THEORIZING BROWN IDENTITY

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the possibilities and limitations of theorizing Brown identity as an anti-racist and anti-colonial framework. By examining discursive representations of Brownness and Brown Identity in the Brown Canada Project, a community-led project of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, it introduces a new framework for conceptualizing the racialization, identity, and resistance of South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area. The thesis reveals three key themes: the salience of Brown identity in terms of a spirit injury that results from migration, assertion of pride in resistance, and how shared values and experiences of racism form pedagogies for education and community-building. These themes inform a theory of Brown identity and Brownness for anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance. This thesis aims to inform anti-racist and anti-colonial educational practices, political activism, and social movements. It serves as a point of generation for new lines of inquiry into Brown epistemologies, experiences, and relationships.

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I. Preface

When I was seven years old, I rode the school bus to school. I was in the second grade and the older kids on the bus (fifth graders) used to tell us younger kids to give up our seats at the back of the bus where it was "cool" to sit or to move over so they could sit by the aisle and talk amongst themselves. I usually refused to give up my seat. One day, an older boy walked up to me and said, "Move over, Paki." Caught off guard, I moved over. I was severely puzzled: the boy's skin was darker than mine, and it was brown.

In the ninth grade, I attended a suburban high school. One day in girls' gym class, we were doing football drills. It was my turn to throw the football and just as I was about to pull my arm back, I heard a friend call out, "Danielle, you're brown?" I had no idea what it was about football, gym, or anything I was doing at the time that was connected to the conversation she was having. It was the first time someone had called me "brown".

By the time I entered university as an undergraduate student, I had developed some race consciousness and more confidence in being an Indian woman. However, when I dated white men I continued to feel a certain affective consciousness about the colour of my skin and my race - the fact that I was brown. I recall one night being told by a man with whom I had gone out a few times that I was "exquisitely beautiful". This sounded strange to me. He continued, "I think you're beautiful…it's just…it's a beauty I'm not used to." I asked him what he meant. He replied, "You're not white."

II. Introduction

Brown Motivations

"Even for academics change must come from within; transformative sociopolitical action begins with the examination of ourselves and the strategies we employ to make sense of the world" (Dei, 1999, p.33).

Over the past year and a half, I have been reflecting upon the construction and significance of a Brown racialized identity. In looking towards my community to see how members negotiated identity and belonging, I found that Brown is used as a common-sense racial signifier in the Greater Toronto Area. Despite its colonial origins and racist legacy, it is increasingly asserted as an identity by South Asian youth. This led me to wonder if Brown identity or Brownness could be mobilized as an essentialist identity among South Asian communities for the purpose of shared anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance. Here Brown identity speaks to the racialized identity of South Asians with a diverse range of ethnic and national identities, languages, and religions, with a shared historical experience in arrival to and within Canada. Brown people may originate from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka/Tamil Eelam, Afghanistan, Iran, and the Philippines. They may have been born in Canada, on the Indian sub-continent, in the Caribbean, or in Africa. In proposing Brown as an essentialist identity for South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area, I am conscious of the politics of Brownness. While there are potential gains such as increasing politicization and solidarity among South Asians, there are also potential harms and limits to over-essentializing heterogeneous realities for South Asians, and detracting from other political movements for racial and indigenous justice. For example, South Asians have organized (and continue to

organize) under the banner of South Asian identity, ethnic identities such as Tamil and Punjabi, and religious identities such as Sikh and Muslim. What is the goal of proposing Brown as a politicized identity as an alternative to any of these (or others)? How does Brown as theorized here relate to Brown identities that fall outside of 'South Asia', such as Latina/os and/or indigenous communities? How does Brown identity relate to, support, or hinder the objectives of Black identity? I discuss the implications with respect to these questions below.

As the Canadian-born daughter of two Punjabi immigrants, I have grown up trying to negotiate and understand my racial, national, and cultural identities. With my light-coloured skin, hazel eyes, non-Indian first name, and manner of speaking English, I have had access to some of the privileges of whiteness. Punjabi, Indian, South Asian, Canadian and Brown are among the identities that were placed on me or at times I have chosen to claim. The impacts of the various ways I have been interpreted include dissonance, exclusion, shame, and a lack of belonging. Personal experiences of overt and systemic racism throughout my youth and as an adult, engaging in political activism, and anti-racism studies have contributed to my race consciousness and motivation for political resistance. They have also contributed to a recognition of my responsibility as a scholar and community activist to challenge racism within the Academy and the broader community.

In addition to these personal experiences, I have witnessed how divisive, zero-sum state policies have driven competition for inclusion, dignity, resources, and political power by South Asian communities coopted into the perpetuation of colonial standards of whiteness. As a student on a large, diverse, university campus, I have longed for more discussions with friends, peers, in classrooms and on the campus on issues of race and racism confronting South Asian communities. I have also been seeking discussions about developing solidarity across

communities of colour to racism. I have been wondering about potential frameworks for engaging my peers in anti-racist work, and current frameworks being used by community organizers in Toronto doing anti-racist work within South Asian communities.

Simultaneously, I have been fixated on the work of anti-racism and anti-colonial scholars that have demonstrated the continued significance of racial identity (See especially Omi and Winant, 1994; Dei, 2000, 2007; López, 1995), and those that have put forth frameworks for decolonization (See Lawrence and Dua, 2005; Tuck and Yang, 2012; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Smith, 2012). I have been contemplating the colonial and hegemonic standard of whiteness and various resistance movements to this standard. In particular, I am motivated and inspired by the strong resistance of movements such as the Black Power (Carmichael, 1967; López, 2001), Chicana/o (Garcia, 1995; López, 2001; Gutiérrez, 2010), Tamil (Cheran, 2003; Wayland, 2004, and indigenous movements (Escárcega, 2010; Graveline, 2013) in the United States and Canada, which have disrupted settler narratives of inferiority, achieved political aims, and centred the experiences of racialized peoples. In looking to these movements, I aim to learn from the shared understandings and experiences that inspired and informed a powerful strategic mobilization of politicized racial identity. I aim not to equate experiences or detract from these movements in my analysis, but similarly build shared resistance against racism and settler colonialism.

Reflecting on the theoretical possibilities of a Brown identity, I am conscious of the intrinsic and material meaning(s) that are or could be ascribed to it. There is something visceral and personal about proposing Brown identity, having reflected upon and embraced its embodiment, and its epistemic significance. Dei (2007) describes this as a process of coming to know through my racialized embodiment. With respect for the distinct and diverse struggles

confronting communities of colour, I have begun to conceptualize Brownness as a potential framework for a sociopolitical movement of solidarity and anti-racist resistance by South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area. I want to be clear about the aims of conceptualizing Brown as a politicized, racial identity. While I cannot control its effects, I see possibilities for Brownness to be an entry point for South Asians to engage in anti-racism resistance, to challenge whiteness and to come to speak through their racialized embodiments. It is what bell hooks (1991) describes: theory as liberatory practice. However, this cannot be simply a personal political ideological project, or mere theorizing, since neither of those is conducive to a true anti-racism project. The impetus for building a collective social movement must come from community. As such, I turn to insights from South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area via the Brown Canada Project, an initiative of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians.

Brown Beginnings

On May 23, 1914, the Komagata Maru, a ship carrying over three hundred and seventy passengers (predominantly Punjabi men) arrived off the shores of British Columbia from India (Mann, 2009). Gurdit Singh Sandhu had chartered the ship in opposition to the exclusionary and racist laws of Canadian immigration that existed at the time (and also inform current policies that sustain the colonial state). Sandhu sought to challenge the orders-in-council enacted by the Canadian government, which prevented immigration of the "Asiatic race", and particularly migrants from India (the 'Hindu invasion') based on the racist vision of a "white Canada" established by members of the governing Liberal Party of Canada (See Mann, 2005; Dua, 2007; Mawani, 2012).

Exclusion was achieved through three orders-in-council in place at that time. These required that Asian immigrants pay a $200 fee, that all immigrants coming to Canada arrive from their country of origin by "continuous journey" (impossible to do from India given there was no steamship that made a continuous trip from India to Canada), and that migrant labourers be prevented from entering Canada through British Columbia (Mawani, 2012). All three orders-in-council were aimed at preventing immigration from India, which was at that time still part of the British Empire (Mawani, 2012).

When the ship arrived off the shores of British Columbia, passengers were not allowed to disembark. Their allies on land issued and exhausted legal challenges to the exclusionary and racist legislation to no avail. In the backdrop of race riots that had taken place in Vancouver in 1906-07, tensions and racist sentiment among settlers in British Columbia continued to grow towards the ship's passengers and the ship was turned away. Upon arrival in Calcutta, passengers were placed under arrest by the British Raj for their challenge to imperial Canadian law, and for their revolutionary activity in the name of India's independence. Passengers thought to be affiliated with the Ghadr Party[1] were shot and killed.

The Komagata Maru has often been cited as an example of 'shame' in Canada's past, suggesting that Canada no longer discriminates against immigrants (or the racialized Other). However, this overt and violent example of racism is exemplary of a history of imperialism that, while less conspicuous, nonetheless continues today. It also situates South Asians as the Brown racialized Other who have no place within the borders of the white settler colonial state of Canada, and establishes the framework for understanding the racialization of South Asians in Canada.

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[1] The Ghadr Party was founded in the early 20th century by North American Punjabis. The Party's aim was gaining independence for India from British colonial rule.

[2] Some of the participants in the Brown Canada Project are friends, allies, and colleagues of the researcher.

South Asian communities have historically been racialized in terms of our economic value or threat to the Canadian state, either framed as cheap and efficient bodies of labour, or the 'brown peril' that threatens the interests of the colonial dominant. We are also placed in contemporary Canadian nationalist discourses such as the myth of multiculturalism and model minority; myths that we are often complicit in perpetuating, thereby contributing to ongoing systemic racism and ethnic divide within a white supremacist society. Much of the literature on South Asians in Canada is primarily focused on first and second-generation experiences, specifically framed as being newcomer experiences of adults and youth. This includes experiences adapting to dominant white settler culture in Canada, or experiences of racism as new arrivants, including individual and systemic racism (See Razack, 1995; Handa, 2003; Samuel, 2005; Sundar, 2008). This work taps into the national myths perpetuated by the Canadian nation-state about immigrants, diversity, and inclusion - the myth of multiculturalism, the model minority, meritocracy, and the objective 'fairness' of national policies of citizenship, immigration, and labour (Prashad, 2000; Pon, 2000; Dua, 2007; Thobani, 2007; Mann, 2009). However, there is little to no analysis of third and fourth-generation South Asians in Canada, or examination of the relationships across various generations. What is the potential for building community across generations of South Asians in Canada?

Additionally, while research documenting and analyzing the systemic exclusion of South Asians on the basis of race is necessary, there is less research available on the ways in which South Asians are resisting systemic racism, building community, and developing political power in a contemporary context. What are the tools and frameworks South Asians are using to forge community and solidarity, and resist racism? How were these tools and frameworks developed? What are their limits and what new tools and frameworks can be developed?

Research Question(s)

This thesis seeks to examine the extent to which Brownness and Brown identity can be mobilized as a decolonizing framework, by and for, South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area. The study's central questions are:

1. What is the saliency of Brown identity for South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area?

2. Who or what does Brown represent?

3. Can Brown identity be mobilized as a decolonizing framework for anti-racism and anti-colonial social movements?

4. What are the limitations of theorizing Brown identity as a decolonizing framework for South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area?

The research aims to bridge the gap in the literature on self-representation and racialization of South Asian communities, as well as resistance to, or subversion of, white supremacy. The hope for a Brown framework is to address cultural, social, and political representation in order to challenge state-based frameworks and discourses. This thesis also serves to extend the literature on South Asian resistance movements to inform anti-racist and anti-colonial educational practices and political activism, and to probe the possibilities of developing socio-political movements.

Theoretical Entry Point

My goal for Brownness is first and foremost to be an anti-racist political project. It is effectively a conceptualization of an imagined community with the purpose of forging anti-racist

resistance and solidarity among South Asians (Anderson, 1991). Therefore, the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study are rooted in critical anti-racism and anti-colonial theory. In particular, this thesis relies on Dei's (2000) anti-racism discursive framework. As Dei (2000) suggests, anti-racism is an action-oriented praxis, one that responds to systemic racism on a broad-based community level. While noting the significance and need for consideration of intersectionality, Dei (2000; 2007) highlights the salience of racial identity, and the relationship between racial identity and the individual (through embodiment), and community (through political resistance). Both of these are highly relevant to the theorizing of Brown identity as a framework for South Asian communities. Dei (2000) also suggests that race can be an effective tool for organizing for social change, noting that collective experiences that do not over-essentialize can be politically powerful. This framework allows for discussions of power, representation, and resistance from a community-based and activist perspective.

