Us. As she explained, "That's a community I have very shared values with, and that unconditional support. … The networks from which I get strength are not people who are doing this work. They are people doing other kinds of change work, or doing their thing, or whatever their thing might be."

The Us of shared values was described as a group that plays a critical role in participants' lives. They pointed out that sharing values means much more than a shared cognitive connection (i.e., "we think alike"), and speaks rather to a profound, emotional, and personal connection in which there is much at stake for the Self. In addition to being described by all nine participants as a key source of friendship and social support, two participants further described this group as offering them a place of comfort and safety. As Debbie explained, "When you're under more stress it's really important to be able to socialize - and freely socialize, like not worry about what you say … how you approach things." Four other participants portrayed this Us as a source

of strength and rejuvenation that was critical to their ability to continue in their work. Finally, four participants explained that this group exists outside the mainstream and inhabits the margins with them. Note how the space of this Us lies in stark contrast to participants' descriptions of Saskatchewan society (i.e., a dark and sinister world, rampant with racism and injustice). Indeed, this space of Us resembles a place of refuge within that dark and foreboding world.

11.4.3 <u>The Us of Shared Experiences</u>

Eight participants described another form of Us that lies in contrast to both the preceding forms discussed. This Us was presented as the product of a particular space and time; a transient Us that grew out of a specific and shared experience. While the particular experiences described differed, there were strong commonalities among participants' accounts. For example, these experiences of Us were framed as unique, exciting, and generally unexpected occurrences, not something typically encountered in their everyday lives. Their comments suggested a powerful sense of connection between Self and other members of the group that was related to a lack of hierarchy and a sense of equality among group members. As differences among group members were highlighted (e.g., race, culture, socio-economic status), part of the richness of these Us moments for participants seemed to stem from the co-existence of 'difference' and 'equality'.

A few examples are offered to illustrate participants' constructions of this Us. One participant described his involvement in a program that brought together people in law enforcement and Aboriginal youth in trouble with the law for multi-day wilderness adventures. He described how these trips began with the youth and the police far apart from each other, and ended with a feeling of oneness and a distinct sense of Us. Kelly explains how this change occurred:

> That's why the … trips are so effective, because in those four days you saw that process. The cops weren't the cops anymore, the kids weren't the kids. They were paddling canoes together, they were put in situations where they had to become dependent on one another. So it took them to a place where they started to see similarities. You'd have one kid talk about his family, his abusive parents ... or parents who were alcoholics, and you'd have the cop talk about, "Well gee, my dad was an alcoholic." So you saw these connections that were made. They became friends, they have a lasting relationship.

The notion of a shared experience leading to an experience of Us can also be read in the following accounts: Stephanie and Jeff's descriptions of what occurs with their students in the context of their classrooms; Joan's description of a faculty meeting in which previously assumed differences among members were reframed by a colleague as "we are in violent agreement" and a strong sense of unity ensued; and Debbie's various involvements with activism in her community. Finally, Liz described a one-day cultural event that she hosted to bring together people from a range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Note the themes of unity, equality, lack of hierarchy, and diversity in her description of the event:

> When I look around from the front when I'm M.C.ing and see every colour that you can imagine. The kids, there's no barriers that day. They're playing and running and sitting together and eating, you know, each others different cultural food, you know, they're grabbing the hand of the little one and they're taking them around. … People can stay for an hour if they want, they can stay all day, and we have many who stay from morning 'til night. … And the only cost is … what they want to buy to eat. So we're not setting up different economic statuses.

11.4.4 Interpreting Us: The Experience of Communitas

Turner (1969) offers an interesting lens through which we might make sense of participants' accounts of Us, in particular the Us of shared values and the Us of shared experience, in relation to their broader experiences as anti-racism educators. Participants' descriptions of Saskatchewan society as hierarchical, rife with power struggles, and oppressive for those who do not identify as members of the dominant group fit with Turner's definition of structural aspects of society. Turner suggests that to avoid becoming "arid and mechanical" we cannot always remain in structure, but must

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be "periodically immersed in the regenerative abyss of communitas" (p. 139). He goes on to describe spontaneous communitas as an experience in which there is an emphasis on "such universal human values as peace and harmony between all … universal justice, comradeship and brotherhood between all men, the equality before God … young and old, and persons of all races and ethnic groups. (p. 134). Turner further describes communitas as "richly charged with affects, mainly pleasurable ones. … something 'magical' about it." These elements of communitas are precisely the themes that were noted in participants' descriptions of Us.

Turner's theory of communitas seems particularly applicable to understanding one participant's portrayal of Us. Grace explained that at times she feels she is not "rooted" in culture; while she credits this for her open-mindedness to other ways of being, she also acknowledged that at times it can make her feel "unstable" and uncertain as to "who I am." It is this experience of "instability" that she said she shares with newcomers to Canada and that leads to an experience of Us. Note how the experience she describes has all the characteristics of communitas:

Grace: For me it's been a real privilege to meet the people I've met and to have people tell me things about how they see the world and how they see life and what their experiences were and … I just feel totally privileged for that experience. It means a lot. And it's the wonderful point that one experiences with newcomers, because of that instability of identity with them too, and mine, that some of those walls break down, and you're working without the usual clues, the cultural clues and the facades and all of those things, because you're trying so hard to communicate.

Vonda: So you're both in this sort of unknown..

Grace: That's right, completely open, trying to understand each other. And that happens quite a bit. I shouldn't say completely open but more open in some ways, when we're trying to figure something out together. … That's a wonderful experience, and I'm not sure how to describe it. It's beyond words, for me. It's a space between things….

Vonda: And you're both in that space.

Grace: And we're both in that space, and it doesn't last all that long, because society needs structure and it needs, you know, all these little culture

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attachments to make life go more smoothly, and so it's not so heavy and so you're not always thinking about all these things all the time. You have to be able to take some things for granted every day. … But for <u>that</u> time, then you feel people can communicate. You take away a lot of stuff and then you're just <u>people</u>. And then the trust can build from there.

Considering a function of communitas in Turner's (1969) theory is to regenerate and revitalize the individual and the collective, it would be interesting to explore further the relevancy of this concept of communitas with participants. For example, do they view their experiences of Us as contributing to their collective ability to continue doing work that they describe at times as challenging and stressful? Furthermore, might they relate these experiences of Us to their ability to remain optimistic despite the despairing portrait they offer of society as rife with racism and injustice?

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In broadly reviewing participants' varied constructions of the present Self, I was struck by several aspects of their talk. First, there was remarkable similarity in participants' descriptions of the complex and multi-dimensional present Self. Second, the present Self was clearly constructed as a moral being. While the anti-racism Self, described in terms of values, is framed the most explicitly in moral terms, morality is also central in their talk of the White and the liminal Selves. Finally, the tone of self-confidence that I noted in participants' descriptions of themselves left me with the distinct impression that, by and large, they feel comfortable with themselves and the people they have become.

12. PAST AND FUTURE SELVES

12.1 <u>The Past Self: I Became</u>

Having considered participants' portraits of the Self as White, anti-racism educator, I now explore their accounts regarding how this particular Self came into existence. The story-telling style of participants' accounts, combined with my interest in examining the general structure and content of their talk, suggests that this material may best be explored through the lens of narrative analysis.[87] While it is beyond the scope of the present research to conduct a thorough and in-depth narrative analysis of each interview, the lens through which I read participants' accounts and approached the writing of this section was certainly inspired by the narrative approach (as described by Riessman, 1993).

Riessman (1993) points out that narrative analysis can take many forms, each having its own unique strengths and limitations. Ginsburg's method (1989a, as cited in Riessman 1993), in which the investigator "searches for similarities and differences among the sample" in terms of "how the story is told in the broadest sense" (Riessman, 1993, p. 30) perhaps best describes the approach I have chosen to use here.[88] In organizing these data, I re-read all the life history interviews, constantly moving back and forth from the detail of what they were saying, to exploring the underlying logic and

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[87] In discussing what kind of data might be explored using narrative analysis, Riessman (1993) offers several definitions of a narrative. Of these, my participants' stories meet the criteria offered by Aristotle (1996) in *Poetics* in that they have a clear beginning, middle, and end; as well as Labov and Waletzky's (1967, as cited in Riessman, 1993) suggestion that they must follow a chronological sequencing.

[88] According to Riessman (1993), a drawback of this approach is that the broader context of each individual's story tends to get lost in the analysis. While I agree with Riessman that there are many intriguing details of participants' narratives that would be fascinating to explore in greater detail using alternate approaches to narrative analysis, a broader comparative approach is more appropriate for the purposes of the present study.

flow in their overall account. In then moving back and forth between participants'

narratives, I began to see patterns as well as differences in how they told their stories.

This process of intensely interacting with the data resulted in the following co-

construction of participants' narratives on becoming anti-racism educators.

Beginning at the broadest level, one might ask "What kind of story do the

participants tell?" I borrow a term used by Joan in her interview in labeling participants'

stories of 'becoming' as a "developmental journey." Five participants specifically used

the term "development" in describing the manner in which the present Self came to be,

while others used similar words, such as "process." Regardless of terminology, all

participants suggested that the present Self came to be through a series of steps that

moved them from one point to another.[89]

While I saw great diversity in the particular kinds of stories they told and in the

degree of complexity in their narratives, there was remarkable similarity in the general

structuring of their narratives. In each participant's narrative I noted a clear progression

from beginning to middle to end, that followed a roughly similar pattern. All participants,

except for Chris, began their narratives by focusing on their childhood and describing

the context in which they were raised; a phase, I argue, that is characterized in their

accounts as a time of innocence and ignorance. The middle of the story emphasizes a

shift, in which they are described as moving from a state of innocence and ignorance to

a state of increased awareness of Self, Other, and social injustice. The story concludes

with participants noting a final developmental turn, in which the Self moves from a

static state of awareness to becoming actively involved in addressing injustice; thus

signaling the beginning of the present Self.

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[89] My role as narrative co-constructor here is particularly apparent as my framing of the questions in the life history interview may well have pulled for this kind of story.

12.1.1 The Beginning: Ignorance and Innocence

With the exception of Chris, all participants began their narratives by offering a broad social context for their story. Typically, this meant first geographically situating their childhood Self. Seven participants noted that they came from rural areas or small towns, and nine described being raised in Saskatchewan. Within this context, participants noted the presence or absence of the racialized Other in their childhood. Nine participants suggested that the world of the racialized Other was very separate from their own world, even when this Other lived in the same geographical area (e.g., in same town, or on a reserve located near their home). As Kelly explained, "In my community, no one ever talked to people in the First Nations community. There wasn't anything set up between the two communities; they were just two separate worlds." In this context, it is hardly surprising that these nine participants claimed to have had little direct interaction with racialized people, or that they remembered the few interactions that they *did* have as memorable events.

For these nine participants, the racialized Other was reportedly experienced by their childhood Self as exotic (Joan: "And then in grade 5 … I had my first classmate who was a person of colour, and he was even <u>more</u> exotic. … He was Hawaiian!); as someone to be feared (Grace: "And I remember still seeing a first coloured person in Calgary at St. George's Island at the zoo, and my mother said, 'Be careful.'"); or in the case of First Nations people, as extinct (Tom: "I remember as a kid actually finding arrow heads and stone hammers on our land there but, you know, when I look back I was thinking in <u>my</u> mind these people are gone, eh?"). Participants explained that this Other was so distinctly 'not me,' and inhabited such a different world from the Self, that they did not give much thought to racialized people while growing up. In this manner, participants constructed their childhood Self as innocent and ignorant products of their

privileged, White society; societal factors beyond their control were blamed for their lack of knowledge about, and interaction with, the racialized Other.