The study also draws in large part from theories on racial formation and racialization from Omi and Winant (1993; 1994) and López (1995) to highlight the continuing significance of race and racial identity for individuals and groups. Specifically, the study uses the concept of racial formation - where social, economic, and political forces shape racial meaning - to argue for the theorization of identity as part of ongoing contestations of race. The study probes the connection between racial formation and anti-racism, looking at Spivak's (1988) notion of strategic essentialism as a means of developing oppositional consciousness in South Asian communities. Drawing from this concept, Brown identity is put forward as an essentialized identity for South Asians for the achievement of particular political aims discussed later in this thesis.

As Brownness begins as a personal, political, and ideological project, a decolonization framework is essential for evaluating its anti-racist objectives. The application of anti-racism and decolonization theories facilitates an examination of the effects and affects of colonial encounters, as well as their impact on identity and marginalization. Decolonization theory allows for foregrounding of the agency of the colonized subject, as well as their potential for resistance. Thus, this thesis also draws from anti-colonial and decolonization theories in order to examine the potential for Brown identity to be mobilized as a decolonizing framework. In particular, Brownness is examined in conversation with the frameworks for solidarity and anti-colonial resistance as posited in the works of Lawrence and Dua (2005), Thobani (2007), Tuck and Yang (2012), Gaztambide-Fernández (2012), and Smith (2012). As this thesis looks at how identity can be used to challenge the social, economic, cultural, and political ways in which colonial power is sustained, the use of anti-racism and decolonization theories furthers the examination of Brownness as subversive to white supremacy and settler colonialism.

Methodology

Brown Canada Case Study

In order to answer the central research questions of this thesis, I use a case study of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians community project, the Brown Canada project. The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) is an umbrella of agencies, groups and individuals that supports and aims to empower members of the South Asian community in Canada (CASSA, 2011). Most of its constituent agencies and groups are located in Ontario, the majority of which are located in Toronto. In 2012, CASSA began the Brown Canada Project, a two-year community-led project aimed at "documenting, creating, and sharing diverse South

Asian histories in Canada" (Browncanada.ca, 2014). Project coordinators issued a broad call to students, youth, writers, researchers, artists, activists, educators, community organizers and other interested individuals to send in submissions to be posted on the Brown Canada website. The submissions or "stories" could be in image, text, video or combined forms, with no restrictions on the topic of the submission beyond relating to South Asian histories.

In this thesis, I conduct a critical discourse analysis of the video, images, and textual representations of Brownness in the Brown Canada Project. The method allows for the evaluation of the discursive representations of Brown in one of the few (or only) broad, contemporary, public, and community-led iterations of Brown identity, hosted by members of the South Asian community in Canada. The project also provides a significant set of data for analysis into the central research questions and the community's representations of Brownness. The submissions are diverse and encompass a multiplicity of identifiers, identities, ethnicities, nationalities, generations, languages, genders, sexualities, and experiences in arrival to, and within, Canada. This methodology is chosen to ensure the proposed study is aligned with the vision, expectations, and understandings of the broader South Asian community and to aim to speak *with* the community as opposed to speaking *to* or *for* the community (Alcoff, 1991). This methodology foregrounds the lived experiences of the authors/participants (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Dei, 2000). In this way the community can express who/what is considered Brown, allowing for a more thorough analysis of representation, experience, and identity, and the researcher can "write alongside" the community's initiatives (R. Sintos Coloma, personal communication, July 25, 2014). Being a self-identified member of the community, the study engages my personal subject location, experiences, and interpretations. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) states, "the critical issue with insider research is the constant need for reflexivity" (p.137).

Writing alongside the project enables archiving and documentation of a community project by a member of the community. It also allows for some critiques to be offered on political strategies and strategies for representation, as well as engagement and learning to be done by the researcher. While all researchers need to think critically about their methodologies, their data and analysis, and the impact(s) of their research, "insiders have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day-to-day basis for ever more, and so do their families and communities" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p.137). While in many ways I am an "insider", there are ways in which I exist *outside* the community, given my lack of interaction with most of the project's participants[2] and the privileges that afford me the opportunity to conduct this research in the first place (such as my formal education, birthright citizenship, knowledge of English). I therefore must be cognizant of the potential implications of theorizing Brown identity and the approach taken. In looking at what Brown means to the community at-large, I aim to serve one of the broader aims of the study, which is to support community resistance, and to honour as best as possible the narratives and experiences of the participants in the Project.

While the Brown Canada Project is a broader community representation of Brown identity, it has some limitations in terms of participation from members of the community, and therefore who is able to contribute to the Project. Constraints include lack of time, resources, internet, or fear of visibility. However, CASSA does take steps to mitigate some of these constraints. These measures include reaching out to South Asians across the Greater Toronto Area, hosting workshops in various neighbourhoods, engaging a diverse range of participants through partnerships with other community organizations (such as labour unions, senior groups, and youth initiatives), allowing for volunteers to document narratives on behalf of participants, and allowing for anonymous submissions.

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2 Some of the participants in the Brown Canada Project are friends, allies, and colleagues of the researcher.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is premised on a strategy of developing theories from research grounded in qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006, p.6). Straus and Blaser, who first articulated a grounded approach, suggested that qualitative analysis could *generate* theory (Charmaz, 2006, p.6). Given the entry point of writing alongside the community, the Brown Canada Project was analysed using constructivist grounded theory, drawn largely from Charmaz (2006). While Charmaz draws from grounded theorists, including Straus and Blaser, her social constructivist approach is preferred because theories/hypotheses are drawn from the interaction of the researcher, the participants and the data generated. This methodology is used to foreground the lived experiences of the participants, and is more generative in terms of revealing the feelings, perspectives, and themes of the authors in the study's submissions. Charmaz also seeks to bring relativity and subjectivity into grounded theory, and acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher. For her, "subjectivity is inseparable from social existence" (2006, p.13). Rather than taking the discovery of theory or data as a given, she states, "we are part of the world we study, the data we collect, and the analyses we produce" (2006, p.17). In this way, she underscores how positionality of a researcher, including their analytical frames and knowledge about the research topic can influence their observations and conclusions.

In analyzing the significance of Brown identity and drawing conclusions from representations of Brownness in the Brown Canada Project, I performed a constructivist grounded coding of the data. Coding involves categorizing segments of data with a short name that summarizes that piece of data (Charmaz, 2006). Coding also seeks to explain the events, actions, and meanings contained within the data (Charmaz, 2006). In applying grounded theory to the data, the audiovisual, text, and visual submissions were coded by attaching labels to

segments of data, depicting what each segment was about and emphasizing what was happening in the scene when data was given (incident-coding). For example, in text submissions, I created labels for each action or incident described in that particular segment of text. For videos, I created labels for dialogue, for describing the visuals and the background audio effects. For images, I created labels for subject matter, as well as the elements and principles of design, to denote the incidents or ideas being conveyed. The coded statements were used to generate memos that helped define analytic categories and identifying areas for further investigation. Coding was done to look at structure, context, language, underlying facts, author's assumptions, and embedded meanings and intentions of the data. I also took note of author language and special 'in vivo' codes used in the data such as 'fob' or 'desi' (Charmaz, 2006, p.53). The analysis of data was done until no new themes were likely to emerge and gaps were identified for additional data collection in future. Following this initial incident-coding, a secondary round of coding was done to examine themes in the data, and specifically looking at how themes were depicted or grouped together within individual submissions. From here, thematic clusters were identified across the data set. These thematic clusters were analyzed using critical discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis

This thesis adopts a critical discourse analytic approach in order to analyze the representations of Brown identity in the Brown Canada Project. This approach is used to analyze not only meanings contained within the project, but to examine the meanings that inform the representations, and connect them to a broader social context. As Michel Foucault suggests, discourses are "ways of constituting knowledge, together with social practices, forms of

subjectivity and power relations which are inherent in such knowledges and relations between them" (Weedon, 1987, p.108). The purpose of critical discourse analysis is to examine the relationships between discursive practices, events, and texts; broader social and cultural dynamics; and the power structures that shape and are informed by these discourses (Fairclough, 1995, p.132). It allows for insights into how race and power form constraints on the style, structure, or cognitive interpretation in which discourses or representations are produced (Van 1993, p.14).

Discourses are active; they act upon, constrain, influence and enable the ways in which we think, speak, and articulate self-representation. In this thesis, I conduct an examination of how the representations of Brownness in the Brown Canada Project engage with power, agency, and resistance to hegemonic, racist, and colonial ideologies. As Van Dijk (1993b) suggests, the way to approach questions of power and inequity is by focusing on the manner in which discourse reproduces and/or challenges dominance (p.283). For him, discourses can be interpreted as "situated forms of action", or active in their propagation of racism (1993a, p.13). This is a useful methodology for analyzing and understanding the significance of Brown identity, how South Asians experience race and racism, as well as evaluating Brownness as a framework for challenging colonialism and racism. Van Dijk (1993a) is also cognizant of the influence of the Academy in the production and reproduction of elite discourses. In a relevant warning for this thesis and its theorization of a Brown identity, he suggests "if knowledge is power, then knowledge of other people may be an instrument of power over other people" (p.158).

Why Brown, why now?

While there is a long history of challenging racism in the Canadian nation-state by South

Asians, and significant gains have been made in the rights of South Asian communities; the current political moment is a crucial one to theorize Brownness. In a political moment when South Asians form a large demographic in the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2011) and families span over three or four generations, there is a considerable potential to mobilize a strong lobby of political power within, and in resistance to, the colonial state. Brown identity aims to form the basis of a broad framework for engaging in widespread, unified, solidarity and anti-racist resistance. Theorizing Brown identity is not limited to just state-based action and resistance. It also aims to be a framework for individual and community self-affirmation, as a response to colonial standards of whiteness.

The Brown Canada Project takes as a "collective entry-point" the Komagata Maru story of 1914. Project co-ordinators frame this entry point as significant to the history of South Asians because it represents the desire of the Canadian government and settlers to maintain a "white Canada". On this the hundredth anniversary year of the Komagata Maru story, it is timely and relevant to analyze the Brown Canada Project by asking questions of racialization, representation, and resistance of South Asians in Canada.

Overview of Chapters

This thesis examines the possibilities and limitations of theorizing Brown identity as a decolonizing methodology for South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area, and serves as a point of generation for new lines of inquiry into Brown epistemologies, experiences, and relationships. In part III, I put forward a nascent theory of Brown identity based on theories of racial formation, anti-racism and decolonization. I suggest that Brown identity is a broad, essentialist racial identity that can be used to subvert the dominant representations, resist white supremacy, and

form the basis of solidarity and action. In part IV, I introduce the Brown Canada Project. In the chapters that follow, I examine representations of Brownness and the key themes in the project. In part V, I trace the saliency of Brown identity in terms of the spirit injury that results from migration, loss, and lack of belonging. In part VI, I analyze the assertion of pride that comes from political resistance. In part VII, I examine how Brown values and shared experiences of racism are used to foster community and activism, as well as how a Brown framework seeks to create critical spaces for re-imagining South Asian identities, histories and relationships. In part VIII, I offer some concluding remarks on the pedagogic potential for Brown to be applied as an anti-racist and anti-colonial framework, and themes for future analysis.

III. Theorizing Brown Identity

In this chapter, I present a theory of Brownness. I draw from existing literature on race, identity, and representation; dominant discourses about South Asians; and anti-racism and decolonization theories. I also look at examples of sociopolitical movements for racial and indigenous justice that deployed a politicized racial identity to achieve their aims. I suggest that Brown identity must act as a broad, essentialized, racial identity for South Asians, which can be used to subvert dominant representation, and for anti-racist and anti-colonial solidarity and action.

Feeling Brown

In putting forth a theory of Brown identity it is necessary to consider what has led me to theorizing it in the first instance. What are my motivations? What implications and harms does such theorizing bring? In putting forth Brownness, I recognize that "all knowledge has political implications" and that academic discourse is not politically neutral (Dei, 1996a, p.253). As Hanisch (1970) suggested, "the personal is the political" (p.76). In theorizing a Brown identity, it first and foremost speaks to a personal racialized embodiment. This embodiment is salient and consequential given the material, social and intrinsic implications of racial identity, and the spirit injury that results from the emotional harms of racism (Dei, 2006). Taking up Brownness then becomes a political response to the use of colour to oppress; one that is about reclamation, liberation and challenging oppression (Carmichael, 1967). While Brownness is about defining the self, it is also about building community, and engaging in movements for justice and transformative change in society. I approach this discussion of identity, representation, and race from an entry point of wanting to engage in anti-racist praxis. As Dei (1996) notes, the concept

of race is a "fundamental tool for community and academic political organizing for social change (p.255). A key aspect in the pursuit of effective political organizing is "theorizing the personal and the political", which requires interrogation into individual subjectivity, voice, and experience (Dei, 2000, p.35).

The Salience of Race, Racial Identity and Strategic Essentialism

Theorization of a Brown identity is situated in debates about the nature of race and racial identity, and strategies to challenge systemic racism through its engagement of essentialist and/or socially constructed notions of race. In this study, Brown identity is also positioned as a salient identity and framework for anti-racist political mobilization in the Canadian context, with the aim of building solidarity among South Asians and people of colour communities. The salience of race; the relationships between race, identity, and anti-racism; and the possibilities for these factors to be transformed or reconstituted are integral to the theorizing and construction of Brown racial identity.

As a starting point to Brown identity, I assert the importance of speaking and naming race as consequential to identity, community, and resistance. Speaking race is also a requisite entry point to anti-racist practice for the purposes of addressing racism (Dei, 2007, p.55). In putting forth this theory, I aim for an "action-oriented educational strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and interlocking systems of oppression" (Dei, 2000, p.27). Consistent with the values of Dei's anti-racism discursive framework, I put forward a theory of Brown identity that conceptualizes race and racism broadly, seeks to challenge white supremacy and the subordination of racial minorities, and looks to collective experiences to inform resistance to racism and colonialism (Dei, 2000).

As Dei (2000) notes, race must be at the foreground of anti-racism. Scholars such as DuBois (1903) and Boas (1940) have debunked the biological and essentialist notions of race. Alongside communities of colour, they challenged the white supremacist and colonial constructions of difference perpetuated by eugenicists and European colonizers. Consequently, the primary task facing Brown racial theory is to "focus attention on the continuing significance and changing meaning of race" (Omi & Winant, 1993, p.4). This task emerges in a sociopolitical context of so-called post-racial and integrationalist approaches to racial identity that negate the consequences of race and racism on communities of colour, and where racism has become more insidious and systemic.

The work of Omi and Winant (1986; 1993; 1994) is foundational in demonstrating the ongoing material, social, and political consequences of race and racial identity. Through their analysis of historical and contemporary theories and "common-sense" understandings of race, they demonstrate that race is neither an ideological construct – though it can have ideological applications – nor an objective condition. They posit a theory of race premised on processes of racial formation, highlighting the influence of social, economic, and political forces on racial meaning. With categories and terms such as ethnic/ity, religion, im/migrant, foreigner, asylum seeker, refugee, and multicultural/ism (among others) increasingly utilized as euphemisms for race and for perpetuating racism against Brown people, it is important to name and talk about race explicitly. In particular, we must make legible how racism operates in systems such as citizenship, immigration, and nationalism to uphold racial hierarchies. As Omi and Winant (1994) demonstrate, racial identity is inherently politicized given that "race will remain a feature of social reality across the globe" (p.5). Here they speak to how race continues to be salient in social organization and identity formation. Indeed, they suggest that to be "[w]ithout a racial

identity, one is in danger of having no identity" (p.12). Omi and Winant provide a useful methodology to trace the construction and subversion of race in dominant systems and discourses while emphasizing its malleability.

Similarly, López (1995) posits that race and identity are mutually constitutive, stating "race and identity overlap and influence each other; each is both product and producer of the other" (p.8). In this way, race becomes not just "an external definition of group membership but a source of social identity" and contributes greatly to the building of community and personal identity (p.8). He also asserts the political and material significance of race, warning that its denial carries a "high price" and that to cease to speak of race "obfuscates the very real connection between who we are and what we look like (p.20). Theorizing Brown identity does not reify race, but instead speaks to the positionality of South Asians in the white settler Canadian state and aims to connect the processes and realities of racism to settler colonialism.

The power of race has also been historically demonstrated with the active creation and dissemination of knowledge of a "racialized Other" in the service of colonialism (Dei, 1999, p.21). Colonizers have used difference as a site of power and oppression, but "difference is also a site of possibility" wherein people can reflect on and interrogate personal lived experiences to inform collective political action (Dei, 1999, p.20). Dei suggests that the salience of race emerges from recognizing its entry point to political resistance in the aim of racial justice (1999). He presents race as a socio-political construct with material consequences, the full effects of which cannot be understood without examining intersectionality with other forms of oppression, articulating the need for an integrative analysis that considers the impact of histories, class, gender, sexuality, and culture (Dei, 2000). Citing Austin (1970), he notes that approaching race and difference from a theoretical departure of anti-racism is to acknowledge its performativity

(Dei, 1999, p.24). Recognizing the performativity of race allows for one to construct, inform, and subvert racial identity. In articulating critical anti-racism, he therefore provides a methodology for approaching racial identity through an integrated and holistic understanding of individual and community identity and experience, recognizing the role of power and political resistance, and the primacy of race.

In order for race to be mobilized in political movements for racial justice, we must be able to generate "new identities, new collectivities, new (imagined) communities" (Omi & Winant, 1993, p.7). This requires the capacity for re-imagining or reconstituting dominant understandings of race, racial difference and identity. Omi and Winant (1993; 1994), López (1995), and Dei (1996; 1999; 2000) among others suggest that race is a social construct, one whose meanings can be contested or changed over time. Omi and Winant (1986) offer the concept of 'racial formation' for understanding the influence of social, economic, and political forces on race. They suggest that these factors "determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meaning" (1986, p.61). They suggest that a theory of race must apply to contemporary political relationships, an increasingly global context, and across historical time. Similarly, López (1995) demonstrates how racial meaning – or the process of racial formation – is plastic, relational, contested, and changes over time (p.10). He argues that while morphology and ancestry has helped to inform racial meaning, race is constructed along cultural, political, and economic lines, and crosses both class and geographic considerations. Such theorizations are insightful. They recognize that while racism continues to pervade global society, contemporary subjectivities and identities are not constructed in lines of empire, though they serve neocolonial goals of maintaining a colonial dominant and upholding white supremacy. The construction of new racial identities or imagined communities therefore

must consider contemporary social, economic, and political realities, while challenging racial hegemony.

Elsewhere, Hutchinson (2001) uses critiques of "post-colonial racelessness" to assert the continuing significance of race, and to articulate the mobilization of race as a means of political resistance. In his view, racial resistance strengthens race consciousness and an individual's racial identity, leading to a "symbiotic relationship" between racial resistance and identity formation. He affirms that political resistance is the "most positive usage" of race by communities of colour (Hutchinson, 2001, p.1467). In articulating a theory of Brown racial identity, the aim is for a deliberate mobilization to further racial resistance and race consciousness and for this effect to be mutually constitutive, where identity formation also reinforces racial resistance.

Spivak (1998) suggests that mobilizing an essentialist racial identity on a temporary basis can be used to achieve political goals and anti-racist resistance for racial groups. In asking "can the subaltern speak?" she demonstrates that this strategic essentialism can be used to challenge the European elite's construction of the subaltern in India (Spivak, 1998, p.13). Many scholars have taken up Spivak's concept to investigate its implications, and the possibilities and limits of its use in movements for racial justice. This thesis makes use of Spivak's concept of strategic essentialism suggesting that the deliberate mobilization of a Brown identity can be used to achieve the strategic goals of raising race consciousness, and developing sociopolitical movements for racial justice. While I am optimistic about the potential for such an identity to achieve anti-racist aims, I define 'temporary' as until such time needed to achieve racial justice for South Asians and all racialized peoples, or until this theory is discarded in favour of a new and different framework that better achieves these objectives.

Strategic essentialism may draw critics including those who would see this as putting race "on the table". However, Dei (2007) states that "silence around race is far from neutral" and that anti-racist discourse and praxis seeks to address "that which by all means already exists" (p.53). For racialized peoples (and other oppressed groups), the role of race and dominant understandings of race (or gender, sexuality, ability) shape our material, social, and spiritual existence. Use of strategic essentialism serves to raise awareness about and subvert dominant understandings of Brown and Brownness, which permeate individual attitudes and prejudices, as well as systemic racism in social institutions. For those that suggest that it serves to reinforce essentialism broadly, as Spivak warned against, Sayer (1997) provides a useful analysis of the concept. He distinguishes between biological determinism, essentialism, and strategic essentialism, noting that essentialism may not always be "guilty of homogenizing and flattening difference" (p.456). He also argues clearly that while some things have essences, others - such as race - do not, and that the features held up to be essential can be socially constructed (Sayer, 1997, p.455). This serves to counter the critiques of anti-essentialists who affiliate essentialism with oppression and the perpetuation of racism, sexism, and queerphobia, for example, as opposed to movements to combat such oppressions. I agree with Sayer (1997) who contends that asserting sameness need not require the denial of difference, but that in fact asserting commonality in the midst of difference "*presupposes* diversity" (italics in original, p.456). He suggests that there is as much harm in denying difference or asserting commonalities where there are none, as there is in denying significant commonalities or asserting insignificant difference. He contends that racism in fact, "involves both kinds of error" (Sayer, 1997, p.457). From my experience in engaging in anti-racism community work, it is this "harm" that Sayer presents which often undermines the capacity for building coalitions for social justice. Thus the hope for

Brownness as a framework for solidarity among various South Asian communities is to overcome this harm, and assert commonality in the face of racial hegemony. Sayer (1997) and Dei (2007) also challenge anti-essentialist critiques by questioning the motivations behind those critiques. Dei (2007) asks us to question how anti-essentialism can "serve white power and privilege, bringing them into the centre of supposedly critical political pursuits" (p.57). As Sayer (1997) notes, the power of the colonial dominant is also evident in looking at who has the power to define and categorize in ways that can homogenize people. While resistant movements may seek to mobilize an essentialist identity and are always vulnerable to cooptation for racist objectives, the creation or propagation of hegemonic discourses still relies on the power of the colonial dominant to perpetuate such discourses for a white supremacist purpose.

Gosine (2002) also articulates some of the implications and motivations for the mobilization of essentialist identity by minority actors. Noting that identity has "everything to do with how people acquire a sense of belonging" he claims that racialized communities can strive for a coherent racial identity in the face of a racist society and in response to a dominant culture that represents them in a homogeneous and negative Other form (Gosine, 2002, p.81). Brown identity is the assertion of a "defensively situated, communal identit[y] in response to societal representation", which seeks to develop collective oppositional conscious and self-esteem for South Asian communities (Gosine, 2002, p.82).

While essentialist identities have the potential for achieving anti-racist goals (some examples are discussed below), the risk of the co-optation of essentialist identities, including those articulated by marginalized communities cannot be understated. For example, Mar (2010) presents an historical analysis of the role of Chinese "brokers" who negotiated the entry of Chinese immigrants to Canada and the United States during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

In her analysis, Mar demonstrates the deliberate construction and mobilization of "the model minority", an essentialist identity used to negotiate entry for Chinese immigrants in a time of overt exclusion. This identity was employed by and for Chinese immigrant communities to challenge their racist exclusion and oppression. The deliberate use of this essentialist identity served its intended purpose of negotiating belonging and rights, such as access to immigration and jobs in the settler state for Chinese immigrant communities. However, in response, there was a deliberate co-optation of this essentialist identity by the colonial dominant to oppress other racialized communities. Dominant settler narratives co-opted the model minority discourse about Chinese immigrants so as to deny Black and Brown communities that sought rights within the Canadian nation-state (Thobani, 2007). Today, the model minority remains a contested and marginalizing racial stereotype. In this way, racial representations can have foreseen and unforeseen implications, including the reinforcement and perpetuation of essentialism broadly, and oppression of other racialized groups, which can have implications for solidarity. Some of the various differential and harmful impacts of essentialism by dominant groups on marginalized communities have been demonstrated by Razack (1995), who demonstrates the oppression of Asian students with respect to the essentialist model minority stereotype; Zine (2007) who demonstrates how an externally imposed essentialist Muslim identity can have differentially harmful impacts on Muslim women; and Paradies (2006) who demonstrates how rigid enforcement of an essentialist indigenous identity continues to be used in the colonization project on Turtle Island.

As Dei notes, "[i]dentity is not the end of politics; rather, it is the beginning" (1996, p.261). He suggests that a politics of identity can be used to set out the terms and grounds of

political struggle. In seeking to foster inclusion, Brown identity must overcome a significant challenge facing a politics of representation:

> "...to conceive of how a politics can be constructed which works with and through difference, which is able to build those forms of solidarity and identification which make common struggles and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and identities, and which can effectively draw the political boundary lines without which political contestation is impossible, without fixing those boundaries for eternity." (Hall, 1992, p.445).