While most participants noted the absence of racial diversity in their childhoods, three participants (i.e., Debbie, Liz, and Stephanie) explained that they grew up in Regina or Saskatoon, surrounded by cultural and racial diversity. Liz and Debbie were both raised in inner city neighbourhoods comprised primarily of immigrants. While today a high number of Aboriginal people live in these neighbourhoods, this was reportedly not the case when Liz and Debbie were children. As Debbie explained, "Growing up, the only time that I would see an Aboriginal person would be at the fair. Almost like your … wooden <u>Indian</u> concept. You know there's the tipi and there's some Indians at the fair and they're all dressed up...." Both women recalled a time of transition in which an increasing number of First Nations people moved into the city from reserves, and they commented on how these individuals were isolated by the rest of the community. While Debbie said she frequently interacted with immigrant children, she explained that with First Nations people "There was <u>no</u> interaction. No, <u>no</u> interaction." Liz and Debbie described their communities as divided not only by race, but also by culture, religion, and socio-economic status. Stephanie was unique in that she was the only participant who spoke of both frequent and positive interactions with Aboriginal people in her childhood. In the interview, she recalled only positive feelings about her diverse community and group of friends that consisted of many Aboriginal children; furthermore, she said she had no personal awareness of racial difference or acts of racism directed specifically at her friends during her childhood.

Although the childhood context was very different for these three participants in that they interacted more frequently with the racialized Other, the Self was portrayed similarly as innocent and ignorant. For Stephanie, this was accomplished through noting only positive feelings towards her racially diverse group and friends, and

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pointing out her lack of awareness of differences among them. Although Liz and

Debbie acknowledged being aware of racism (though they claim they didn't have the

language to refer to it as such at the time) like most participants they explained that

they were products of a society that didn't give them the tools to understand what was

happening, or to conceptualize their situation as anything but "just the way it is" (Liz).

Given the key role a parent typically plays in a child's life, it is interesting that

participants' parents received relatively little attention in their stories of childhood. Most

made only general or ambiguous comments regarding the positive or negative role

their parents played in their development. Chris is the exception in that his parents

figured prominently in his story of development. He credited them as key role models,

describing them as central figures in his life.

12.1.2 <u>The Middle: Increasing Awareness</u>

Having established their early Selves as innocent and ignorant children living in

a world of division, darkness, and racism, participants' narratives shifted noticeably

when they spoke about how they moved to a place of greater awareness. All

participants described their growing awareness in terms of becoming conscious of

injustice and racism in the world around them. For half the participants, this awareness

of injustice was linked in their accounts to a growing awareness of the Self in relation to

the racialized Other. Specifically, these participants described how they came to be

aware of their whiteness and their privilege, and of their inadvertent complicity in

oppressing racialized people in their society. Grace, who most clearly structured her

story of becoming as a journey of increasing self awareness, illustrates this point in a

story she told of her experiences as a young teacher at a First Nations residential

school:

> But really the first time I can say I felt ashamed, where something hit me
> <u>personally</u>, was when I was with a couple of the girls who probably were about
> grade eight, I think, and we went for a walk. One of the girls said she hated the

colour of her skin. … And I thought that was such an amazing thing for her to say. And so I asked her <u>why</u>, and she said she wished it was whiter. And I felt <u>really</u> ashamed, and I said, "Well I wish mine was <u>darker</u>." And that little experience I remember quite clearly, that there was <u>something</u> there that probably for the first time said to me, "I'm part of this, this is not just everybody else out there," and it's a very personal kind of experience, that whole awareness thing.

In these stories of growing awareness, 10 participants told of how the racialized Other gradually began to take on more of a human form, becoming less foreign and Other to the Self.[90]

Participants outlined what they felt were the key factors responsible for bringing about this sense of growing awareness of Self, Other, and injustice. For eight participants (all but Stephanie, Margaret, Diane, and Debbie), beginning to interact with the racialized Other on a personal level was deemed to be an important step in increasing their awareness of this Other. In participants' stories, these experiences involved working alongside the racialized Other. For example, Kelly described having taking a job trucking in northern communities, and Jeff spoke of accepting a position within a First Nations organization. Stephanie, Grace, Debbie, and Joan emphasized the important role that reading and studying played in increasing their awareness of social injustice and racism. They referred to books they had read about the civil rights movement and to courses they had taken that challenged them to think about these issues. Diane and Chris emphasized the role of international travel in opening their eyes both to systems of injustice and to their own relative privilege. Finally, Margaret explained that her awareness grew as a direct result of her union involvement, pointing to the education and firsthand experience that her union experience afforded her.

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[90] Stephanie and Chris are the exception here, as both suggested they did not experience the racialized Other as distinctly Other in their early childhood.

12.1.3 The End: Taking Action

Having moved the past Self from a place of innocence and ignorance to a state of awareness of injustice in their narratives, participants described a final stage in their development as a move towards *taking action* against injustice. While this stage represented an end point in participants' narrative of becoming, it could alternately be viewed as a beginning as it served to signal the birth of the present Self.[91]

Kelly and Margaret each pointed to a particular work experience that they identified as critical in moving them from awareness to action. Kelly told of his decision to accept a new position in his workplace that would require him to actively and directly address issues of racism. Similarly, Margaret described her acceptance of a union position that encouraged her to take a more active stance in fighting injustice.

Jeff, Debbie, and Tom spoke of other defining moments in their lives in which they made the conscious choice to become more actively involved in fighting racism. Tom identified as a critical moment his decision to become involved in community meetings following a series of incidents of alleged police brutality against Aboriginal people. He explained that this involvement represented a significant shift in his life, moving him from merely being concerned about racism to actively taking steps to fight it. Jeff recalled making a similar choice after working for some time at a First Nations college and becoming increasingly aware of the pervasive racism in society and his own position of privilege: "I became aware that I needed to take responsibility for the fight. For helping my friends and colleagues, who didn't always necessarily have the ability or were acknowledged to be fighting back. … So I joined forces." For Debbie, this moment of "becoming motivated" reportedly came about after reading a stirring

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[91] Grace and Chris are unique in that their narratives of becoming focused more specifically on their growing awareness than on taking action against injustice. While both described an 'active' present Self and alluded to steps they took from awareness to action, they were more vague than other participants in pointing to particular experiences that moved them from a place of awareness to a point of action.

book about Martin Luther King at the age of 16 that moved her to action. As she

concludes, "I was in high school when I read that book, and I think it really changed my

life. I really do."

The remaining five participants also described a shift from awareness to action,

but did so in a less linear fashion. While they still spoke of a point of action, in their

narratives it was embedded within a series of smaller awareness/action cycles that,

they suggested, gradually brought them to the place they are now. I explore this notion

further in the following section in which the distinctive narratives of these five

participants are given particular consideration.

12.1.4 <u>Versions of the Broader Narrative</u>

In reading through participants' interviews and reflecting on the similarities and

differences in their accounts, the same five participants' narratives tended to cluster

together. I began to take note of this trend and to question what it was that these

participants had in common. I concluded that while their narratives were in keeping

with the general structure of beginning, middle, and end outlined above, their stories

had a distinctive "plot structure" (Good, 1994, p. 146) that suggested a different kind of

developmental journey. The difference between theirs and others' narratives,

suggested a different construction of the Self in relation to White society. Specifically,

while other participants portrayed their childhood Self as generally alike other members

of White society, these five participants hinted that they had always been different

somehow from the rest of White society. Furthermore, their stories were told in a more

cyclical fashion, compared to the linear structure of other participants' narratives.

I refer to the first plot structure, apparent in most participants' accounts, as a

linear account of becoming: The progression from innocence and ignorance; to

becoming aware of injustice; to finally to taking action, is described in terms of a clear

sequence of events. In this story, the Self is transformed through a series of events

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and experiences from an unexceptional state in which the Self is not unlike other White people, to the current highly aware and active Self. While the present Self may be unique, there is a sense that most other White people under the same circumstances would be transformed similarly. There is no suggestion that the Self is intrinsically unique or different in this regard, and no sense of pre-destination or higher power involvement in moving them from their past to their present state. In fact, there is an underlying sense in their talk of having arrived at their present state by accident. For example, Kelly pointed out that he applied for the position that catapulted him into a place of action "on a whim," while Grace pointed out she never could have guessed that she would end up being involved in anti-racism, attributing it in part to "chance." In brief, theirs seem to be relatively unexceptional stories of personal development.

The second plot structure (apparent in Cathy, Liz, and Diane's narratives, and particularly striking in the accounts of Stephanie and Joan) constructs the starting point of Self's development differently. Rather than describing the Self as typical of the broader White society, these participants emphasized that they have always been different from the dominant group in how they experience the Self and Other, and in how they view difference. They referred of a 'core Self' that has always been a part of them, like a seed within them waiting to grow. Their stories tended to be more about how this unique Self was nourished and brought to its full potential through a series of events that involved increasing awareness and taking action. Thus, even though they spoke in developmental terms, there was a parallel thread running through their stories suggesting that on some level "I've always been this way." In this regard, they seemed to be referring to quite a different experience in that they were constructing a narrative of stability even as they were telling a story of development. It is a story, perhaps, of becoming *more* oneself rather than of moving from being one Self to another Self. In

order to illustrate the unique features of this construction of becoming, consider how

these participants structure the beginning, middle, and end phases of their narratives.

Even in the midst of the depictions of their childhood as a time of ignorance and

innocence, there is a hint of personal awareness, and the blurred shape of the present

Self can be seen in their descriptions of their young Selves. Stephanie made this point

explicitly:

> To be perfectly honest it's sort of like how, you know, some of my homosexual friends might say "I always felt this way, I always knew." That's sort of how I feel. I don't remember a time when there was an "Aha!" moment or suddenly I realized that I had White privilege or suddenly I realized that everyone was equal.

These participants also described questioning and challenging injustice at an unusually

young age, despite their limited understandings. For example, Liz and Diane told of

how they defended other children at school who were being mistreated; while

Stephanie, Joan, Diane, and Cathy described challenging their parents regarding

injustices they perceived in the realm of religion.

Understanding the basis for their early awareness and activism was a stated

source of interest for these five individuals, and I noted a sense of mystery in their

speculations of its origin. For example, note Stephanie's theory regarding her

uniqueness based on a discussion with a Cree friend: "<u>She</u> believed – she's very

spiritual, and she … is a very traditional woman – and she said she believes when … I

was <u>born</u>, that a First Nations' <u>spirit</u> came to me. Like, that's what <u>she</u> believes, and

that's how <u>she</u> was able to come to terms with it or explain it." While the other four

participants did not offer specific theories regarding possible origins of their early

sensitivities, they all voiced a sense of bafflement in proclamations such as, "I just don't

understand where it came from."

As alluded to previously, while these participants talked about developing

awareness and taking action, they did so in a cyclical manner in which references to

gaining awareness and taking action were more intertwined than in other participants'

narratives. Thus, the difference between the middle and end of their narratives was

more a matter of degree than of kind. While the focus in the middle of their narratives

was primarily on their increasing awareness, this awareness was described as

growing, in part, through their actual involvements in addressing injustice. For

Stephanie, Diane, and Joan, the end of the story of becoming was less clear than in

other participants' narratives, as the lines between 'who I was' and 'who I am' seemed

blurred. However, in Liz and Cathy's narratives there was a clear shift towards taking

action despite their ongoing efforts to address injustice throughout their narratives. In

these cases, the defining moment seemed to push them to a more intense and

intentional level of action. For example, despite her efforts to address racism in her

local workplace, Liz suggested that it was her involvement in the union that made anti-

racism a more central part of her life. As she explained, "I still didn't know what to do

with my <u>anger</u> towards racism, you know? I kept trying to correct the problem with what

<u>I</u> could do, but I wasn't correcting … the big picture…. So I got involved in the union,

cause I didn't know what else to do." Cathy described a similar shift that occurred when

she became involved in a particular human rights organization.