Hall speaks to the difficulty of capturing a heterogeneity of experiences and subjectivities under one banner of identity, and how the construction of boundaries for identity are both necessary and yet restrictive. The enforcement of rigid boundaries for example, can hinder self-identification and belonging by propping up notions of authenticity. Identity politics, as a means of marginalized communities seeking rights on the basis of that marginalized identity, are also easily co-opted and undermined by settler narratives. Consider how self-identification and self-determination for Black communities gets portrayed as "black supremacy" or "racism in reverse" (Carmichael, 1967, p.47). Identity and coalition-based politics also face broad challenges in mobilizing communities to action and resistance because they must also resist a global political context of capitalism, imperialism, and in Canada, multiculturalism. These systems incentivize individualism over collectivism, create oppressive socio-economic and political conditions that undermine potential for collective action and community, or render a false sense of inclusion. Thus, while the proposed framework of Brown identity offers possibilities for fostering community for the purposes of shared goals, there are also challenges to its realization.

In theorizing Brown identity, I acknowledge and accept the risks outlined above. While the potential for co-optation and other harms need to be considered and mitigated in political organizing, it is true also that these risks - essentialism, racism, co-optation - already exist. Racism and colonialism are carried out through essentialist discourses of race and inferiority with white standards of excellence, beauty, and rationality. As we have seen with movements described below, the potential for self and community affirmation, and challenging of systems of oppression is significant. Given the effects of racism and colonialism, this potential is worth reaching for.

Mobilizing a Politicized Identity: Lessons Learned from Resistance

In seeking to develop Brown identity as a broad, essentialist identity for anti-racist resistance and political mobilization, I now look to a few examples of sociopolitical movements that have successfully achieved anti-racist and anti-colonial objectives through the deliberate mobilization of an essentialized racial identity. The Black Power (See Fanon, 1961; Carmichael, 1967; Davis, 1974; Shakur, 1987), Chicana/o (See Acuña, 1972; Garcia, 1995; López, 2001; Gutiérrez, 2010), Tamil (See Cheran, 2003; Wayland, 2004) and indigenous (See Escárcega, 2010; Graveline, 2013) movements in the United States and Canada and globally, have facilitated individual and community self-affirmation, achievement of political aims, and resistance to the dominant settler nation-state. They serve as powerful and insightful case studies for a theory of Brown identity and mass mobilization for anti-racist resistance. I introduce these movements briefly below, but they require more space and detail to better articulate and represent the context, histories, mobilizations, manifestations, organizations, and communities

involved in supporting them, and to elaborate on the complexity of organizing required to achieve their aims and successes.

The Black Power movement prominent in the 1960s and 1970s represented a struggle of Africans against white imperial society. Though largely based in the United States, it was tied to socioeconomic and political conditions around the world. The movement explicitly rejected whiteness, articulating a non-white identity as a basis for community solidarity and mobilization, and the capacity for self-identification and self-determination (Carmichael, 1967). Elements of the movement had a range of political and/or social aims, which included an assertion of proud Black identity, affirmation of Black values, creation of social institutions, and centreing the experience of African peoples in the United States. While different community organizations and components of the movement engaged in a diversity of tactics and supported varying outcomes (autonomy and/or integration), the movement as a whole challenged systemic anti-Black racism and racial oppression in social, economic, and political spheres. While the movement had the purpose of "attaining certain goals in the body politic", it "[did] not mean that black people should strive for the same kind of rewards (i.e., end results) obtained by the white society" (Carmichael, 1967, p.47). In this way, the Black Power aimed to subvert colonial white society. It also countered definitions of 'black' and 'blackness', weapons used by the oppressor, with "colour as a weapon of liberation" (Carmichael, 1967). Race formed the basis of the struggle, and racial identity became the primary means of self-conception and group empowerment.

Chicanismo or the Chicano Movement is driven by a nationalistic political ethos that aims to resist white supremacy in the American context. The remaking of Mexican group identity formed the basis of political mobilization (López, 2001). As a whole, the movement aimed for "the acquisition of political power with which to change power relations between

Chicana/os and the Euro-Americans" (Gutiérrez, 2010). While there was a strong uprising in Chicana/o resistance in the 1970s, in many ways the movement dates back to the U.S.-Mexican war in the 19th century (and continues today). In the 1970s, the resistance was characterized by the engagement of many sectors of society in asserting rights for Chicana/os, including land rights, workers' rights, access to education and the proliferation of Chicana/o histories, and full voting and political rights. It responded to state racism and repression with activists resisting oppression and exclusion in schools, in labour, by the government, and by the police. Chicana/o theory, and the work of Chicana/o activists, through the influence of academic, art, and political spheres bolstered this movement. Chicana/o identity affirms Mexican and indigenous identities and histories, and rejects the integration of Mexicans into white racial identity.

The two movements share commonalities in their approaches to building resistance to racist systems and structures. In many ways, the tactics and strategies used by organizers of the Black Power movement later served as lessons for the Chicano movement. Both movements succeeded in constructing and mobilizing a broad, politicized racial identity that subverts dominant views, representations, and discourses; resists white supremacy; and forms the basis of group solidarity and action. These characteristics are consistent with the principles of anti-racism and literature on racial identity, and are instructive for the possibilities of a strategic mobilization of Brown identity as a means of political resistance for South Asians.

Indigenous communities across Turtle Island (and around the world) have engaged in centuries of resistance in the face of racism and colonialism. While I enumerate specific recent examples of the use of strategic essentialism in indigenous communities in this thesis, I do not want to suggest that resistance has only occurred recently. Nor do I wish to contribute to the reduction of long histories of resistance into a few short years. In looking at the specific sites of

organizing done by indigenous activists, as well as Tamil diaspora activists, I seek to learn from movements that act transnationally and locally in the context of the Greater Toronto Area. Below, I examine the organizing by indigenous activists ahead of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, and Idle No More across Turtle Island in 2013. I also examine the mobilization of a Tamil diasporic identity. Each provides insights into the potential for a Brown framework to act transnationally and locally in the context of Greater Toronto Area.

Through the mobilization of a strategic essentialist indigenous identity, indigenous activists were able to "legitimize claims for social justice and rights" for indigenous peoples at the site of the United Nations (Escárcega, 2010). Mobilizing dominant discourses of indigeneity such as the need for indigeneity to be 'recovered' or 'protected' may be understood in some ways as reproducing colonial discourses. However, the short-term mobilization of such discourses represents a process for decolonization "in which Indigenous Peoples raise consciousness of themselves as 'peoples' with rights and the need to transform the system and structures that deny them peoplehood" (Escárcega, 2010, p.4). Global indigenous activists essentialized indigenous identity as being premised on the right to self-definition and determination, a relationship with the land, and a common history of oppression; simultaneously applying and challenging the dominant colonial images and discourses surrounding indigenous peoples. This mobilization of an essentialist indigenous identity subverted the idea that recognition of indigenous rights could only occur as individual rights within the framework of the state, with recognition of indigenous peoples as "right-bearing collectivities" within the framework of the United Nations (Escárcega, 2010, p.3). It is also consistent with indigenous frameworks for decolonization that emphasize shared aspects of indigeneity, a relationship to

land, and a shared history of oppression to be articulated without homogenizing all of the issues facing individual nations. More than combatting marginalization, strategic essentialism in this case represents a methodology for survival. It also represents, as Spivak (1988) suggested, a specific, temporary use of essentialist identity; one used to further equity and resistance for members of indigenous communities around the world. While Brown is put forward as an essentialist identity largely in the context of the Greater Toronto Area, it could lend itself to being a useful framework for South Asians across Canada, Britain, Australia, and the United States – white settler nations with large South Asian populations.

Similar to the movement for United Nations' recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, the Idle No More movement uses a specific moment and political issue to engage members of First Nations communities across Turtle Island broadly in anti-colonial resistance (Graveline, 2013). Movement organizers used the political moment around government Bill C-45, an omnibus legislation that would infringe on environmental protections, Aboriginal and Treaty rights, to protest "ongoing systemic modern colonialism" and broadly the nation-to-nation relationship that exists between the Canadian federal government and First Nations' people (Graveline, 2013). The movement aims to "revitalize Indigenous peoples through awareness and empowerment" in broad resistance to settler colonialism through education, though resistance to colonialism has been occurring "since the first tall ships landed in Nova Scotia" (Graveline, 2013). The movement catalyzed a strong sense of pride in indigenous communities and articulated a movement that was "of the people for the people" (Idle No More, 2012). One of the striking elements of the movement has been the broad participation of indigenous youth, engaging in the movement and doing creative actions, as well as the strong unification from nations across Turtle Island under a broad indigenous framework. It is instructive in creating

intergenerational resistance movements in a contemporary political setting, demonstrating the role that stakeholdership plays in facilitating participation.

Former Sri Lankan President, J.R. Jayewardene describes the strength of the Tamil diaspora movement broadly poignantly as "the world's most powerful minority" (Wayland, 2004, p.415). He captures well the dynamic of power and resistance formulated by Tamils around the world in support of the cause of Tamil Eelam - an autonomous state for Tamils, free from state-led repression and violence (including from Jayewardene's government). In some ways, the Tamil movement aims to subvert the colonial dominant given its resistance to systems of governance set up by the British. These systems favoured the Sinhalese under colonial rule and established a permanent divide in governance and representation for Sinhalese and Tamils, which has resulted in multiple civil wars since independence. It also represents another example of how an essentialist identity – Tamil identity – has been used strategically for political aims. In the diaspora, Tamil identity is a proud signifier and its use is a powerful strategy to politically mobilize the Tamil community in the Greater Toronto Area and Canada. Specifically, Tamil identity has been used to build a strong, cohesive, engaged, political base for electoral politics and political lobbying (Cheran, 2003, p.10). This strategy has succeeded in bringing broad attention to civil war in Sri Lanka, and the war crimes of the Sri Lankan government. In addition, a strong sense of identity, community, and shared political resistance has kept diasporic Tamils engaged in "alternative models of development" given the state's lack of support for education, healthcare, and other supports for Tamils in Sri Lanka (Cheran, 2003, p.11). It has also served as a means of developing political consciousness in Tamil youth. Brown identity shares some the objectives of Tamil identity in politically mobilizing South Asians locally in Toronto, such as for the development of a broad base of lobbying and electoral power within the state as a means, not

ends, to achieving racial justice. It also aims to engage youth through a strong sense of identity and community toward political action.

These three examples make use of a precise political issue and political moment in which to mobilize a strategic essentialist identity. However, Brown identity as theorized does not rely on a specific political moment around which to centre its mobilization. Similar to other identity-based sociopolitical movements, it aims for a broad-based challenge to the representation of South Asians, affirmation of self and community, and resistance to racism and colonialism.

Brown as an Essentialist Identity and Framework for Resistance

"The meaning of race is defined and contested throughout society, in both collective actions and personal practice. In the process, racial categories themselves are formed, transformed, destroyed, and reformed." (Omi & Winant, 1994, p.61)

A strategically essentialized Brown identity is broad, racial, and political. It is premised on the salience of race, and is formulated on a racialized identity that bridges across a range of ethnicities, nationalities, languages, and religions; and focuses on South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area with a shared historical experience in Canada. Brown is transnational; it reflects forced migration, less forced migration, and more privileged travel by those from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka/Tamil Eelam, Afghanistan, Iran, and the Philippines. It represents those born in Canada, South Asia, in the Caribbean, or in Africa. It reflects connections to, and estrangement from, "back home". Brown captures the distinct migratory, marginalized, and shared community experiences of exclusion and lack of belonging in a racist context structured by social, economic, and political forces. It resists dominant racist discourses that sustain myths

about asylum, "illegal" immigration, citizenship, terrorism and the model minority; myths that South Asians are often complicit in perpetuating, thereby contributing to ongoing systemic racism and divide within a white supremacist society. It holds that values of anti-racism, solidarity, and justice; and shared experiences of racism can serve as the basis for fostering community. Brown is an entry point for similarly raced and racialized peoples to come to speak through our racialized embodiment. It is rooted in the racialized embodiment of brown skin – or a feeling of brown – and aims to affirm shared pride in race across cultural, socioeconomic, and geographical lines by unsettling boundaries of race, ethnicity, class, citizenship, religion, and language. It bridges across diversity along lines of religion, gender, and sexuality. It challenges dominant representations by recognizing and affirming the beauty, strength, and value of Brownness. It is more than a simple and reductive interpretation of brown. Brown is fluid, relational, and complex. The boundaries are defined through self-definition by those that reject whiteness and affirm their Brownness. This identity must be taken up by Brown people with differing socioeconomic and political positionality as part of anti-racist resistance. Brown is proud, Brown is resistant. Brown challenges white supremacy, orientalism and colonization; in short, it challenges the white nation with a Brown one.

Key Principles of a Brown Framework

1. Brown identity and Brownness must act as a salient racial identity for South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area.

2. Brown identity and Brownness must subvert dominant discourses and representations of South Asians.

3. Brown identity and Brownness must engage in race consciousness, solidarity actions, and community building for the purpose of shared anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance.