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Recall the parallels noted between participants' narratives of development and

their descriptions of their efforts to educate White people: in both cases ignorance was

attributed to the failings of society (e.g., the education system) rather than to the

shortcomings of particular individuals. Furthermore, participants suggested that

through increased interaction with racialized Others and through education about the

Other, White ignorance could be significantly reduced; participants similarly highlighted

their own interaction with the racialized Other and education as key factors in their

developmental process. Considering these parallels, I wonder whether this particular

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construction of the present Self as the product of a developmental journey may be related to the sense of optimism and general confidence expressed by participants. That is, perhaps their constructions of the Self 'becoming' serve to function for them as evidence of the potential effectiveness of their approach to anti-racism.

12.2 <u>The Future Self: I Will Be</u>

After providing lengthy, in-depth descriptions of their present Selves and rich narratives about how they came to be involved in anti-racism, the brevity of all participants' projections regarding their future Selves and their anticipated involvement in anti-racism was striking. However, equally striking was the clarity and conviction with which they spoke of their absolute commitment to continuing their anti-racism efforts into the future.[92] Liz's response to my question of how she envisioned herself involved in anti-racism in the future is typical in this regard: "No different. I can't see myself changing.... I don't think it would matter <u>where</u> I go. … I'll probably be in the senior citizens home and still fighting racism…."

While participants suggested that little would change in terms of their commitment to anti-racism, nine of them expressed an openness to making changes that might increase their effectiveness as anti-racism educators. For example, Kelly said he would consider changing professions if it would mean he could "focus on these types of issues where my passion is." Stephanie contemplated whether her efforts might have a greater impact if she were to shift her focus from teaching students to educating teachers about racism, concluding: "I don't know what my future holds, but I don't think it will be small. I don't think that one classroom at a time is enough for me. I want it to be bigger…." Other participants (i.e., Liz, Jeff, Grace, and Chris) talked about

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[92] Chris is an exception in that he spoke about his future involvement with less certainty or passion than the other participants. For example, when asked about his future involvement in racism, he replied hesitantly, "..I'd like to stay involved..." This reply contrasted markedly with the absolutist tone used by other participants.

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directing future energies to meeting specific goals for better addressing racism within their current anti-racism involvements. For example, they spoke of improving existing programs to better address the needs of Aboriginal clients, conducting research that could be used to assist refugees and immigrants, and implementing new strategies to increase interaction among diverse groups in the community. Finally, Debbie, Joan, and Tom spoke of their desire to become involved in new initiatives in the future: Debbie described her vision for a new advocacy organization; Joan outlined her plans for establishing a "place of learning where people can get the 'real' training they need to do organizational change and social justice work as bona fide change agents"; and Tom suggested he would like to shift some of his energies into more formally mentoring youth in order to "pass on" his passion and experience for fighting racism. As he explained, "You just start to see your mortality … and it doesn't make any sense to take all that to the grave."

Note how in all of the cases described above, the focus in participants' talk of the future is on what they hope to *accomplish*, in terms of objective work goals, rather than on how they envision *themselves* changing in the future. Only Jeff and Joan spoke to how they would like to see themselves continue to develop in the future. Joan described this as a desire to improve her ability to "seamlessly" integrate anti-racism "into everything" she does; Jeff explained that "in the future I want to be – and I work on it all the time – I want to be better able to argue my points. I want to be better equipped with statistics, knowledge and experience, when somebody <u>says</u> something that <u>sounds</u> ludicrous I'm able to break it down and to discuss it and to argue it." Interestingly, even in these instances the focus of change seems to be their ability to 'do' the work of anti-racism better.

While participants may have said little about the future Self, there was a tone of confidence and optimism in their talk. In each case, the future was portrayed as a time

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of opportunity, possibility, and freedom for the Self. The possible changes that were predicted suggested change for the better, such as a more fulfilling job or an achieving of personal goals.

The relatively few references to how participants expect themselves to change in the future is interesting in light of their broader narratives of past, present, and future. The shift from the past Self to the present Self is portrayed as significant; described as a move from ignorance and innocence, to a state of heightened awareness, to a place of action. However, no similarly dramatic transformational shift is noted in comparing participants' constructions of the present Self and the future Self. Rather, there is a sense that the story of Self ends with the present Self, and that this Self continues into the future relatively unchanged. Minor changes can be read into their accounts, but they seem to be more in terms of degree rather than kind, whereby elements of the present Self may become more refined rather than radically changed. Jeff and Joan's suggestion that they would like to hone rather than change their skill set, fits with this interpretation. Debbie offers another interesting illustration. Her comments suggest that the defining aspect of the present Self (i.e., one who is active) may become increasingly relevant to her future Self:

Debbie: What do I see doing for the future? I don't know. … But, hopefully it's something with an action, because I'm <u>old</u>, ok?

Vonda: What kind of an action?

Debbie: With an action attached to it. I'm old, and what I say to these people at these meetings is, I say "You know, this is great having a meeting, I love getting together, we all have donuts, at the end of the day we all leave, get a little fatter. But what <u>action</u> are we really doing?" You know? So I'm <u>now</u> a person of more action than I was actually when I was 16. So I <u>demand</u> an action be attached to almost everything that we say we're doing, because I'm <u>old.</u> I'm not gonna be here forever.

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Clearly, interpreting the meaning of the relationship between the present and future Selves based on the data requires considerable speculation on my part. Certainly their portrayal of the future Self may suggest that participants experience themselves as having 'arrived', or already achieved a desired state. It is also possible that participants' primary portrayal of the future Self in terms of 'doing' anti-racism is further evidence of a pragmatic orientation; alternately, perhaps the wording of my question simply pulled for this type of response. It is also possible that the particular way in which participants constructed the past, present, and future in relation to each other is a common feature of life narratives. In any case, while I am unable to make any strong interpretations, the relatively static relationship between present and future Selves is noteworthy and suggests an interesting topic for future exploration.

12.3 Anti-Racism Education as a Moral Career

Goffman's (1961) theory of the moral career suggests a cohesive framework for understanding my participants' various experiences and constructions of the past, present, and future Selves as White, anti-racism educators. Goffman defines a moral career as "any social strand of any person's course through life." He goes on to explain that a moral career can be identified in terms of "changes over time as are basic and common to the members of a social category" (p. 127). Goffman's interest lies in understanding the moral careers of individuals residing outside of the dominant structure of society, and within places of liminality. Specifically, Goffman's particular focus is on the development of moral careers within the context of "total institutions" (i.e., closed worlds such as penitentiaries, monasteries, and the military). In exploring the moral career of the mental patient, Goffman considers the "two-sidedness" of this career. That is, he considers the career both from the perspective of "..internal matters held dearly and closely, such as image of Self and felt identity" as well as from a more

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distant and "publicly accessible" angle (Goffman, 1961, p. 127). In the case of the former, this involves an attempt to understand patients' experiences of Self based on their constructions, while in the case of the latter, he relies on observation, medical records, and others' views of the mental patient to show how the mental patient is socially produced.

Unlike Goffman (1961), my data are limited to participants' constructions. While I define experience as intersubjective, I have not gathered data that permits me to offer the overtly 'public' perspective that Goffman is able to offer in describing my participants' career development. Still, this should not be regarded as a limitation given that my primary interest lies in using the concept of moral career to gain a better understanding of my participants' accounts of their experiences of *being* anti-racism educators. To that end, I consider two defining elements of a moral career as theorized by Goffman (1961) in relation to my participants' construed experiences.

First, Goffman (1961) suggests that a moral career implies a key and pervasive identity. Certainly anti-racism was described as central to participants' experience of Self. To avoid redundancy, I refer the reader to participants' descriptions of their present Self as anti-racism educator. Recall the absolute centrality of anti-racism to participants' descriptions of themselves; note too the interconnectedness of this identity in their accounts, to what they do, to their relationships with various Others, and to what they believe, in the varied contexts of their lives.

Second, Goffman (1961) suggests that a moral career can be understood in terms of a series of developmental stages. As outlined in this chapter, amidst the diversity in participants' narratives on becoming anti-racism educators, there was commonality in the structuring of their accounts in terms of particular stages. Furthermore, Goffman suggests that the individual involved in a moral career "typically … constructs an image of his life course – past, present, and future – which selects,

abstracts, and distorts in such a way as to provide him with a view of himself that he can usefully expound in current situations" (p. 150). The cohesiveness of participants' narratives of Self in temporal terms further suggests that anti-racism education might be viewed as a moral career for my participants.

Having made the argument for understanding anti-racism as a moral career, I now backtrack somewhat in suggesting that this concept may not be well suited to describing the experiences of one participant in particular. Sprinkled throughout this chapter is the familiar refrain "except for Chris." Chris's narrative provided something of a challenge for me, both in interpreting the data relevant to this chapter and in writing parts of preceding chapters. While Chris touched on many of the same topics as other participants and his comments were generally coded in similar ways to other participants, I kept having this sense that Chris's experience in anti-racism was in some manner distinct. This was noticeable to me even during the interview process, though it was hard for me to put my finger on just *what* was different. The concept of moral career helped me to understand what I was having a hard time clarifying: unlike other participants' narratives, Chris's account of his experience in anti-racism does not fit with Goffman's (1961) description of a moral career. I could point to specific differences in the data to support this argument, but my conclusion is based more on my global assessment of his interview in comparison to the other interviews. For example, Chris's interview was shorter than the other interviews and his comments suggested that he had not given as much thought in general to the topics covered, or to the specific interview questions. Unlike other participants, during the interviews he seemed distracted, answering his phone and glancing at his watch. While articulate, there was noticeably less emotion and passion in his voice when talking about anti-racism, suggesting that there may be less at stake for him in his anti-racism work. His narrative on becoming an anti-racism educator, though broadly structured like others'

narratives, was both briefer and lacked the complexity evident in others' accounts. While he spoke highly of his racialized colleagues, Chris acknowledged having no close friends who were racialized. He identified strongly as White and did not indicate that he identified on any level with the racialized Other. His frequent use of the word "should" in speaking about his anti-racism involvements also stood out for me, as did his reference to feeling badly for not being more involved in anti-racism. His tentative suggestion that "I'd like to stay involved" when talking about the future contrasted with comments such as Jeff's adamant response to my question of whether he could imagine a future in which he was not involved in anti-racism: "No. No, not possible. It becomes a part of you."

I certainly do not mean to suggest in this description that Chris didn't seem to *care* about anti-racism; evidence would not support that conclusion. Rather, the difference between Chris and the other participants might be understood as a matter of degrees, or perhaps it highlights a different form of caring. In either case, Chris' account suggests that anti-racism education may not be experienced as *central* to Chris's experience of Self. While the 'Chris factor' was a source of some consternation on my part in working with the data, I have concluded that Chris's narrative is vital to this study in that it provides a useful contrast that enriches my understanding of participants' experiences. The differences I noted in Chris's interview reinforced for me the relevance of the concept of moral career to understanding what it means to be an anti-racism educator in the case of the remaining 11 participants.

13. CONCLUSION: THE DUAL WORLDS OF WHITE, ANTI-RACISM EDUCATORS

In the preceding chapters, I have explored many layers of moral experience, including participants' constructions of race, racism and anti-racism, their descriptions of their numerous anti-racism involvements, and their varied depictions of Self and Other. The interconnectedness of these domains of moral experience is apparent in the common threads that can be seen woven through the chapters. One such thread is the theme of contradiction, plurality, and duality that emerged in various forms in the participants' narratives, as evidenced in the following examples. First, participants constructed the concepts of race and racism in two distinct ways that varied according to the framing of the interview question. Furthermore, contradictions seemed apparent when participants' descriptions of their approaches to anti-racism were placed alongside the discursive productions of anti-racism that emerged in their contextualized talk. In describing their anti-racism practice, the plurality of methods participants reportedly employed sometimes appeared to be in opposition to each other; as did the distinctive and varied tones of their talk. In talking about Self and Other, at times clear-cut distinctions between I-You and I-Them were emphasized, while at other times these lines of demarcation were blurred. Similarly, the Self was described on occasion as a cohesive and distinct entity, while at other times the image presented suggested multiplicity and ambiguity.

While these polarities and tensions are not in themselves problematic from a constructionist perspective that assumes a multiplicity of lifeworlds (Good, 1994) operating according to distinct programs of truth (Veyne, 1983), they do challenge any

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attempts at simplistic, one-dimensional portraits of the participants' experience.[93] Does this mean we must content ourselves with a portrait of participants that emphasizes only fragmentation and disconnect, or is it possible to regroup the data to make sense of these many specific dualities and contradictions within a global system in which broader meaning might be generated? I propose that it is indeed possible to see a broad pattern across these data. Furthermore, I hypothesize that the polarities and fragments noted are connected in such a way that they together point to two distinct lifeworlds, between which my participants can be seen to navigate.

The notion of participants residing in two distinct lifeworlds that are related to different symbolic realms has been alluded to in previous chapters. In the context of discussing their dual constructions of racism, I suggested that the apparent contradictions in participants' talk could be understood in terms of their residing in distinct lifeworlds (Good, 1994) that operate according to different programs of truth (Veyne, 1983). Specifically, I argued that Good's description of "the world of everyday life," which he suggests is based upon a "common sense reality" in which "objects are taken for granted" (p. 124), fit well with participants' contextualized talk of racism. Good contrasts the world of everyday life, with "a world of theory," that is characterized by a "scientific attitude" (p. 124). I suggested that participants' abstract, decontextualized, and more ideological conceptions of racism fit with Good's depiction of this world. My reading of the data suggest that these two lifeworlds discussed by Good are relevant to making sense of participants' broader narratives, and suggest a useful framework for regrouping the data.

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[93] It might be noted that from an objectivist position these apparent contradictions are more easily viewed as problematic, and could be interpreted in terms of a deficiency on the part of my participants. A traditional psychological interpretation might suggest there is cause for concern given that consistency, coherency, and stability between an individual's behaviours and views are broadly assumed to be indicators of good psychological health (e.g., see Meyers, 1998).

In making the case that participants can be conceptualized as living in two distinct lifeworlds, additional theoretical tools are required. Specifically, Shweder and Bourne's (1991) description of concrete and abstract forms of thought map onto Good's (1994) distinction between the world of everyday life and the world of theory, respectively, and allow me to explore an additional dimension of these worlds.

According to Shweder and Bourne (1991), cultures vary in terms of the prevalence of, and value placed upon, concrete versus abstract forms of thinking. Concrete thinking is defined as "a mode of social thought often referred to as ... undifferentiated, context specific, or occasion bound." In concrete thinking, meaning can only exist within particular contexts and situations, and becomes lost as one moves towards greater abstraction. In contrast, abstract thinking tends to focus on general patterns and rules that can be applied more broadly across contexts. This mode of thinking is described as being in keeping with an objectivist epistemology and related to the scientific approach that grew out of the Enlightenment period. Shweder and Bourne illustrate these two modes of thinking by suggesting how a person might be conceptualized in each: whereas a concrete description of a person tends to focus on specific behaviours that occur in particular contexts, an abstract description might rely upon references to decontextualized traits or characteristics. Shweder and Bourne claim a relativist stance in arguing that that these different forms of thought are equally valid and do not imply a difference in cognitive *skill*. Still, they note that in the West abstract thinking is typically viewed as a higher form of cognitive functioning, while concrete thinking is typically interpreted as a primitive or developmentally deficient mode of thought.

While Shweder and Bourne (1991) use this distinction in reference to different cultures, I suggest that this model might be applied to further understanding the dual worlds in which the participants appear to live. That is, my participants can be viewed

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as moving back and forth between a contextualized world of the everyday that is governed primarily by concrete thinking, and a world of decontextualized ideas that is governed by a more abstract mode of thought.

Using Shweder and Bourne's (1991) concepts, it would be convenient to label the two worlds of my participants simply as the concrete world versus the abstract world. However, given my view that theory must only be used in the service of understanding the data, and since participants' constructions must take precedence over any neat and tidy form of labeling, I shall have to refrain from labeling their worlds in these terms. Rather, while the notion of concrete thinking is certainly broad enough to subsume the various dimensions of one of their worlds, the other is better described as the world of absolutes, within which abstract thinking might be viewed as a key characteristic.

13.1 The World of the Concrete

Participants' narratives suggest that their primary place of residence might be conceptualized as a messy world of plurality, complexity, and ambiguity; a world in which things are not necessarily straightforward or clear-cut. Flexibility, resourcefulness, adaptability, and compromise appear to be trademarks of this world of the bricoleur; a world governed primarily by pragmatism. Participants' portrayals further suggest that in this world of 'real' people and specific contexts, success is defined as the ability to make strategic choices that are appropriate to particular situations, while an acute sensitivity to contextual factors is of high importance. I propose that this world has the characteristics of Good's (1994) world of everyday life and privileges a concrete mode of thinking. Let us now consider the evidence that supports this construction of participants' world by considering how the themes outlined above are woven throughout their narratives.

A pragmatic focus was apparent in participants' contextualized discussions of race, racism, and anti-racism. Participants seemed disinterested in abstract discussions of race and racism, choosing to define these concepts in broad, practical terms that related directly to their actual anti-racism efforts. In describing their general approach to anti-racism, pragmatic considerations were most apparent in their references to the approach labeled 'pragmatic'. However, all participants, even those explicitly critical of the pragmatic approach, relied upon arguments of effectiveness in noting the superiority of their own approach. The themes of flexibility and resourcefulness could be read in participants' refusal to limit themselves to discourses directly related to their stated anti-racism approach, choosing rather to draw upon a wide range of metaphorical references in discussing their anti-racism efforts.

The theme of pragmatism was perhaps strongest in participants' explicit descriptions of their anti-racism practice. In this context, success was defined both according to subjective evaluations of effectiveness and in terms of concrete outcomes (e.g., winning a legal battle). Pragmatism was particularly pronounced in participants' talk of their efforts to educate Whites. Specifically, they used references to effectiveness and drew upon an ends-justifies-the-means logic in describing how they negotiated moral dilemmas in this domain of their work.

The themes of flexibility, adaptability, strategic maneuverings, and context-specific actions can also be read throughout participants' references to their anti-racism practice. Participants described choosing distinct methods that varied by context. For example, participants' descriptions of their efforts to change structures varied in content and in tone, depending upon their positioning in relation to the structure they sought to change. An acute awareness of contextual factors was evident in participants' talk of educating Whites, in particular in their references to employing strategies to minimize resistance. Finally, participants described strategic ways in

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which they negotiate power with various groups and individuals in their efforts to address racism.

In talking about racism and in describing their anti-racism practice, participants tended to rely upon context-dependent constructions. In describing racism, they emphasized concrete acts that they had witnessed in their local communities, or that they had heard of firsthand; few references were made to racism in the abstract. Similarly, in talking about their efforts to address racism, they focused primarily on particular actions taken and on specific involvements. The focus of their talk was on making a noticeable difference in particular local contexts: workplaces, social circles, family settings, and communities. Throughout this talk there was a strong sense of the here-and-now as participants emphasized local events and current happenings. All of these observations are in keeping with the notion of a concrete world and the work of a bricoleur.

Participants' apparent reliance upon a context-dependent mode of thinking was also evidenced in their talk about their actual encounters and relationships with White and racialized Others. The themes of plurality, complexity, and ambiguity permeated these discussions. When they spoke about real people and real situations, boundaries between I-You and Us-Them tended to blur, and otherness became more a matter of degree than of kind. In these contexts, the racialized Other was not presented as a single entity, but had many faces and was encountered in many spheres of daily life. Positioned alternately as friend, colleague, one I help, and family member; participants described a range of feelings towards, knowledge of, and identification with this Other. I made the argument that race *matters* in their accounts of their varied relationships, but suggested that it does so for various reasons and to varying extents that differ by context and type of relationship. Otherness appeared to be determined by a wide range of factors, such as the type and context of the relationship; the similarity of belief

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systems; and socio-economic disparities between Self and Other. In participants'

narratives, Us could also be seen to take on a variety of forms, alternately emphasizing

shared tasks, values, or experiences. Fluidity, plurality, and ambiguity were also key

themes in participants' descriptions of Self in terms of I-Me. For example, recall

participants' depictions of the liminal Self as residing in the spaces between; their

references to Self as both White and *not* White; and their constructions of Self as both

power*ful* and power*less*. In these portrayals, the Self appears fragmented and fluid,

while identity seems something to be actively negotiated.

A key characteristic of Good's (1994) world of everyday life and Shweder and

Bourne's (1991) concrete mode of thinking is a focus on contextualized

understandings. As illustrated in the preceding paragraphs, this was clearly a central

theme running through much of participants' talk. In the concrete world in which the

participants can be understood to reside primarily, their understandings of concepts;

their actions; their relationships with racialized and White Others; and their

constructions of the Self seem only to make sense in relation to the particular contexts

they identified in their talk.

13.2 The World of Absolutes

In reflecting upon all of the data used in constructing participants' primary

lifeworld as a world of the concrete, there is the sense that there may be little left to

work with in their accounts to construct a second lifeworld. Indeed, the evidence

suggests that the world of the concrete is a dominant lifeworld for participants and it

offers us a solid framework for understanding much of their moral experience.

However, another world can be seen to emerge from the shadows when a spotlight is

shone upon a different constellation of data, highlighting very different thematic threads

running through their talk.

In reviewing the themes running through the preceding chapters, I noted evidence of a world emerging that was in distinct contrast to the concrete world outlined above; this world seems best described as a world of absolutes. While two forms of absolutism could be read in participants' narratives, both suggest a world in which things are conceived primarily in terms of binary oppositions. One form of absolutism was noted in a style of talk that was in keeping with Shweder and Bourne's (1991) description of abstract thinking. That is, participants at times seemed to be speaking from a place within a rational world, in which reason and logic could be seen to rule; a decontextualized world of universals and generalities, of ideas, ideals, principles, and ideologies. Their accounts suggest that this is a world of straightforward explanations and solutions; a world in which thinking tends to be structured by categories, dichotomies, binary oppositions, and clearly defined demarcations. In this talk, references to real people were replaced by constructions of figures and caricatures, and the nuances of context were largely absent.

Consider the following evidence for this construction of participants' secondary world: when I asked participants to provide a general definition of the concepts of racism, their answers were markedly more straightforward and absolute (e.g., defining racism as a logical result of cognitive functioning) than were their constructions of racism offered within their contextualized references to their anti-racism practice. Similarly, when described at an abstract level, approaches to anti-racism were clearly defined and differences among them were emphasized in terms of type rather than degree. When participants spoke of White and racialized Others within the context of their daily lives, they tended to speak of living and breathing people; in contrast, when participants spoke of Self and Other in more abstract terms, the individuality of the Other was blurred. In these instances participants emphasized clearly demarcated categorical distinctions that relied upon binary, either-or logic. For example, the

common discourses of anti-racism upon which they drew suggested clear-cut subject positions for Self and racialized Other based upon a strong-weak binary. Us-Them oppositions were noted as well in participants' talk of general approaches to fighting racism. In describing the figure of the White Other, participants' clearly distinguished between types: ignorant, racist, and powerful. Similarly, in describing themselves, participants at times clearly asserted "I am White," and identified with the power and privilege associated with their whiteness. Participants further offered unambiguous descriptions of the I-Me Self in their references to a core Self made up of values: This Self was described in essentialist terms as a unified being. In these decontextualized framings of Self and Other, participants tended to emphasize structural positionings that suggested static and deterministic identities for Self and Other.