Challenging Dominant Discourses and National Myths

The power to self-define for marginalized peoples is a form of resistance (Dei, 2007, p.57). As demonstrated in the pages that follow (as well as in Razack, 1998; Mackey, 1999; Mahtani, 2002; Handa, 2003; Thobani, 2007), being Canadian is about being white, and South Asians, regardless of whether they are new arrivants or born in Canada, struggle with negotiating identity, culture, or belonging – or race – in the settler nation state. Affirming Brown racial identity is about fostering identity and belonging, and resisting dominant representations of South Asians. A theory of Brown identity aims to challenge the use of a multicultural approach, which equates race with ethnicity and culture; placing racialized groups outside of the white settler Canadian nation (Gosine, 2002, p.89).

As demonstrated by Chicana/o, Black, Tamil, and indigenous communities, and articulated in Dei's anti-racism discursive framework, one of the key tasks facing Brown identity is the subversion of dominant discourses and representations of South Asians in Canada, and the challenging of white supremacy. In order to do this, Brown identity must confront the constructions of South Asians as the racialized Other, as achieved by colonial, orientalist, and white supremacist discourses. It must also confront the complicity of South Asians in propping up Canadian nationalism, premised on narratives of multiculturalism, benevolence, and opportunity; as well as the systems of citizenship, immigration, labour, and education that uphold them. In challenging the representation of South Asians in these narratives, Brown identity can challenge the maintenance of a white settler nation and subjugation of South Asian communities.

The rise of multiculturalism practices in the discourses of national identity in Canada has led many scholars to evaluate the impact of multiculturalism on identity construction for new arrivants, and first- and second-generation racialized youth. Mahtani's (2002) work on the "hyphen nation" and hybridity of identity is foundational in this regard. She highlights the burden of hyphenation or Othering on the identities and lived experiences of mixed-race women, which informs a better understanding of forces shaping identity construction in racialized youth in Canada. Building on Mahtani's work, Handa (2003) demonstrates how identity construction in South Asian youth is shaped by the dichotomy of cultural preservation (being 'too Indian'), and the exclusionary norms of Canadian nationhood (being 'too Canadian'). This reflects the material realities of racialized communities negotiating identity and positionality within a state that espouses a horizon of tolerance, welcome, and respect for diversity; and creates barriers to such a horizon so that immigrants have to *become* Canadian. The internalizing of white norms that inform the claiming of "Canadian" as an empowering signifier, and the accompanying investments that wanting to be Canadian contribute to the context of the white settler nation state must be interrogated.

A Brown framework must reveal the role that Canada's "official policy" of multiculturalism plays in reproducing Canada as a white nation. It must challenge dominant discourses of South Asians as immigrants, labourers, and the racialized Others who exist outside of the nation. This involves tracing historical policies of exclusion and the denial of rights to, and persecution of, immigrants (including Japanese, Eastern European, Jewish, African communities and others), in advance of the period of the 1960s-1980s. It requires deconstruction of the 1960s-1980s as a new era of tolerance and acceptance, and as representing a closing of the door to Canada's racist past. It requires seeing multiculturalism as it was intended: to affirm

recognition of French presence in Canada, addressing separatist sentiments in Quebec, and to continue the subjugation of indigenous communities (Mackey, 1999; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Though this policy move would later lend itself to a process of espousing values of tolerance, diversity, and openness to all immigrants (including racialized communities), it continued the project of maintaining Canada as a white settler nation. As Thobani (2007) notes, "multiculturalism facilitated a more fashionable and politically acceptable form of white supremacy, which had greater currency within a neocolonial, neoliberal global order", highlighting how the forces of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism shape the racialization of South Asians (p.148). Immigrants from Asia are welcome when Canada needs labourers, but easily slide into becoming the yellow and brown perils – or the illegal refugees, terrorists, and perpetual foreigners - when white racial anxiety creeps in. Berger (1996), Razack (1998), Mackey (1999), Bannerji (2000), Dua (2007) and Jiwani (2011) also demonstrate that multiculturalism upheld ideas of a core white Canadian identity through its celebration of the diversity and culture of racialized immigrants, now welcome to arrive and settle in Canada. As Razack (1998) suggests, cultural difference is the new racism, where "minorities are invited to keep their culture, but enjoy no greater access to power and resources" (p.61).

Tracing the representation and creation of South Asian subjects in the context of Canada is incomplete without examining the "enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (Said, 1978, p.3). Analysing Orientalist discourses allows us to see how Europe was constructed against its "Other", and how the West was constructed in relation to the East as a means of domination.

It also allows us to see how contemporary constructions of Brown bodies as raced, gendered, exoticized bodies of labour are cloaked in colonial and imperial (or orientalist) images:

> "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (Said, 1978, p.1).

These images grew from the Western gaze on India, and specifically the British and French who "saw" and "felt" India and Africa "with a combination of familiarity and distance, but never with a sense of [its] separate sovereignty" (Said, 1993, xxi). This is represented in the case of the Komagata Maru, where immigrants from India thought they ought to be welcomed into Canada as members of the British Empire. However, as Canada's denial off the shores of Vancouver and the British Raj's use of force off the shores of Calcutta demonstrate, Indians were always subjects, not equals. These images continue to shape the racial imaginary in Canada and must be subverted by naming the images, discourses, and systems that continue to uphold white supremacy. Brown thus challenges dominant discourses of multiculturalism/culture, ethnicity, and immigrant that form proxies for race, and engages in a broad analysis of race and racism. In this way, Brown aims to disallow dominant national subjects from recuperating innocence in the deeply racist nation-building project (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Brown in Conversation

Brown identity and Brownness is posited as a new framework for conceptualizing, analyzing and understanding the racialization and marginalization of South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area, and serves as a point of generation for new lines of inquiry into Brown

epistemologies. Brown identity as theorized in this study suggests a relationship between identity, racialization, representation and decolonization. South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area, and elsewhere across Ontario (and to a limited extent across Canada) have demonstrated affiliation with the identifier 'Brown'. However, other communities, such as Latina/o and/or indigenous communities, also use the descriptor/identity 'Brown' in other contexts. The claiming of Brown by Chicana/o and Latina/o communities has been theorized in a wealth of literature. What is the relationship across these two theorizations/communities? I recognize that there is salience of Brownness and Brown identity for South Asian, Latina/o, and indigenous communities and also that these communities have distinct histories and experiences of racism, racialization and colonialism. Therefore it is difficult to delineate the exact ways these identities/frameworks will relate to each other. However, the terms of engagement, "whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively" (Bhabha, 1994, p.3). The potential for examining a relationship across these movements, or a broadening of Brownness as theorized here, is possible if the broader communities see shared objectives and common ground for doing so.

In theorizing Brownness here, I aim for a race consciousness project for South Asians, with the explicit purposes of motivating members of the community towards anti-racist and anti-colonial solidarity with indigenous communities and non-indigenous communities of colour. Therefore, South Asians can support the self-identification and affirmation of Brown identity for Latina/o communities. We can also engage in indigenous solidarity efforts and reject the perpetuation of structures that impede the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples. Solidarity and resistance can also be demonstrated in a Brown framework by supporting the objectives of Black nationalism and rejecting anti-Black racism through a recognition of the

ways in which "brown folks are used as a weapon in war against Black America" (Prashad, 2000).

However, while Brownness is asserted as non-hierarchical difference, it also benefits from a perceived proximity to whiteness. Through a mobilization of Brownness, Brown bodies can share in and be understood as seeking racial privilege as compared to Black and indigenous bodies. Brownness can also create a sense of insularity, which may result in a politics of isolationism - a potential outcome that runs counter to the desired solidarity objectives of the framework. The proximity between whiteness and Brownness then could be used to further racist exclusion and oppression of Black and indigenous communities, making Brownness complicit in perpetuating a white settler project. This complicity must be acknowledged and troubled, and perhaps may even form the basis of discarding Brown as a framework.

As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) suggests, conducting insider research requires one to be reflexive. An insider must also contend with the consequences of their own research. From an insider perspective in theorizing Brown identity, I am prepared to live with the consequences of such theorizing. However, it is harder to know what the consequences of such theorizing will be for other communities of colour, and *I will never experience them*. Given this privilege, and the possible limitations, should such a framework be applied? What does it mean to theorize Brownness from this positionality? In some ways I hesitate to put forth this theory for fear it will be co-opted by the dominant for the purpose of perpetuating anti-Black and anti-indigenous racisms. I am also cautioned in mobilizing an identity-based framework used by other marginalized communities because "for some of us, identity is all we have" (G. Dei, personal communication, April 8, 2013).

One of the motivations for theorizing Brown as a framework is solidarity with Black and indigenous communities in particular, recognizing the specific and violent nature of racial violence these communities experience. As Prashad (2000) notes, this racism differs from the experiences of South Asian communities that are permitted some upward social mobility so as to justify white supremacist rationales that perpetuate anti-Black and anti-indigenous racisms. For those of us with relative racial (also class, geographical) privilege, this privilege and positionality must be used for anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance. We also need to respond to the voices/calls of Black and indigenous communities as to what forms our solidarity can take.

If deployed, a Brown framework must centre the politics and relationships across indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour. It must seek to destabilize notions of racism as a black-white duality, challenge state zero-sum state policies that disrupt solidarity across communities, and broadly subvert the white supremacist logics that underpin our society. In order to achieve its intended aims, a Brown framework must centre an anti-colonial analysis of the colonial dominant's power, such that challenging this power and forging solidarities and sodalities across indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour may be possible.

Brown versus South Asian

In putting forth 'Brown' as a framework, I suggest it is more salient for the current social and political moment than 'South Asian'. While South Asian is a common-sense identifier and I too use it throughout this thesis, it does not reflect for me the same political aspirations and anti-racist and anti-colonial objectives as does Brown. I suggest that Brown is increasingly becoming a sociocultural identifier in the Greater Toronto Area, and is a more salient identity framework for such resistance. As Sundar (2008) demonstrates, strategic performance of brownness is used

by South Asian youth to negotiate belonging in Ontario, who choose to "brown it up" or "bring down the brown" among family or in the home, among friends and in schools. Sundar defines brownness as "emphasizing South Asian characteristics and behaviours" (p.265). She also suggests that this strategic deployment of brownness or identity capital is used as a means of responding to oppression on an individual level. The study also shows that deployment of brownness occurs at times to seek advantage over other racialized bodies. In articulating Brown as a framework in this thesis, I suggest that this individual salience and negotiating of Brown identity can be extended to the systemic level, but that Brown needs to be a framework for solidarity with other racialized communities. The youth in Sundar's study seem to emphasize their Brown identity or assimilate to what they understand to be a Canadian identity for personal gain and to evade discrimination in some instances. Brownness as articulated in this thesis suggests a deployment of Brown identity in the face of assimilation and the zero-sum politics mobilized by the colonial dominant to perpetuate divisions amongst racialized communities. Nonetheless, Sundar's study highlights the potential for complicity in perpetuating racist exclusion of other racialized communities. In considering the extension of a broader framework of Brownness, there must be consideration for how Brown has differential impacts and interpretations across Canada. In the context of Vancouver and Surrey in British Columbia, Frost (2010) and Sumartojo (2012) highlight that Brown acts as both a claimed identity and externally assigned signifier. As expressed in dominant discourses about South Asians in this region, Brown represents criminality and violence, and the construction of Punjabi men as so-called "Surrey Jacks", a masculine caricature of stereotyped Punjabi culture. As strategically mobilized by South Asian men in British Columbia, Brown is positioned as oppositional to white, and in part oppositional to Canadian; and constitutes "doing male in a way that challenges white

hegemonic masculinity" (Frost, 2010, p.213). Thus, Brown "shapeshifts" in Canada, acting as a strategic discourse that acts in different ways in different moments (Burman, 2010, p.201).

The deliberate use of South Asian as an identifier by activists in Toronto in the mid-1970s initiated "a new politics of recognition and representation" (Ashutosh, 2008, p.133). Activists and community members came together to put forward this identifier as a category for identification for the purposes of employment equity and representation in the Canadian census. This move towards South Asian was also meant to be a cultural framework, legitimizing the place of South Asians in Canada as a diaspora. Activists and community members defined South Asian as an "unbordered world of commonalities", looking at the pre-colonial boundaries of the South Asian civilization (Ashutosh, 2008, p. 139). As such, the category was "reappropriated" by political activism (Ashutosh, 2008, p.143). They also felt South Asian resisted dominant discourses *within* South Asian communities, as assertion of South Asian included advocating for marginalized voices of queer or hijra community members. The political mobilization in favour of the category of South Asian was successful: the identifier of South Asian was added to the census in 1996, and represented a significant effort from the community to move beyond predecessor labels such as "hindoo" and "east indian" (Ashutosh, 2008). This represents a significant victory in the battle for self-representation.