A second form of absolutism was also apparent in participants' accounts. In contrast to the unemotional and rational tone of the talk described above, at other times absolutist ideas were expressed with intense passion and feeling. While still primarily in the realm of the abstract, on these occasions a good/bad binary opposition seemed to play a dominant role in structuring their talk. In keeping with an absolutist position, a tone of rigidity and inflexibility was apparent in this talk, while pragmatic arguments and references to compromise were noticeably absent. In this talk, battles between absolute good and absolute evil could be seen to rage, and participants took on the form of a religious warrior. For example, recall the sense of absolutism in participants' descriptions of the moral approach to anti-racism, and their use of the warfare metaphor. In both cases, anti-racism was framed in absolutist terms as a fight between good and evil. Similarly, in describing their efforts to challenge racist structures from their position within a union or as an activist, participants portrayed themselves as fighting alongside the forces of good against largely faceless and nameless enemies; in that fight, they described using highly aggressive and

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confrontational methods. Finally, recall the harsh criticisms leveled at those deemed to

be hypocrites, participants stated refusal to compromise on matters of principle, and

the decidedly moral tone evident in their depiction of Self in terms of core values held.

While the world of absolutes may have been less often apparent in participants'

narratives, these examples suggest that it was a world in which each of them, on

occasion, could be seen to reside.

13.3 Dual Worlds and Logics of Morality

To return to the primary focus of this research, how might this conceptualization

of participants as residing in two lifeworlds governed by distinct modes of thought aid in

our understanding of their moral experience as White, anti-racism educators? Given

that participants seem to reside predominantly in a world governed by pragmatism, is it

in fact appropriate to conceptualize anti-racism primarily as a *moral* domain? Indeed, I

found myself puzzling over this as I pondered the data, unwittingly relying upon what I

see as a tendency in everyday discourse to position morality and pragmatism in

opposition to each other rather than as distinct forms of morality. However, I concluded

that these worlds must be moral worlds given that anti-racism is fundamentally a moral

practice focused upon bringing about moral change. Furthermore, participants'

narratives suggest that they conceive of it in these terms. Still, how are we to

understand these dual worlds in terms of morality?

Métayer's (2001) distinction between narrow and broad visions of morality has

proven invaluable in this regard. [94] Métayer outlines two distinct logics of morality that

are based upon different philosophical traditions; a conceptualization that is highly

relevant to understanding participants' overall experience of morality in terms of the

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[94]Kleinman (1999) similarly distinguishes between two approaches to morality which he labels
"ethical discourse" and "moral experience." Although their distinctions are very similar, I have
chosen to focus on Métayer's work here as he offers a more in-depth review of the two
approaches. I also I prefer his framing of the difference in terms of breadth of vision, rather than
as "ethics" versus "morality."

dual worlds described. Furthermore, Métayer's theory is in keeping with the

constructionist stance of this research, and fits well with the theories noted previously

in this chapter. Specifically, the notion of narrow and broad logics of morality can be

seen to add yet another layer of understanding to the worlds thus far described in

terms of Good's (1994) depiction of the world of everyday life versus the world of

theory, Veyne's (1983) description of varied programs of truth, and Shweder and

Bourne's (1991) distinction between concrete and abstract thinking. A necessarily brief

and simplified summary of Métayer's narrow and broad visions of morality is offered

below.

13.3.1 <u>The Narrow View of Morality</u>

Typically embodied in what is commonly referred to as ethics, Métayer (2001)

argues that the narrow approach to morality represents the dominant view of morality

in contemporary western philosophy, and has attained the status of common sense in

our society. Based upon philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the

narrow view of morality can be summarized as universalistic, reductionistic, and

objectivist. Simply stated, the ultimate and lofty goal of philosophers in this tradition is

to develop a model of morality that recognizes a core set of abstract and universal

principles that can be applied to solve every moral problem, across every context, in as

clear and objective a manner as possible. This aim – to develop an unshakeable

foundation of key moral principles, which may then be used to provide clear moral

guidance through their rigid application to questions of morality – must necessarily

simplify complexity in order to provide these clear-cut answers in terms of universal

'rights' and 'wrongs'.

According to Métayer (2001), in this approach simplicity and clarity are

achieved by situating morality narrowly within the rational world of pure ideas; a world

viewed as distinct from the empirical world of everyday experience (i.e., the physical

and emotional world). Within this narrow realm, the focus of interest for philosophers is typically on exploring huge moral dilemmas that impose heart-wrenching choices on individuals. For example, in studying morality from this perspective, the classic scenario presented to individuals is one in which they are asked to choose between stealing medicine for a spouse or allowing the person to die. Furthermore, the focus tends to be on morality in the public realm (e.g., stem cell research), rather than on more mundane experiences of morality that occur in the domain of everyday life (e.g., parenting dilemmas).

Kleinman (1999) offers a useful summary of this approach, describing it as "an abstract articulation and debate over codified values…conducted by elites…principle based…" and emphasizing "rational choice…over affect or behaviour and coherence over the sense of incompleteness and unknowability and uncontrollability that is so prevalent in ordinary life" (p. 363). In this objectivist view of morality, the moral agent takes on two forms. In one form, this figure is construed as taking on a judicial role, acting as a judge who renders an impartial and equitable verdict, free of bias and error, and speaking from a position of seeming neutrality. Alternately, the moral agent is portrayed in essentialist terms, as embodying the characteristics of a virtuous person.

This narrow form of morality – based as it is on objectivist, universalistic, rigid, and decontextualized abstract principles – is clearly well suited to the world I have described as the world of absolutes. Furthermore, there is ample evidence in participants' talk suggesting the appropriateness of viewing their world of absolutes as governed by a narrow morality (e.g., note the moral absolutism evident in their talk structured around a good-bad dichotomy). Interestingly, both versions of the moral agent described by Métayer above can be read into participants' varied presentations of Self. The figure of the detached and impartial judge fits with the image of participants that emerges in their unemotional, abstract and rationalistic talk; the figure of the

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virtuous moral agent fits with the image of participants that emerges in their more emotion-laden references to battling the forces of evil.

13.3.2 <u>The Broad View of Morality</u>[95]

 According to Métayer (2001), the broad view of morality offers a markedly different picture of the moral landscape, and it appears to be the moral logic governing the concrete world. Métayer explains that while proponents of the broad approach (e.g., many feminists, postmodernists, and pragmatic philosophers) offer no systemic theory of morality, they are united in two ways. First, they assert that the narrow view is inadequate for understanding human experiences of morality; second, they argue that the goal of a single, universal code of ethics is both misguided and unattainable. Rather than limiting morality to a particular and defined domain of life to be discussed by a small group of intellectuals and decided through formal debate, they suggest that morality cannot be separated from the messiness of everyday life in which it is experienced. Proponents of the broad approach further claim that formal, abstract constructions offer impoverished views of moral experience, and that normative theories are too detached from life to be of much relevance to our everyday experiences of negotiating moral terrains. They suggest that we are not typically guided by rational deliberation and do not generally resolve our everyday dilemmas by consulting universal principles.

 In the space of everyday life, argues Métayer (2001), we tend to rely upon a different logic of morality which cannot be spelled out in terms of a generic, universal formula, because it is intimately connected to many contextual factors. Métayer is not

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[95] Kleinman's (1999) theory of moral experience is firmly rooted in a broad view or morality. Thus, what Métayer (2001) refers to as the "broad view" of morality has already been described in some detail in the context of outlining Kleinman's theory. Given that the concepts are similar despite the differing terminology, a brief summary of this approach should suffice in reminding the reader of the key elements of this approach to morality that is entrenched within a constructionist epistemology. The reader is invited to return to the review of Kleinman's theory of moral experience should further clarification be required.

suggesting that proponents of this view reject the existence of broadly held values. Rather, this conceptualization of morality suggests values cannot be applied simplistically or systematically when addressing particular problems, since those problems cannot be understood outside of a specific context and construction of reality. For example, while courage and integrity might be considered to be universally held values, Métayer asks whether they can be considered desirable in every situation: are they still good when attributed to the Nazis? Rather than being guided by the law of parsimony, a broad view of morality embraces complexity and suggests that what is moral in any particular situation can only be determined by taking into account a multitude of intersecting contextual and cultural factors.

In stark contrast to the portrait constructed in the narrow view, the moral agent is not defined in essentialist terms, nor is this figure a singular or static entity when viewed from a broad perspective. Rather, the moral agent is reconstituted in terms of an actual person operating within particular meaning systems and in relation to multiple and shifting factors such as personality, life history, social class, and capacity for reflection.[96]

Just as a narrow moral logic seems well suited to a world of absolutes, so a broad moral logic appears suited to the world of the concrete. Indeed, this depiction of morality resonates with my understanding of how participants primarily construct their morality in the highly contextualized and concrete world of their everyday lives. In particular, note the strong theme of pragmatism that was seen to permeate their depictions of this world, showing itself at times in ends-justifies-the means reasoning.

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[96] Given the hegemony of the narrow view of morality in my experiences in academia, reading examples of research based upon a broad view was highly beneficial in helping me to understand this approach and to grasp the implications of it. While the following authors do not all deal explicitly with issues of morality, their writings are part of a relativist tradition that promotes a broad view of morality: Kleinnman (1995; 1999), Geertz (1973; 1983), Good (1994), Shweder (2002), Shweder & Bourne (1991), and Veyne (1988).

Furthermore, throughout their narratives, participants' references to actively negotiating their morality suggests they are acutely aware of contextual factors in determining what is to be considered moral in any particular situation.

13.4 <u>Distinctions In Anti-Racism Educators' Use of Dual Moral Logics</u>

At risk of breaking the flow of the argument being developed, I would like to pause for a moment to reflect on how Métayer's (2001) framework for understanding morality might be applied to making sense of differences among participants' accounts, and differences between participants and the figures of the anti-racism educator produced in the literature review.

While it is certainly possible to speak of general themes in this chapter given the many commonalities among participants' accounts, after emphasizing the richness and diversity of their narratives throughout this thesis I do not wish to conclude by implying homogeneity. While data suggest that it is appropriate to conceptualize all participants as living in two moral worlds, diversity was apparent in the degree to which their talk was structured in accordance with a narrow versus a broad logic of morality. For example, in comparison to other participants, Liz seemed to rely more heavily on a narrow approach to morality, tending to apply rigid rules of morality across situations to a greater extent than the other. This is illustrated in her reported response to a board member who arrived late and joked about being on "Indian time": "[It's important] for everyone to be on time no matter what background you came from, and that you can't use your background as an excuse … for being late." Liz's reliance on a human rights discourse emphasized the universal application of western notions of justice and equality, and her talk frequently had a dogmatic and absolutist tone to it. In contrast, Jeff, Kelly, and Grace seemed to rely more heavily on a broad logic of morality than did other participants. For example, they seldom spoke in terms of absolutes and emphasized 'real life' experiences in their talk, and Grace stated explicitly that she did

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not want to talk about abstract theories, preferring to discuss her actual, lived experiences. While Diane and Chris seemed to draw upon both narrow and broad logics of morality, overall, I detected less evidence of either moral logic being used in their talk. Like Diane and Chris, the remaining six participants also appeared to rely on both systems of morality in their interviews; however, they are distinct in that I saw considerable evidence of *both* moral logics being used in their talk. In comparison to the other participants, these six participants can be conceptualized as living passionately and fully in *both* worlds and embracing *both* views. That is, while there might be more evidence suggesting their reliance on a broad logic, they also voiced strongly held views in keeping with a narrow view of morality. Having noted relative differences among participants' accounts, I reiterate that taken together, participants can be understood to reside more often in the world of the concrete with its broad vision of morality, than in the abstract world with its narrow morality.

I return now to the portraits of White anti-racism educators that were produced in the literature review. How might Métayer's (2001) conceptualization of morality help us to understand the participants in relation to these figures? Recall the fuzzy image that was produced in the objectivist, social psychological literature: the cool, detached educator, with tidy categories and de-contextualized theories of racism. In contrast, the picture that emerged in the constructionist-based research on whiteness was of a person who resided in an emotionally charged and overtly moral world; a person who experienced intense power struggles, and fought on the side of truth and goodness against the evils of racism. While these figures appear to be quite distinct in some regards, they are similar in that they are both in keeping with the portrayal of the moral agent in the narrow view of morality. Specifically, the figure from the objectivist literature matches Métayer's description of the impartial judge; the figure from the constructionist literature is in keeping with his depiction of the moral agent who

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embodies virtue. Thus, when residing in the world of the absolute participants can be constructed as similar to both the figures depicted in the literature review; however, their primary residency in the world of the concrete also suggests key distinctions between them and both of these figures.

Despite these noted differences, it would be an error to conclude based on this observation that the participants in this study are somehow different in any essentialist sense from those researchers whose work was described in the literature review, or to assume that the dual portraits of White researchers in the literature constitute a comprehensive description of those academics.[97] Rather, it may be useful to understand the writings reviewed within the context of a particular world. Specifically, while it is quite possible that these writers rely upon a narrow morality in their scholarly writings, there is no reason to assume that they rely primarily upon this logic in all contexts of their lives. Still, given the high status afforded the narrow view of morality in academia, it would be intriguing to explore further the moral worlds of academics working in this field.[98]

13.5 The Relationship Between Dual Worlds of Morality

I have argued that the data support the interpretation of participants as living in two distinct worlds that operate according to distinct modes of thinking and particular moral logics. I have further suggested that one of these worlds is primary and the other secondary. While this construction of moral experience is useful in providing a general

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[97] Shweder (2002) is guilty of just such an error in his somewhat essentialist and one-dimensional depiction of western activists. Ironically this portrayal is offered within the context of a rich and convincing argument for relativism, in which he encourages the reader to avoid imposing rigid interpretations on the behaviours of people in other cultural contexts.

[98] Within this context, recall Eichstedt's (2001) conclusion that White, anti-racism activists live in a state of "constant conflict" regarding their identification with whiteness. In reading the article, I did not get the impression, based on the evidence offered, that her participants experienced themselves in these terms. While clearly speculative, I wonder if this portrayal might rather reflect Eichstedt's academic bias that individuals holding to apparently contradictory positions must necessarily experience them in terms of conflict. It would be interesting to re-examine her data and assess the relevancy of Métayer's (2001) distinctions between moral logics to understanding her participants' accounts.

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framework for making sense of the many dualities and contradictions in participants' narratives, and for understanding them in relation to the literature reviewed, it also raises additional questions regarding their moral experience.

First, how do participants experience residing in these two worlds and relying upon both visions of morality? Are they conscious of this duality? How do they experience their movement between these worlds? Do they experience a tension between them?

Second, how might we understand the relationship between these worlds governed by distinct logics of morality? What functions might each of these worlds serve for participants? What is to be gained by residing alternately in each of them?

Finally, in light of these dual moral worlds, how are we to interpret the strong theme of moral certainty that runs through participants' narratives and is equally apparent when they speak from a place within either the world of the concrete or the world of the absolute? How is it possible for them to reside with certainty in a space that appears (at least from an outsider's perspective) to be rife with moral ambiguity? Indeed, it seems to me that shifting between two forms of moral logic might in itself be cause for increased moral anxiety. Finally, how might this framework allow us to make sense of participants' apparent movement towards greater moral certainty that is suggested in their developmental stories of past and present Selves? I address all of these questions in the following sections.

13.5.1 The Experience of Moving Between Worlds

The data suggest that, on some level at least, participants are conscious of drawing upon two distinct logics of morality. For example, half of the participants said that they sometimes behave in a manner that appears morally contradictory or hypocritical to others. Interestingly, while these participants all claimed to understand

this view of their behavior, they disagreed with the interpretation of it as hypocritical or problematic. Stephanie's comments below illustrate this point:

> I know that there are First Nations people in the city who would prefer that a White person not teach Native studies, I have heard that, and I understand it. … I say to them I understand exactly where you're coming from, and to some extent I agree with you, but I'm not going to stop teaching it. And again, I know that that doesn't make any sense. … Why would I agree with them but then [not] take myself out of it then? Because I know that the way I approach it, I know the way I go about teaching Native studies.

Margaret offers a similar illustration from another field of activism. Labeling herself a feminist, Margaret offers many examples of having fought for gender equality in her workplace, union, and other "political" spheres of her life; however, she also states that she has no interest whatsoever in challenging sexism within her church. Furthermore, she explains that when "politics" entered her church in the form of a group of women demanding equal status with men, she was so upset that she quit attending services. While she said she understood why others had labeled this as hypocrisy, "for some reason" she did not feel that it was hypocritical.

Thus, while participants' accounts suggest they are aware of a moral duality, there is little evidence that shifting between these dual worlds is experienced in terms of a moral tension. Rather, it seems their movements between these worlds are experienced as relatively smooth and uncomplicated.

13.5.2 The Functions Served by Dual Moralities

From Metayer's constructionist perspective (2001), a narrow and a broad view of morality need not be incompatible, and participants' smooth and uncomplicated transitions between these two moral worlds might actually be construed as representing an ideal of sorts. That is, while the focus of each moral logic is distinct, the privileging of one need not imply the absolute rejection of the other. Rather, these perspectives might be conceived of as potentially serving complementary functions. Specifically, Métayer points out that the narrow view, based on clearly defined

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principles, may be useful in moments where decisive and unambiguous moral direction is required. In this regard, the narrow view can be conceptualized as a map of sorts, that allows individuals to orient themselves quickly and easily within a broad moral terrain by drawing upon a minimal number of key principles. In terms of generally charting out a course, this type of map may be sufficient. However, the rigidity of the narrow view also suggests limitations if it is not used in conjunction with a broad view of morality. Thus, where the narrow view proves itself inadequate, a shift towards a broad logic of morality provides greater flexibility while still allowing one to act within a moral capacity.

Indeed, Métayer's (2001) posited ideal of a complementary relationship between narrow and broad views of morality seems an apt description of the way in which the participants appeared to be using these two approaches to morality. Their accounts suggest that the narrow view is used as a default morality, used as a starting point and a foundation that provides a clear guide for behaviour. However, when contextual factors lead to complexities that challenge the simple application of narrow principles of morality, participants can be seen to shift to a more flexible logic that better allows them to deal with these situations. To be clear, this shift towards a broad view does not involve a rejection of the principles of the narrow view; rather, it seems the narrow view is treated as the foundation upon which a more nuanced and broad perspective is established.

This interpretation of the relationship between participants' use of broad and narrow logics of morality can be illustrated with specific examples drawn from their narratives. Throughout the interviews I saw a recurring pattern in which participants would point out a potential moral dilemma, suggest a clear-cut answer to it that had the ring of the narrow view, and then explain the rationale behind taking an action that was not in keeping with their previously stated position. In explaining their rationale for the

action taken, participants typically noted particular contextual factors that influenced their decision. For example, Cathy was explicit in stating that it is both exploitive and racist to hire highly qualified immigrants to do jobs that are professionally beneath them. She then explained that she often *does* hire overly qualified immigrants, pointing out that it provides them an opportunity to gain work experience they need in order to get back into their professions. Similarly, four other participants stated emphatically that it is wrong for White people to presume to speak on behalf of racialized people. However, these same participants also suggested that under certain circumstances it would be morally irresponsible for them *not* do so. Grace and Jeff suggested that ideally positions of authority in certain organizations should be held by racialized individuals; however, they argued that their decision to hold such positions in the past was the morally proper thing to do given the circumstances. In the interview, Jeff spoke out against the appropriation of Aboriginal culture by Whites; yet he also argued that he was behaving morally in using the stories given to him by Aboriginal people since it was their expectation that he would share them. Finally, all participants stated that racism and injustice must be fought wherever and whenever it is encountered, a position best understood as originating in a narrow view of morality. At the same time, most participants noted particular instances when they chose *not* to do so, explaining that doing so in certain contexts would require them to break other important moral codes. For instance, Jeff described an occasion in which he chose *not* to directly challenge highly offensive and racist comments made by a stranger in a bar that was owned by his friend. He explained that he remained silent and simply left in order to avoid offending his friend's customer.

In each of the cases outlined above, participants did not describe their actions as inconsistent with their stated position on fighting racism and injustice. Rather, their comments suggest that their clearly stated stance was used as a general guideline, not

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as a rule to be rigidly applied across situations regardless of differing contextual factors. That is, the abstract principles of the narrow view appeared to be one, albeit important, set of factors to be taken into account alongside other factors in determining what was moral in any given situation. Thus, what might appear as descriptions of morally inconsistent behaviour when viewed solely through the lens of a narrow morality, could be reinterpreted as moral *consistency* if participants conscientiously adhere to the established rules of moral logic relevant to the particular world in which they are residing at that moment.

13.5.3 Participants' Construction of Dual Moralities in Developmental Terms

The complementary manner in which narrow and broad approaches to morality seem to function in participants' narratives suggests that while the narrow view of morality may play a central and critical role in participants' lives, the addition of a broad perspective is experienced by participants as a more sophisticated and advanced approach to morality.[99] Indeed, participants' descriptions of their own moral development certainly support this interpretation. That is, what they describe as a development process in their stories of becoming anti-racism educators can be conceptualized as a shift from relying primarily upon a narrow approach to morality, to a reliance upon *both* narrow and broad moral logics. Recall the general pattern of participants' narratives regarding how they came to be involved in anti-racism (i.e., their narratives of the past Self): their stories began by describing their childhood Self as pure and innocent, but also as naïve, rigid, and idealistic; they then described a process of increasing personal awareness; finally, they spoke of reaching a point of active involvement in fighting racism. As part of the process of growing awareness and

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[99]It is noteworthy that this construction of moral development is in direct opposition to several established psychological theories. To illustrate the bias in western psychology that favours abstract over concrete modes of thinking, Shweder and Bourne (1991) point to the developmental theories of Piaget and Kohlberg in which concrete thinking is associated with childhood, and an early stage of cognitive development.

of becoming actively involved in fighting racism, participants referenced an increasing

appreciation of, and sensitivity towards, complexity and ambiguity. In their

constructions of their development, at no point did they describe rejecting a narrow

approach to morality; rather, their stories suggest that they came to recognize its

limitations and to draw also upon a broad logic. In this manner, the narrow logic can be

seen to shift from a position of dominance to a position of being in service to the broad

view; another tool at the disposal of the bricoleur.

As illustrated in the following examples, this process is perhaps most evident in

participants' accounts when they directly contrast their rigid, ideological past Selves

with their more flexible, open-minded present Selves. Kelly describes how early in his

career he believed in core law enforcement principles and goals. However, he

explained that after working on the street and getting to know many Aboriginal people

in the context of law enforcement, he began to question these principles and their rigid

application. As he describes it, this process led him both to understand better the

complex issues facing Aboriginal people, and to question simplistic solutions. Similarly,

in responding to critics who said she shouldn't be teaching Native Studies, Stephanie

states that she would have felt the same way "at one time" in her life; however, she

said that over the years she has come to see that, in her case at least, the matter is not

so clear-cut.