Bijlani (2005) similarly suggests that the formulation of a legal identity of South Asian in the United States (distinct from Asian American, Asian Pacific Islander, East Asian, and Other Asian) will result in the proactive engagement of South Asians in social movements for racial justice. He also suggests that South Asian reflects the distinct experiences of racism and racial formation that construct discourses of the perpetual foreigner, model minority, and terrorist; and historical exclusion from entry and citizenship in the United States. While legal and state

frameworks can be important to advocate for rights, and historically communities of colour have made gains in racial justice in this manner, these rights exist within the framework of a white, settler nation. To an extent, I agree with Ghosh (2013) when she states that South Asian sustains a postcolonial project. For me, South Asian is a depoliticizing euphemism for race, used largely to describe immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as privileged immigrants welcome within discourses of multiculturalism. While I disagree with Ghosh that the use of "South Asian" constructs a discourse of an imagined South Asian race that is internalized by immigrants, I agree that South Asian as a signifier is not salient and politicized in a manner that lends itself to anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance. Brown, on the other hand, engages in identity formulation, community, and state exclusions in a way that "captures structures and relationships embedded in power" (Fernandes, 2013, p.11). For me, Brown acts to create a sense of belonging and politics of representation that challenges white racial hegemony in ways that South Asian cannot. While I respect the etymology and development of South Asian as a framework for resisting the state, and South Asian may be a salient identifier for some to engage in political resistance, it does not speak to me. I respect that in the same manner, other scholars, activists, and community members may find Brown to be a limited framework.

As marginalized peoples, we tend to be at a deficit of resources when it comes to resisting white supremacy and colonial dominance as is required to sustain these systems. As such, I respect the multiplicity of tactics, frameworks, and approaches and the agency of fellow members of the community to engage in any and all efforts to resist these systems. However, I believe the current political moment requires a new methodology of solidarities and sodalities. What can Brown do? In a deepening era of Islamophobia following 9/11 where South Asians constructed as the exotic Other or model minority are increasingly constructed as terror and

threat, Brown is deployed as "alterity to Euro-Americanness" (Semati, 2010). The perpetration of state violence against Black and indigenous communities in Canada and the United States continues, and the borders of empire are seemingly being retraced. As racialized peoples, we need to resist and take action – together. Brown as an identity names the racism, imperialism and colonialism that underpin contemporary discourses and violence. In claiming Brown identity, we embrace a framework of broad-based resistance to white supremacy and colonialism. Most of all, we embrace shared struggle through a practice of solidarity.

Building a Framework for Shared Resistance

A commitment to shared resistance against racism and colonialism is a foundational component and key objective of Brown as a framework. As such, a critical component of Brown representation is its resistance to the colonial dominant, and its conceptualization of the relationship of the colonial dominant with indigenous communities and non-indigenous communities of colour. I suggest that Brown solidarity must include a commitment to decolonization, establishing of common ground with other marginalized communities, and solidarity actions.

A commitment to decolonization necessitates the deconstruction of settler colonialism or "dismantl[ing] the system" (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010, p.25). This includes deconstructing, unlearning and resisting investments in nationalism, immigration and citizenship in Canada, which are "based in the institution of white supremacy" and "originated in the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples" (Thobani, 2007, p. 74). Ongoing investment in immigration and the institution of citizenship continues the imperial goal of developing colonies in the interest of European powers and white settler societies (Thobani, 2007, p.81). Thobani (2007)

demonstrates that the ideal national - or exalted subject - in the settler colonial state is based on the imported Eurocentric value of white supremacy. She suggests a trichotomy of the 'ideal national', non-indigenous people of colour framed as the 'non-preferred race' subjects, and indigenous peoples who are the 'Aboriginal' subjects. In deconstructing Canadian policies of immigration, citizenship and nationalism, she demonstrates how they are simultaneously used to marginalize the non-preferred race subjects, and how they make non-indigenous people of colour complicit in colonization of indigenous communities and lands. Similarly, Lawrence and Dua (2005) suggest that policies of multiculturalism and immigration put arrivants into colonial relationships with indigenous peoples. While recognizing that there are differing conditions of arrival, they assert that non-indigenous people of colour are settlers:

"Broad differences exist between those brought as slaves, currently work as migrant labourers, are refugees without legal documentation, or émigrés who have obtained citizenship. Yet people of colour live on land that is appropriated and contested, where Aboriginal peoples are denied nationhood and access to their own lands" (p.134).

Thobani's trichotomy is useful for framing the positionality of indigenous communities and non-indigenous people of colour communities with respect to the ideal national in the national project of maintaining Canada as a "white man's country". While Lawrence and Dua delineate differences in colonial experience on Turtle Island for indigenous communities and non-indigenous people of colour; framing those who are made to come to Canada due to global systems of colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism as *settlers* is harmful. It seemingly conceptualizes settlerhood as being solely about residence, rather than the systems of oppression that forcefully displace and encourage migration of peoples globally. It serves to divert attention

away from who has the power to *create* and *enforce* these conditions and systems. Thus, it also detracts from building solidarity movements that focus on resisting and countering these systems of power. In forging a path to decolonization, we must forge a methodology for solidarity among communities with distinct experiences under colonial rule. Lawrence and Amadahy (2009) suggest that historical and contemporary experiences of settler colonialism can form the basis of solidarity and relationship-building between indigenous communities and non-indigenous communities of colour. However, this solidarity can only be forged with recognition of the power relations between the colonial dominant and the Othered, a power dynamic that is diffused by a discourse of pluralisms perpetuated in Lawrence and Amadahy's analysis.

Phung (2011) and Sehdev (2011) complicate the notion of the term settler using 'settler of colour'. They suggest that use of the term recognizes how white supremacy in the Canadian settler colonial state disempowers non-indigenous communities of colour, but simultaneously acknowledges how arrivants contribute to ongoing dispossession of indigenous communities and land through investments in assimilation and citizenship. Phung (2011) suggests that unpacking the difference between 'white settlers' and 'settlers of colour' might contribute to greater solidarity. While Phung highlights that concepts can be used to "recalibrate the methodologies and epistemologies that anti-racist and anti-colonial academics and activists use" and to shape broader community discourse, she fails to provide an adequate entry point that can garner the participation and investment of non-indigenous communities of colour. Her approach seems to be more focused on supporting indigenous activism against the settler state, rather than creating a framework that engages both indigenous and non-indigenous communities to challenge the logics of white supremacy and the settler state together. Further, it dilutes the role of the colonial dominant in settler colonialism. Speaking as an arrivant, Sehdev (2011) suggests that treaty can

act as an entry point for forging solidarity between indigenous and non-indigenous communities, given that "our belonging on this land is made possible by treaty" (p.265). She therefore suggests that the Europeans represent arrivants in the treaty relationship with indigenous communities. In lieu of suggesting that arrivants ought to *denounce* this representation and seek alliances with indigenous communities, she suggests that as a result of this representation it is "incumbent on us to reconsider our strategies for social justice with treaty in mind" and to be cognizant of our complicities in ongoing disregard for indigenous sovereignty (Sehdev, 2011, p.265). This reads as a methodology of guilt, rather than a methodology for action and solidarity. Taken together, Phung (2011), Sehdev (2011), and Lawrence and Amadahy (2009) demonstrate the thorn created by colonial powers that undermines the possibility for solidarity between indigenous and non-indigenous people of colour. I agree that recognition of positionality of arrivants in relation to indigenous peoples is crucial to developing solidarity, and arrivants need to consider how investments in nationalism, immigration, and citizenship preempt indigenous sovereignty and further the settler colonial state. However, these scholars' approaches focus too much on complicities and differences across experiences of racism between indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour, and too little on how to bridge these issues so as to work together to challenge the colonial dominant. Thobani (2007) and Razack (1998) highlight white supremacy as a pillar of marginalization experienced by indigenous and non-indigenous people of colour, and offer this as an insightful means to forge solidarity and anti-colonial resistance.

Decolonization also requires a shift from materialist to indigenous frameworks. Marginalized people of colour and indigenous peoples cannot demand equity within the laws, economy, and institutions of the settler colonial state (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p.128). This represents an "internalized colonial way" of relating to land, resources and wealth (p.127). We

must eliminate settler property rights and do away with the notion of land being property (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.26). Instead, we must focus on communal notions of sharing, justice, and custodianship of the land; and living with a view of seven generations ahead.

Shared resistance to settler colonialism (in the multiplicity of ways it is manifested) can be extended to form common ground but Lawrence and Dua (2005), Tuck and Yang (2012) and Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) caution us with how historic and contemporary evocations of solidarity can contribute to ongoing colonization and erasure of complicities. Tuck and Yang suggest there is a need for an "understanding of uncommonality that uncoalesces coalition politics" (2012, p.35). This understanding serves to acknowledge the differential impacts and enactments of settler colonialism and racism on Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and render them more visible. In part, this creates a space to recognize that white supremacy in the Canadian state disempowers non-indigenous peoples and implicates them in the settler nation-building project, but also affords them access to some settler privileges (Phung, 2011). It also serves to avoid a "settler move to innocence" through equivocation of all experiences of oppression with colonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.17). Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) articulates that decolonized solidarity is only possible where relationships are built on commensurate interdependence (p.46). An ethical and commensurate solidarity is based on encounters that rearrange structural conditions, and a relationship between difference and interdependency, rather than rational calculations of self-interest (p.49). As Smith notes,

"There is still a memory of a different way of living that didn't have to be hierarchical, wasn't based on domination and violence, and was based on having radical relationships with the earth and all of creation, with all other peoples" (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010, p.34).

Possibilities for such existence are informed by the negotiation of mutually supportive relationships built upon mutual respect (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p.131). Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) is similarly clear that solidarity is not empathy. What do decolonizing solidarity actions look like? For Tuck and Yang, such actions would constitute efforts to repatriate indigenous land. Lawrence and Amadahy (2009) suggest that indigenous leadership must inform decolonizing actions. These scholars provide important interventions on notions of decolonization and solidarity, cautioning against the "metaphorization" of decolonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012). They offer a useful and insightful asymptote to the process of decolonization for arrivants, but there is also a real danger of a rigid vision for repatriation of land put forward by Tuck and Yang given the realities of arrivants who have been forced to this land through global systems of racism, imperialism, and capitalism; and who face racism on it. Discussions of racial and indigenous justice movements tend to see the two pitted against each other in a white supremacist society and the emergence of a type of "oppression olympics". These discussions and engagements can easily form anti-Black and anti-immigrant sentiments and contribute to letting the white colonial settler subject off the hook (G. Dei, personal communication, July 23, 2014). The colonial dominant must be recognized, and issues of implications, responsibilities and complicities must be separated (G. Dei, personal communication, July 23, 2014). An anti-colonial framework can help bring indigenous communities and arrivants together to oppose the colonial dominant.

Smith offers an approach to solidarity and resistance that sees "everyone as a potential ally" (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010, p.1). She posits that privilege must not be individualized so as to inform resistance to systems of oppression, including the pillars of white supremacy. She

argues that people of colour solidarity cannot be limited to organizing from sites of oppression but also sites of complicity (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010, p.10). In turn, indigenous activists need to see where their struggles intersect with struggles of people of colour, and offer solidarity that resists the pillars of white supremacy that marginalizes them. She thereby calls for the building of strategic alliances based on the positionality of indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour. Her frame of analysis compels a collective responsibility informed by community notions of justice, as in her view, decolonization necessarily occurs in a framework of global liberation. She positions slavery, genocide, and orientalism as being the logics of white supremacy which allows for recognition of the distinct experiences of indigenous, Black, and arrivant communities and a path to achieving decolonization (Smith, 2010). Her formulation offers many possibilities for theorizing Brownness in ways that capture the realities of white supremacy on stolen lands. Brown solidarity must reflect a commitment to decolonization, establishing of common ground with other marginalized communities, and action. While 'solidarity' often merely implies a positive moral obligation, it is an "uneasy, reserved and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.3). Solidarity therefore necessitates ongoing engagement.

The theory of a politicized Brown identity is nascent, so it remains to be seen if it can be mobilized for the purposes of building solidarity among the Brown community and translate into a social movement. It seeks to disrupt a reductionist understanding of racism as a white-black binary. Smith (2012) offers her suspicions of those that seek to populate the white-black binary, and suggests that they often import an "immigrant paradigm of exclusion" (p.19). The objective of Brownness however, is to disrupt the white-black binary to challenge historic and current constructions of race, and create an entry point for Brown communities to forge solidarity

against racism and settler colonialism. A shared resistance is necessary given the ways in which communities are pitted against each other in the context of a white supremacist society and a globalized economic system. A strategic application of Brown identity and affirmation of Brownness rejects nationalist discourses of multiculturalism, diversity, model minority, immigration and citizenship that perpetuate systemic racism and colonialism. The goals of Brown solidarity would be to actively resist white supremacy and prevailing race discourse, develop community affirmation in Brown identity across South Asian communities, and empower communities to challenge dominant systems of oppression.