If these two moral worlds are constructed and experienced by participants as

developmentally connected, this suggests an interesting way to understand the

tendency of participants to frame experiences of moral dilemmas in the past tense.

That is, if the past Self is understood to have relied solely up a narrow view of morality,

one that is purportedly ill-suited to dealing with the everyday complexities of fighting

racism, a greater occurrence of dilemmas might be expected. In contrast, if the present

Self has more tools at her disposal to maneuver moral terrains, moral dilemmas would

be more easily resolved. This interpretation of participants' accounts offers an interesting framework for making sense of the moral certainty that permeated their narratives.

13.6 A Portrait of Successful Moral Navigation in the World of Anti-Racism Education

To reiterate, what participants describe as the process of their moral development must not be interpreted narrowly as the simple replacement of one primary mode of moral reasoning with another. Rather, what they describe is understood better as a process by which they have come to recognize the benefits of drawing upon more than one type of morality, and they have learned the skill of navigating between two moral spheres, one primary and the other secondary. In so doing, they have managed to increase the space within which they can function as moral beings, and have positioned themselves to work more effectively towards their utopian goal of society transformed. Indeed, by their own accounts, in increasing this moral space they have achieved a certain level of proficiency in negotiating the morally challenging terrain of anti-racism education. Participants' success in this regard can be read in their minimal references to experiencing moral anxiety; their stated confidence in their abilities as anti-racism educators; and in the many years that they have reportedly been involved in anti-racism work, despite the suggestion in the literature that burn-out is common for those working in this field. Given participants' apparent success in negotiating the moral terrain of anti-racism education, there is the potential for them to serve as a model for others working in this domain. Thus, I would like to extract from their accounts the primary dimensions of their particular kind of expertise and to explore the skills that may be required in achieving it.

First, participants' accounts suggest the importance of recognizing the limitations of relying solely upon a narrow logic of morality, and the value of being open to conceptualizing morality in broader terms.

Second, it seems that a sensitivity to nuance and an awareness of contextual cues are needed in order to recognize the key characteristics of the different lifeworlds that are being entered. For example, in entering the more public spheres of life which operate at the level of systems, structures, and policies, this sensitivity to contextual cues might help a person to recognize that they have entered into the world of absolutes. An individual might notice, for instance, that the focus is not on specific, unique, persons, but on positions, roles, or categories, in situations such as when they are negotiating with government bodies on behalf of an agency; fighting for the rights of the oppressed within a judicial process; leading a demonstration to bring public attention to an injustice; or drafting workplace policies that must be able to withstand legal challenges. A sensitivity to picking up on relevant contextual cues also allows individuals to note when they are exiting the world of absolutes and entering the concrete world of everyday life.

Third, participants' narratives suggest that individuals who have learned to recognize the characteristics of the various worlds in which they operate, must then exhibit flexibility and learn to adapt to these worlds in order to function with ease and confidence in them. Thus, to negotiate successfully in domains that have the characteristic of the world of absolutes, individuals must be able to think in an abstract and rationalist manner, to speak the language of that world, and to use the logic of morality that is privileged in it. However, when returning to the world of the everyday and the more private spheres of life in which they interact with individuals and groups (e.g., specific communities, workplaces, and classrooms) these individuals must be able to recognize the change in landscape and switch to the form of thinking, language, and moral reasoning that is in keeping with the world of the concrete. That is, if individuals wish to be recognized as credible and to have a voice of influence in both the world of the absolute and the world of the concrete, they must show themselves to

be competent citizens of each, able to operate in accordance with their respective conventions.

Participants' apparent success both in understanding and adapting to the dual worlds in which they must operate in their capacity as anti-racism educators, suggests that in this regard they may have achieved a state in keeping with Todorov's (1984) notion of cultural hybridity. As cultural hybrids they can be seen to move with ease and agility between the world of the absolute and the world of the concrete. In this bridging position they are able to mediate between the world of ideology and the mundane world of human experience, as they strive to inspire societal change.

<div align="center">13.7 <u>Research Applications</u></div>

While this research does not speak directly to the relationship between the successful negotiation of moral domains and the effectiveness of reducing racism in society, participants' apparent proficiency in negotiating the moral complexities of anti-racism education does suggest potential applications for improving the practice of anti-racism education nonetheless.[100] Specifically, this research highlights ways in which the training of potential anti-racism educators might be strengthened by teaching them strategies for dealing with the moral challenges they may encounter working in this field.

Based on this research, I would argue that what is required is the development of educational programs for anti-racism educators that embrace constructionist perspectives; programs that encourage students to think broadly and critically about issues of morality in practice. What might such a program look like?

First, the potential challenges, ambiguities, and complexities of anti-racism education could be openly discussed as a basis for discussing morality.

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[100] For a fuller discussion of the limitations of this research and proposed avenues for future research that it inspires, please see Appendix F.

Second, the notion of living in many lifeworlds that operate according to distinct moral logics could be presented, and differences among them explored. Through discussion, individuals might consider which approaches to morality are relevant to the particular spheres in which they work. In this manner, learners would be encouraged to take personal ownership of their moral choices, and discouraged from either blindly adhering solely to an abstract code of ethics *or* claiming an 'anything goes' approach to morality.

Finally, against this backdrop, anti-racism educators could be assisted in developing a broad array of strategies and tools that might be drawn upon in their anti-racism efforts. To that end, rather than presenting definitive answers to questions of racism and anti-racism, or dogmatic assessments of what *must* be done, individuals could be provided with a range of conceptual frameworks for understanding racism and the work of anti-racism. For example, various constructions of racism might be presented and the relative strengths and limitations of each to particular situations could be explored. Learners would be encouraged to think strategically, to consider how and when various discourses, moral logics, or particular methods might serve a useful function in their particular efforts to eradicate racism.

While the literature does not specify all the contexts in which anti-racism educator training currently occurs, it does identify one particular domain in which these recommendations could be applied. The literature suggests that many teacher-training programs require pre-service teachers to take a course that exposes them to issues of racism (e.g., see Aveling, 2002; 2006; Gaine, 2001; Schick, 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; Sleeter, 1993). Presumably, the logic behind these courses is that the training will not only discourage teachers from using racist practices in their classrooms, but that it also will encourage them to integrate the message of anti-racism into their teaching. To that end, the above recommendations could be incorporated into existing courses for pre-

service teachers. Furthermore, to the extent that a goal of all anti-racism education is to inspire individuals to become involved in the work of anti-racism themselves, these recommendations might also be applied more broadly to existing anti-racism education programs.

My own intellectual journey in carrying out this research offers some anecdotal support for the potential success of such an approach to training anti-racism educators. I described the experience of uncertainty and moral anxiety that led me to conduct this research, and I explained that while I felt drawn to being involved in anti-racism, I was simultaneously repelled by paralyzing experiences of moral ambiguity and uncertainty. Using Métayer's (2001) notion of dual moralities, I now conceptualize my unease and uncertainty as the result of trying to position myself within the complex and nuanced realities of anti-racism using the rigid view of morality that is privileged in academia. In recognizing the broad approach as a valid and alternative form of morality, I have a broader range of conceptual tools for understanding and negotiating moral questions within anti-racism. As the space within which I can operate as a moral being has increased, so has my level of confidence and interest in working in this domain.

In addition to suggesting ways to improve training for anti-racism educators, this research also has applications for academics interested in issues of morality. Specifically, it encourages academics to move beyond discussions of morality that rely upon oppositional binaries that tend to privilege ethics (i.e., decontextualized and principled morality), and depict it as pure and legitimate in contrast to the inferior, contaminated, or even 'dangerous' broad morality of everyday life. Participants' accounts of their moral experience challenge this either-or vision of morality, in which their behaviour might be viewed as inconsistent, contradictory, and somehow problematic. Todorov's (1984) ideal of "different *and* equal" serves as a useful framework that researchers might use to consider morality in more dynamic terms, as

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they explore the various uses and meanings of distinct moral logics in wide-ranging,

contextualized, experience-near accounts of individuals' lives.

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Appendix A:
Life History Interview Questions

1. Looking back over your life and starting as far back in your childhood as you wish, tell me the story of how you came to be involved in anti-racism work (e.g., key moments, experiences, relationships, etc., that contributed to this process).

2. Now tell me about how you are involved currently in fighting racism (i.e., the place anti-racism occupies in your life today).

3. Finally, how do you envision yourself being involved in the fight against racism in the future?

Appendix B:
Semi Structured Interview Schedule

Directions: *In our last meeting you talked about how you came to be involved in the work of anti-racism and what anti-racism means in your life today. In this meeting, I would like to follow up on some of the topics that you raised then. There are three main topics that I want to explore. <u>First</u>, I want to know more about your views and feelings on different aspects of racism and how it is expressed in Saskatchewan. <u>Then</u> there are questions regarding your involvement in fighting racism. <u>Finally</u>, I also hope to explore in greater depth how you view yourself, your relationship with others, and what racism and anti-racism mean in the different spheres of your life. In addition, if there is anything else that you would like to add that wasn't covered in the last meeting or in my questions today, please do so. Do you have any questions before we get started?*

Racism and Anti-Racism in Saskatchewan

As I mentioned earlier, in this first section I'd like to start quite broadly by exploring your philosophical or theoretical understandings race and racism and then move on to talking about what racism looks like in Saskatchewan today.

1. Let's begin with the basic concept of 'race'. What is your understanding of 'race'?

2. What is your understanding of 'racism'?

3. What does racism looks like in <u>Saskatchewan</u> today?

4. Tell me about the various ways that racism is being fought in the province.

5. I'd like to have a sense of the links between local efforts to fight racism and efforts at the national or international level. In your experience, how does what you do relate to what is being done at these broader levels?

6. In your view, what would a <u>non-racist</u> society look like in Saskatchewan and what would need to be done in order to get there?

Anti-Racism Education/Programs

Now I'd like to focus more specifically on the ways in which you address racism through particular anti-racism initiatives. We talked about this in our last meeting, so you may have addressed some of these questions already. However, I will go through them all anyway as they may trigger other thoughts you'd like to share.

7. Before we discuss the work you do in anti-racism, it be useful to know something of the broader <u>context</u> in which you offer anti-racism education/programs. Tell me about the organizational context in which you work.

8. Now let's shift the focus more directly onto the anti-racism course that you offer (or programs in which you are involved). As an overview, walk me through the course from the beginning to the end to give me a sense of what it looks like. (i.e., What you <u>do</u> to fight racism)

9. Tell me about the content of the course.

10. Describe the methods you use in the course.

11. What do you hope to achieve in the course (or program) and how do you know if you are successful?

12. Now I want to know more about the people who participate in your courses. How would you describe them?

13. What kinds of reactions do your participants have to the course/program?

14. Tell me more about your interactions/relationship with your participants?

15. To what extent can you relate to those people whom you are trying to influence or change through your work?

16. To what extent and in what contexts do you interact with people from oppressed racial groups?

17. To what degree can you relate to or identify with people who are racially oppressed?

18. I'd like to know more about *your* personal feelings and experience in leading these courses/running these programs – what is it like for you personally to be involved in this work?

19. How have you changed as a result of your involvement in anti-racism?

20. Now I want you to step back from your formal work in anti-racism and think about encounters you have with racism in your daily life. What are some typical examples of racism that you see in the varied contexts of your life, and how do you respond to racism in these situations?

Identity

In this last set of questions, I'd like to explore further what it means to be an anti-racism educator outside the formal context of your work and have you talk about how it relates to your broader sense of self.

21. To what extent and in what ways would you say that 'anti-racism' is central to your sense of who you are as a person?