The potentialities for shared resistance through Brown identity will depend on whether various South Asian communities are able to unite under a shared banner of a broad, politicized Brown racial identity. This requires the essentializing of an incredible heterogeneity in terms of histories, class, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality. It also requires Brown identity to absorb other essentialized identities such as South Asian (Ashutosh, 2008) and Muslim (Zine, 2007), which have their own sets of parameters, histories, politics and affinities for community members. As Gosine (2002) warns, overlapping identities based on multiple constructs is not conducive to the idea of a coherent community. Bridging the heterogeneity within a Brown community therefore requires a strong enough basis of common ground to prove to be strategic and useful for mobilization.

A mode of Brown solidarity is incomplete without incorporating the recognition of indigenous ways of relatedness as theorized by Lawrence and Amadahy (2009). I am cognizant simultaneously that trying to forge a Brown essentialized identity in a global context initiated from North America may also contribute to a reduction of voice for subaltern communities lumped into this category, reinforced through lines of empire. It is necessary to consider through

dialogue among communities who may be silenced or harmed in the perpetuation of this political identity. Consider for example, how the model minority construct has been useful creating two sets of antithetical and reinforcing notions about successful students (Korean, Punjabis, Chinese) while diverting attention away from students whose achievements are lower (Cambodian, Vietnamese, Bangladeshis) (Razack, 1995).

Still, it is difficult to deny that "the territorial reach of racial hegemony is now global" (Omi & Winant, 1994). Race will continue to be salient, but how it is reconstituted in the present can lend itself to counter-hegemonic power. As López (1995) notes, the risk of cooptation by racism will also always be present, but we must continue to speak race, to create a strong sense of racial self-awareness and to forge community where racial meaning and racially mediated discrimination serves to provide common ground. This organizing around race will have to go beyond merely asserting a defensively situated collective identity (Gosine, 2002). While oppositional identities help develop new means of self-conception, pride, and motivations for resistance to hegemonic discourses and systems; we must be careful not to paint a broad homogenized identity and stop there. Doing so renders us complicit in structural racism and ongoing colonialism, rather than active in our resistance. As Dei reminds us, "theorizing about race does not certify anti-racist behaviour/work (Dei, 2000, p.38).

We must also be vigilant about the creeping discourses such as multiculturalism that aim to distract and detract from the central questions of race and racism that permeate our institutions and our society. An overemphasis on ethnicity, or culture, detracts from the fundamental questions of power created by racism and white supremacy as Johal (cited in Dei, 2007) notes:

"As much as white people across difference of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or religion may be oppressed in relation to the dominant white middle-class heterosexual male subject, they hold a pigmentary passport of privilege that allows sanctity as a result of the racial polity of whiteness." (p.57)

Further, negative essentialisms informed by racism and systems of whiteness (such as the negative essentialism of Muslim women, or Brown being made synonymous with foreignness) also serve to interfere, pose risks to, or challenge the mobilization of a broad, positive, self-claimed Brown identity.

Brownness: From Theory to Dialogue and Action

In theorizing Brownness and Brown identity, it is important to consider how constructed and perceived boundaries can influence belonging, who feels represented by such a framework, and whose lived experience in terms of class, ethnicity, geography, religion, and empire is reflected. It is important to consider how gender and sexuality intersect with race, and how these multiple intersecting identities can alter how Brownness may be experienced. Such considerations lend themselves to a more thorough analysis of the possibilities and implications for Brownness, since racial identity and oppression intersect with other identities and oppressions. It is also important, given that Brown is theorized as a framework for solidarity, to consider and acknowledge power and complicity in the Brown community, which I too share and personally embody. This complicity presents implications and limits for relationships between and across indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour.

Like Andrea Smith, I hang on to the idea that we must engage all potential allies. This can lead to the building of strategic alliances that engage our positionality in the global political economy, as well as our privileges and our complicities (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010, p.1). I have come to this theory of Brownness in trying to know my authentic self, and to develop strategies for engaging communities in anti-racism work through racial identity, recognizing the the role of identity in community-building. Still, I wonder if given the heterogeneity of experiences, if uniting through the use of strategic essentialism can fulfil the goals of confronting whiteness, racism, and colonialism. Race, identity and anti-racism are political, and have significant material, spiritual, and social consequences for different communities. Still, there is an individual and collective responsibility that I/the Brown community have to disrupt prevailing systems of whiteness, and to mobilize for counter-hegemonic power. Positing this theory is an attempt at fulfilling that responsibility.

In theorizing a Brown identity, I have had (and I continue still) to work through my own racialized embodiment. This is part of the necessary decolonizing work I need to confront on a personal level, a process undertaken since encountering Lawrence & Dua's (2005) call to decolonize anti-racism praxis. This leads me to consider the need for developing race consciousness and racial literacy in Brown racialized youth. Blackwell asks, "What is race consciousness raising for students of colour?" (2010, p. 479). As Guinier (2003) suggests, racial literacy is about being able to emphasize the relationship between race and power, and to trace how race acts in tandem with social, economic, and political institutions. It is the "capacity to decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies" and the ways in which race, class, and geography operate interdependently to perpetuate the status quo of racism (Guinier, 2004, p.100). Race consciousness and racial literacy can reveal not only the ways in

which our society continues to be premised on race and white supremacy but also potential opportunities for solidarity. Racial literacy can be developed within family spaces, within community, and potentially in anti-racist classrooms. Possibilities for how Brown identity and Brownness can support development of racial literacy are discussed later in this thesis.

Andrea Smith asks us to "free up our imaginations about what we really want" (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010). Consistent with the values of Dei's anti-racism discursive framework, I put forward a theory of Brown identity that conceptualizes race and racism broadly, seeks to challenge white supremacy and the subordination of racial minorities, and looks to collective experiences to inform resistance to racism and colonialism (Dei, 2000). Through the mobilization of a Brown racial identity, I want to forge solidarity among communities of colour to work together to resist white supremacy and dismantle the settler colonial state. I recognize that there are consequential, material and intrinsic implications of proposing such a mode of solidarity, and these must be up for consideration, analysis, challenge and abandonment as we work collectively to engage in anti-racism work. But, if we are to achieve decolonization, and broad sociopolitical community resistance, there needs to be a deep and underlying motivation for solidarity. This solidarity must be commensurate and relational; it must transform and be transformative (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Are we able to commit ourselves to deconstructing our own mythologies, potentially ending up in an unknown place with no guarantees for the sake of restructuring inequality?

IV. Brown Canada: A Critical Discourse Analysis

In the next few chapters, I present a critical discourse analysis of the submissions contained in the Brown Canada Project in order to provide insights into this thesis' central research questions. The submissions form the data analyzed in this thesis. They provide insights into the representations of Brownness and Brown identity for South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area. The submissions also reveal the saliency of Brown identity, as well as the possibilities and limitations of mobilizing Brown as a decolonizing framework. I chose the Brown Canada Project because it was one of the few, broad, community iterations of Brown identity, and it takes anti-racism as its entry point through a naming of anti-Brown racism and white supremacy in Canada. As this is a public project, it also allows for me as the researcher to gain an entry point into the data without necessarily imposing upon the data subjects, or projecting my personal and political views about Brown identity upon them. The Project also generated rich data for analysis; data that is self-directed, includes personal narratives, and is expressed in various media. The Project is also presents contemporary insights into questions of Brownness and Brown identity as it was launched in 2012. As an activist, it is also important to me that this is a community-led project, which as an academic I can assist in documenting through this research.

In analyzing the content of the submissions to the Brown Canada Project, I first briefly contextualize the framing of the Project itself, and its political economy of production by looking at the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, and the Community Historical Recognition Program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada which provided funding for the program. Next, I provide a brief overview of the data sample and process of critical discourse analysis

conducted. I then share the key findings of the analysis, and note the themes that were generated which I expand on further below.

Political Economy of Production

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) is an umbrella of agencies, groups and individuals that supports and aims to empower members of the South Asian community in Canada (CASSA, 2011). Most of its constituent agencies and groups are located in Ontario, the majority of which are located in Toronto. It commits to the "elimination of all forms of discrimination from Canadian society" and working with those who want to empower all communities to participate in defining the future of Canada. It operates with values of social justice, anti-oppression, responsiveness to communities, respecting diversity, collaboration and solidarity, and accountability in its governance.

CASSA's Brown Canada Project centred on sharing and documenting South Asian histories in Canada, and comprised of two components - the Brown Canada website and a traveling showcase. The website features submissions created by members of the community in response to a call out from project organizers to share their stories "and to learn, tell and create South Asian history on our own terms" (Browncanada.ca, 2014). The traveling showcase stopped in eight cities across Ontario, and created a space for personal histories, histories of the Komagata Maru, and youth-led creative expressions of poetry, spoken word, plays and skits to be performed. In addition to the showcase, organizers facilitated "a community dialogue with [the] audience to have a critical discussion about our histories and the implications of omitting our history" (Browncanada.ca, 2014). The project also included the production of the play, "Oh

Canada, Oh Komagata Maru!", interactive discussions about racialized and indigenous histories, and the distribution of free resource booklets on South Asian histories in Canada.

CASSA publicly acknowledges the contributions of the Community Historical Recognition Program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada in funding the Brown Canada Project. This program was created in 2008 by the Government of Canada in order to "acknowledge and educate Canadians about the historical experiences of ethno-cultural communities" in Canada (CIC, 2014). The Government frames these experiences as being discriminatory, but as having occurred in specific and finite periods of time in the past. In particular, these discriminatory practices are framed as occurring during times of war. This framing renders discrimination as being a tool of war, and as occurring solely when the Canadian nation-state is officially at war with an external state. It obscures the ways in which historical and ongoing experiences of racism and discrimination perpetuate a war on racialized and indigenous communities. In providing funding for the Brown Canada Project, the Government uses a multiculturalism project to absolve itself of racism and genocide. Prime Minister Stephen Harper seemingly closes the door on Canada's racist past:

"The wartime measures and immigration restrictions experienced by those communities mark an unfortunate period in our nation's history. The policies were race-based and inconsistent with values that Canadians hold today" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014).

Here Harper also draws distinctions between Canadians, who no longer overtly perpetuate racism, and the racialized communities affected by the state's racist policies. While it is

important for the stories contained in the Brown Canada Project to be shared and funding poses a challenge for not-for-profit organizations, CASSA must interrogate what it means to be funded directly by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). This political economy of production allows the state to maintain the dominant myths of multiculturalism and Canada as a welcoming and liberal nation. Funding from CIC then is a form of state-sponsored and "managed version" of anti-racist politics (Bannerji, 2000, p.118).

Data Sample

The Brown Canada website project has received thirty-six submissions to date. Of the forty-five metatags[3] provided to content creators to tag their submissions, thirty-seven were selected for the works submitted. Tags are based on race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, occupation (student, activist, worker), gender, age, type of discrimination, emotions, relationships, and submission type (personal narrative). The most frequently selected tags included South Asian (selected 22 times), Women (21 times), Resilience (17 times), Immigrant (15 times), Toronto (15 times), Personal Narratives (14), and Indian (10 times). The data may suggest a bias towards these categories as being more representative of Brown identity, or could reflect the self-selecting population of contributing authors. The only available tags not used were Bhutanese, Indo-Fijian, Nepali, Sinhalese, and Tibetan. This may reflect either a lack of identification for these labels as relating to South Asian histories, or of Brown Canada and CASSA as being spaces for members of these communities to be involved.

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[3] The metatags include: African Diaspora, Bangladeshi, Bengali, Bhutanese, Canada, Christian, Community Activism, Desi, Disability, Grief, Health, Immigrant, Indian, Indian Christian, Indigenous Solidarity, Indo-Caribbean, Indo-Fijian, Islamophobia, Ismaili, Komagata Maru, Labour, Leaders, Loss, Mixed Race South Asians, Mothering, Muslim, Nepali, Pakistani, Personal Narratives, Punjabi, Queer and Trans, Racism, Resilience, Seniors, Sikh, Sinhalese, South Asian, Sri Lankan, Tamil, Tibetan, Toronto, Victory, Women, Worker, Youth.

Though the metatags allow for authors to assign markers or indicators to the representations, authors themselves are given a broad space to insert their diverse personal narratives, histories, and representations of Brownness and Brown identity in their submissions. It is the substantive content of the submissions - including image, text, or videos - that are analysed in this thesis.