22. How does your anti-racism stance relate to who you are and what you do in other contexts of your life?

23. How does your stance on racism relate to your broader belief system, for example, your religious and political beliefs?

24. I want to shift the focus for moment. If you were asked to describe a 'typical' anti-racism educator, what common or shared characteristics would come to mind?

25. In my research I am focusing in particular on White people who do anti-racism work. What does it mean to you to be White in the context of doing anti-racism work in Saskatchewan?

26. White people working in anti-racism in Saskatchewan can be viewed as occupying a very unique position. On the one hand, as a White person you are part of the dominant group in society, yet you are choosing to fight for the rights of those who are being oppressed by the dominant group. How do you understand your position in this regard?

Demographic Questions

Family History
1. when family came to Canada
2. from where?
3. context for emigrating
4. ethnic and religious identities of family and self
5. year born
6. where raised (when moved to SK)
7. parents' professions
8. socio-economic status of family growing up (lower, middle class, etc.)
9. marital status (married, divorced, separated, single)
10. children? # and ages

Educational and Professional Background
11. educational level attained
12. area(s) of study
13. any specific education or training to do anti-racism work
14. key authors who have influenced approach
15. professional identity (broadly)
16. # of years involved formally and/or informally in anti-racism work
17. % of job/work time devoted to anti-racism efforts

Is there anything you feel we have missed? Any questions/additional comments

May I contact in future if any specific questions arise as I review your transcript?

Would you like to review the transcript?

Do you know of anyone else who might want to participate in this research?

Estimated timeline.

My name is Vonda Plett Martens and I am a doctoral candidate in the Dept. of Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan. I am writing to let you know about a research project that I am hoping to undertake, and in which I would like to invite you to consider participating. The focus of the research project is on exploring the experiences of White anti-racism educators in Saskatchewan.

My interest in this research topic stems both from my personal desire to see racism and inequality reduced in our society and from the unique challenges and dilemmas I have encountered working in this domain. As you are likely aware, there is a significant body of research that focuses on racism; however, very little research considers the experiences of individuals who are actively involved in fighting racism in our society. While I expect many of the experiences working in anti-racism might be similar regardless of racial identification, there may be important differences as well. Given my positioning as a White researcher and the disproportionate amount of research in psychology that focuses on the racial 'other,' I have chosen for my dissertation to explore specifically the experiences of White people working in anti-racism.

If you identify as being White and you see yourself as actively involved in providing anti-racism education in a meaningful way in some form (e.g., offering specifically anti-racism courses or consciously incorporating anti-racism education into your work), I would really enjoy talking to you about your involvement and experiences. Participation in this study would involve sitting down with me on two or three occasions to offer your perspectives on this topic. The first interview would be very open ended and you would be given a few broad questions ahead of time to help you structure your ideas prior to our meeting. The second interview would be slightly more structured, but still quite open ended, allowing me to explore more specific issues with you. These interviews would be kept strictly confidential and should take approximately 60 to 90 minutes each, depending on how much you have to contribute. Following completion of the study, you would be given a summary of the findings.

Please note that your participation is <u>completely voluntary</u>. If you decide to participate, all of your interview answers will be kept confidential. In addition, I would like to let you know that this research project has been approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan on April 13, 2005.

If you meet the eligibility criteria for this study and think you may be interested in participating in this research, please call me at 374-6571 or e-mail me at v.plett@shaw.ca as soon as possible. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have. If you don't meet criteria (i.e., you don't identify as White and/or view your work as anti-racist education) but know of others who do, I would appreciate if you would pass this letter on to them and invite them to contact me if they would like to discuss the possibility of their involvement in this study. Thank you for attention to this matter and I look forward to talking to you.

Sincerely,

Vonda Plett Martens
Ph.D. Candidate - Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan

Thank you very much for meeting with me! You are invited to participate in a study entitled "The Moral Experiences of White Anti-Racism Educators in Saskatchewan." Please read this form and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

Researchers: Vonda Plett Martens, Ph.D. student (researcher); Michel Desjardins, Ph.D. (supervisor) -Department of Psychology – University of Saskatchewan – 374-6571
e-mail: v.plett@shaw.ca

Purpose and Procedure: This study is part of Vonda Plett Martens' dissertation project. The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of people who identify as being White and who are involved in some meaningful way in anti-racism education in Saskatchewan. Specifically, I would like to explore your experiences of being involved in anti-racism work across time and in a variety of contexts. In addition, I would like to explore a variety of related topics, such as your relationships with others, your views of self, and your general insights into racism in our society.

I would like you to participate in two or three interview meetings. In the first meeting, I would ask you three open-ended questions relating to your past, present and future involvements in anti-racism efforts. In the second interview, which will be slightly more structured, I would like you to provide more details about these experiences. If all of the topics are not covered in the second interview, a third interview may be necessary. Each interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes each. I would like to carry out all the interviews within a two-week interval.

If you so wish, you may provide the researcher with additional materials such as job descriptions, workshop materials, course syllabi, etc. (i.e., any materials that you feel might help the researcher to better understand your approach to fighting racism). These items can be brought to the second interview if you wish to bring them.

I will need to tape-record the interviews. You will have the opportunity to review a transcript of what was said before the data are analyzed and included it in the report. You may add, alter or delete any of the information you provided. Once the study had been completed, you will receive a summary of results, and will be able to access a copy of the dissertation at the Main Library, at the University of Saskatchewan.

Potential Risks: There are no known risks associated with this research. I will be asking you to share your experiences, but you do <u>not</u> need to share anything that you are not completely comfortable disclosing. If it becomes uncomfortable talking about anything during this interview, you can stop at any time, with no penalty whatsoever. If you were contacted for this study through your place of employment, please know that your work activities will not be affected by participation in this study and your employer will not be informed as to your level of participation.

Potential Benefits: Despite the arguably unique and challenging issues facing White anti-racism educators in their work, there are very few studies in the literature examining the experiences of this population. You are being given the opportunity to contribute to this literature in a meaningful way through the sharing of your experiences. Furthermore, your involvement may advance our understanding of the operation and function of racism in Saskatchewan and the strategies being used to address it.

Storage of Data: The University of Saskatchewan requires that all tapes from interviews as well as all transcripts of interviews be kept securely for five years. ***The interviews from this research will be securely stored in Dr. Michel Desjardins' office at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of no less than 5 years after data collection and analysis is complete. This office is a private office and the data will be locked in a filing cabinet for extra protection.***

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Although I will be presenting the results of this study in my dissertation report, and possibly in an article or book in the future, the data will be presented in aggregate form so that it will not be possible to identify individuals. Whenever the data are not presented in aggregate form, I will ensure that any identifying information is removed, so that I do not undermine confidentiality. For example, if I report direct quotations from the interview, participants will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information (e.g., participants' real name, names of friends or family members, the names of organizations participants belong to, etc.) will be removed. This consent form will be stored securely in a separate part of my office so that there is no association between an interview transcript and your name. The only individuals who will have access to your interviews tapes are Vonda Plett Martens (the researcher), Dr. Michel Desjardins (project supervisor), and a professional transcriber who will help us with the project—but who will not have access to information regarding your identity.

Right to Withdraw: You do <u>not</u> have to answer any question that you do not want to answer. You may withdraw from the whole interview process at any time without having to offer any explanation and without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed. Finally, if you wish, you are free to turn off the tape-recorder during the interviews.

 Questions: If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point. You are also free to contact me at the numbers and e-mail address provided above if you have questions at a later time. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on April 13, 2005. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that Committee through the Office of Research Services (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

Statement of Consent to Participate: *I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.*

_____   _____
(Signature of Participant)   (Date)

_____   _____
(Signature of Researcher)   (Date)

I, _____ , have been given the opportunity to review the complete transcript of my personal interview in the study entitled, "The Moral Experiences of White Anti-Racism Educators in Saskatchewan," and to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript. I hereby waive the right to review the transcript and authorize Vonda Plett Martens to use the interview material as recorded during the interviews in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

_____   _____
Participant   Date

_____   _____
Researcher   Date

I,_____ , have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in the study entitled, "The Moral Experiences of White Anti-Racism Educators in Saskatchewan." I have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Vonda Plett Martens. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Vonda Plett Martens to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

_____   _____
Participant   Date

_____   _____
Researcher   Date

Appendix F:

Research Limitations and Future Directions

There are three key limitations to the research that are important to note, in part because they identify new avenues for future research. These limitations relate to the type of data collected, participant characteristics, and the range of potential applications of this research. First, in this research my data were comprised solely of participants' constructions of their experience. I did not gather other forms of data, such as observational data regarding participants' practice of anti-racism, or others' views regarding participants' anti-racism involvements. Second, the specific characteristics of the participants in this research (i.e., White, middle-aged individuals involved in a variety of anti-racism efforts, whose primary employment tends not to be in anti-racism education, etc.) limits the extent to which the findings allow me to speak about other groups involved in anti-racism (e.g., racialized anti-racism educators or White academics researching racism). Finally, this research does not allow me to speak to issues regarding participants' *effectiveness* in addressing racism. That is, while I suggested participants might be viewed as highly successful in their ability to negotiate morality within a challenging domain, I did not consider the relationship between this particular ability and their ability to effect the change they desired in society. Based on these limitations, I would like to briefly outline four broad domains for future research that vary in scope.

First, this research has raised many new questions regarding the moral experiences of White, anti-racism educators. For example, how might we understand the particular processes employed in negotiating a moral stance in any particular domain? That is, how are various contextual factors weighed in relation to each other? How is the process of shifting from a primarily narrow vision to incorporating a broad vision of morality in their lives experienced in the present tense? In addition to these questions, which rely upon a further exploration of participants' constructions, future research might consider exploring the practice of anti-racism from other perspectives. For example, observational methods might be used to explore what their anti-racism looks like in practice. Might the dual visions of morality be evident in their practice, and if so, how might they be manifested? Is their developmental vision of broad and narrow visions of morality incorporated into the content of their anti-racism teachings? How do these individuals interact with those they are seeking to help or teach? In addition to observation, one might consider others' perspectives regarding White, anti-racism educators. For example, how do those they are trying to influence or help, view them? How do racialized anti-racism educators conceive of their White colleagues efforts?

Second, research might explore the moral experiences of other groups of individuals involved in the study or practice of anti-racism. For example, recall the dual images in the literature of White researchers involved in the study of racism, and the apparent dominance of the narrow view of morality in their discourse. Research might explore the relationship between their academic discourse and their experiences of morality in other contexts of their anti-racism involvements. Future research might also consider the similarities and differences in the moral experiences of racialized individuals who similarly identify as anti-racism educators, as well as individuals involved in other domains of activism (e.g., see van Esterisk, 1985). Across these various groups, one might explore the relationship between particular configurations of moral universes and external indicators of effectiveness in bringing about desired changes.

At a more abstract level, the notion of moral universes involving distinct worlds and logics of morality, suggests broad questions for investigation. For example, in this research participants offered a particular construction of a moral universe that was based upon a developmental relationship between narrow and broad views of morality. How else might moral universes be constructed? In what other ways might broad and narrow logics of morality be connected in people's experience? My participants' accounts suggested smooth transitions in moving between lifeworlds and moral logics. How else might this movement be experienced? Furthermore, are there lifeworlds in which other moral logics are dominant (i.e., logics that are distinct from those identified in this research as 'narrow' or 'broad')? How might we understand them?

Finally, this research highlights the need for additional research that focuses on experiences of morality that fall outside of the traditional academic focus on ethics. To that end, this research might be read as yet another voice added to a wider chorus of voices (e.g., Kleinman, 1999; Métayer, 2001; Shweder, 2002) calling for greater research attention regarding experiences of morality within the varied contexts of everyday life.