The data sample represents a diverse data set in terms of axes of difference, including age, ethnicity, class, geography, nationality, religion, gender, and sexuality. Submissions reflected the experiences of youth in high schools and elementary schools, seniors and grandparents, parents, and young adults in university. The data set also reflects a diversity of class experiences: international students of high class privilege back home and lower status in Canada, recent immigrants, those who are third generation and have accumulated wealth and social capital, young couples struggling to make ends meet, and mothers living here with their kids separated from their spouses. Participants, authors, and interviewees were either born in Canada, or travelled here from the United Kingdom, the Caribbean (Guyana, Trinidad), Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh), or Africa (Uganda, Tanzania, The Congo). They identified as being ethnically Punjabi, Goan, Tamil, Pakistani, Bengali and Mexican[4]; and religiously Sikh, Ismaili, Muslim, Christian, and Hindu. A significant number of submissions were from women, with a few from queer-identified South Asians. The data sample comprises of submissions from students, community organizers, workers (in diverse fields), caregivers, and artists. Submissions were made in various media - including poems, stories, reflections, interviews, photographs, paintings, workshops, and videos. The flexibility of media

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[4] While one of the submissions reflects Mexican identity, the insights from this submission are inconclusive as to the relationship between Brownness as theorized in this paper and as theorized by Latina/o communities.

facilitated community expression and contributed to the richness of the data. Each of the submissions was analyzed in this study.

Data Analysis

As Charmaz (2006) suggests, the positionality of the researcher and their analytical frames greatly influence their coding and analysis of data. This can also be generative for theory. With respect to analyzing the Brown Canada Project, my positionality affected my reading and interpretations of the data set. In particular, my personal experiences enabled me to interpret the submissions such that the authors' ideas could be lifted or made legible and visible. My critical discourse analysis of representations of Brownness in the Brown Canada Project consisted of multiple readings of the text, visual and audiovisual submissions, which led to the emergence of key themes. During a first engagement with the submissions, I read, observed and watched in full the data submissions without questions in mind. I reacted to the scenes, incidents, visuals and representations; making personal observations and notes on the aspects to which I reacted viscerally. I made notes on the aspects, experiences and issues that appeared significant to the author in the submissions. I made notes about the author's perceptions, desires, struggles, and values. Analysing the verbs used by the authors revealed their emotions and perceptions. I also made note of the themes or experiences that were emphasized through repetition, through sound, textual focus, literary style, and visual imagery invoked or presented. In a second reading, I conducted an incident-coding which generated mini-themes across the submissions, such as longing, memories, spirit/soul, im/migration, struggle, and loss. In a third engagement of the submissions, I examined the appearance and representation of these mini-themes across the data, and made notes on how they were characterized in each piece. I also engaged with the data

asking: what does Brown Canada represent? How does the author or subject perceive, understand, and/or experience racism? What are the author or subject's experiences and conceptualizations of anti-racism? Linking the mini-themes as they were characterized and presented in the submissions, and examining the data in light of the above questions, generated the following six key findings:

1. Spirit injury or longing from migration/loss/memories/racism.

2. Pride/power/voice is associated with resistance, resilience, identity/heritage.

3. Values of helping others, serving community, solidarity are demonstrated in response to injustice/racism/colonization/violence.

4. Shared experiences of racism and resistance help engage and build community.

5. Critical spaces that use history are used to educate/raise consciousness, shape identity, build community, and imagine a better future.

6. Culture acts as a proxy for race in a multicultural context.

Finally, I noted how these key findings related to each other across the data, in order to capture the major themes presented in this thesis. Below I examine the three major themes of Brown identity and Brownness that emerged from the Brown Canada Project: spirit injury, pride in resistance, and pedagogies for education and community building. These three themes revealed by a constructivist grounded approach and critical discourse analysis inform the theory of Brown identity in this thesis. The salience of a Brown racial identity is seen in the spirit injury that occurs through migration/loss/racism. Affirmation of self-representation and subversion of dominant representations of Brownness occurs via the assertion of a proud identity of resistance

to racism. Shared values and experiences of racism, as well as the use of history and racial identity inform an entry point to a pedagogy of Brownness. This pedagogy can be used to raise race consciousness, and engage community members in broad organizing towards shared anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance.

V. Spirit Injury/Longing

Many of us are familiar with the pangs of anger, indignity, and shame that come from experiences of exclusion and racism. One of the main themes evident across the Brown Canada submissions is the experience of a spirit injury or longing associated with memory, migration and racism. I suggest this is part of "feeling brown", or what makes being Brown salient for members of the community. In applying a critical discourse analysis to representations of this sense of injury or longing as expressed across the Brown Canada submissions, I characterize the nature and source of this spirit injury and longing below.

In *Empty Suitcases,* Saima S. Hussain describes the quintessential migrant experience - one of hope and one of emptiness. She draws from Jan Sawka's painting, *Immigrant's Suitcase,* featuring images of countryside and portraits, to show the fragments of memory and pieces of home that immigrants must choose to bring with them, as they leave everything else behind. She notes that no matter the amount of material possessions that a migrant may bring with them, "in the real sense, you have come empty-handed" (Hussain, 2012). Hussain describes both how systemic racism does not recognize the value of educational and professional credentials, work experience, and networks of Brown people, regardless of where they are from (including settler nations or cities like the United Kingdom or New York), but also the spiritual impact of having to amputate one's life experiences to "start from the beginning in order to build a life again" (Hussain, 2012). Her submission is one-part an introspective reflection from her first-hand experience of moving from Pakistan to Toronto, and one-part an open letter to others facing migration and relocation. She reflects on the "wide blank space" into which a migrant must walk, one step at a time. This is the third space, or an-other lived experience described by Grewal (2008) as dis-locatia. It is the violent and traumatic experience of having to assimilate in Canada

and a "lifetime of movement" which includes the isolation, terror, and depression experienced by migrants on the body and in the mind (Grewal, 2008). Hussain highlights the inherent violence of wrestling through this lifetime of movement describing the terror of being in a new place, severed from one's past and former home, and needing to begin anew:

> *"There is no point looking back. What was once there and what could have been there if you had stayed doesn't count for anything anymore. This is your place now. Make some tough decisions. Face some difficult days and weeks. And most of all, overcome those gut-wrenching moments of pure terror" (Hussain, 2012).*

Here she is both offering advice to others who have recently arrived, and seemingly speaking to herself to remind herself that this is *her place now*, and she too must overcome the struggles of exclusion, lack of belonging, and racism. The emotional harm and pressures of adjustment can be felt in the text as she describes needing to "take a deep breath every time terror strikes" and that "the furthest you are allowed to look into the future is the next day" (Hussain, 2012). Hussain also prescribes the courage (perhaps her own) it takes to walk into the blank space, and the resistance that is needed over time to deal with racism. She suggests that in order to fill up one's empty suitcase and heal the spiritual injury, one must struggle and triumph over racism by gaining new experiences, and forging new relationships, and that over time these will form the new "happy load" that can be carried around proudly. In this way, she describes the saliency of a racial embodiment, rooted in the spirit injury that results from the emotional harms of racism (Dei, 2006). This injury can only be healed through spiritual fulfillment of belonging, community, and resistance to racism.

The spirit injury described by Hussain manifests itself in the "ache" described by Vivek Shraya as he describes the emptiness or hole created by assimilation. While Hussain describes time in breaths, Shraya denotes time in the sound of heartbeats that intimately connect the audience to his experiences of marginalization. We are invited into this struggle for self-definition, as he introduces us to the negotiations around his name, identity, and belonging: "there's an ache in my name but I say it with an ick" (Shraya, 2012). He thus presents us with his choices of being "VivACHE" or "VivICK", and questions of power, agency, and subversion in terms of who has the authority to decide how his name is pronounced and whose pronunciation matters. Using grey images of historic Hindu monuments, we see the physical "ache" in the form of a cave or physical hole that exists as he describes the etymology of his name, and arrival to Canada:

"Our parents named us after gods... but when we came to this land, we traded our faiths and got re-named…. We became our new names, we became our new names, what was betrayed in this exchange? Is this another case of how we just … assimilate?" (Shraya, 2012)

Through the use of repetition, rhyme, and multiple layered voices, Shraya emphasizes the ongoing negotiation that he and other children of migrants, as well as their parents and predecessors on this land must go through in terms of identity and belonging. From imitating his peers in school asking how to pronounce his name, and wondering about the significance of a name, he seemingly asks himself whether or not he will choose to assimilate. He speaks of the struggles and concessions that his parents made when they arrived, in *becoming* a new name, and

losing part of their identity[5]. The impact of this loss of identity is contained in the grey images of stones, monuments, and caves; the urgency of the beating heart; and Shraya's own monotonous voice. This is an age-old struggle, one that has material and social impacts, and one that dislocates a racialized person spiritually. As the short video progresses, his voice becomes less questioning and more confident in stating that it's about "how *I* pronounce it", or about the power of self-definition (Dei, 2007). Thus the remedy to the spiritual harm or ache is to assert one's autonomy, and resist dominant representations and racisms.

In *Living on the Outside: A Memoir*, Naziefeh Aidrus describes her journey to discover her longing; a longing that she had while growing up, and a longing that her parents seemed to share that can be seen "in their eyes" (Aidrus, 2012). She describes her experiences of attending Catholic school as a lone Muslim girl and outsider in her high school class, one part of her mother's attempts to "anglicize" her children. Speaking English, listening to North American pop music, and dressing in denim jeans were all means of performing race, or becoming more Canadian. This performance and assimilation took a more aggressive turn after 9/11, when Aidrus' mother began to tell everyone her family was Lebanese, and she "learned how to curse and got blonde highlights" (Aidrus, 2012). In this way, Aidrus was able to strategically alter her racial identity and escape anti-Muslim sentiment. She was often perceived as white or Hispanic and she "loved it", demonstrating not only the impact of inferiority assigned with race difference, but also "inexpressible envy and desire" to be white (Hall, 1992, p.446). Aidrus displays a lack of self-affirmation in her racial identity and embraces the idea that she is not perceived as being Brown. Hispanic places her closer to being white, and the uncertainty surrounding her heritage renders her more exotic. On the one hand, it's troubling that Aidrus and her mother go to such

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[5] The experiences described here are reminiscent of those of Kapoor Singh and his family, as described in *Jewels of the Qila* (Johnston, 2011).

lengths to hide the fact that they are Brown, but it is simultaneously understandable given the material consequences of being Brown in a post-9/11 context. Nevertheless, her longing remains, along with a loss of memory about life in Pakistan, because she is not able to affirm her self-identity. She describes her dis-locatia:

> *"Almost like you have another past that is out of reach, and not matter how far you extend your arms it's unattainable. My past is not for me to understand. Sometimes I feel like something tragic happened to me in Pakistan and I'm still suffering from the trauma, so my mind has blocked all passageways as a means of coping"* (Aidrus, 2012).

In this way, Aidrus depicts a severing that occurred as she moved to Canada as a child, and a sense of living "apis se bahir", or living *outside of herself* since arriving here. While this term simultaneously makes her think of the ways in which her mother would chide Aidrus for becoming "too Canadian" or "too Western", it nonetheless resonates with her and captures her sense of a lack of belonging. Instead of looking within, she appoints herself 'family therapist' to try to learn what her parents long for. It's only when she shares an intimate and emotional conversation with her father about how he manages to live apart from the family and discovers the true degree of his suffering that she decides to retire as family therapist. In that moment of seeing her father cry, she connects with him; his pain and his suffering visible for the first time, reflecting some of her own experiences of maintaining a front while hiding secret feelings of shame, hurt, and pain. From this encounter, she is seemingly unable to maintain a barrier between herself and the experiences of her family, and can no longer live outside of them. Connecting a bit with who she herself is in that moment, she decides to begin a journey to discover her own longing; or her own history, identity, and racialized embodiment.

In contrast to Aidrus, Veronica Diaz seemingly wants only to "sing and draw our migration stories" and set aside her memories, dreams, and visions of her "faraway land" (Diaz, 2012a). While maintaining a sense of pride in her Mexican heritage, she wishes to leave it behind so she can more easily assimilate and "live, work and play" or build a home, in Canada. She experiences longing, but the pride in her "colourful" heritage facilitates her memories. Her dreams and nostalgia allow her to envision her former homeland, as well as a pre-colonial past to which she feels connected and yet continues to work through, given that she is the "unity of two bloods, two continents" and has "a bitter historic battle" in her inner being due to her mixed race heritage. She does not experience the same dis-locatia as Shraya, Hussain, or Aidrus. Her longing comes from a desire to nurture a vision of her homeland and a pre-colonial past to (re)visit in her mind. In her second submission, *Why open the door?* she describes the harms of assimilation and racism on immigrant and indigenous bodies. Through the metaphor of the colonizer's wooden house, she highlights the material consequences of racism and colonialism, and the ways in which violence is enacted against indigenous and non-indigenous people of colour. From the walls that hold up the "stench" of the laws that result in the death and assimilation of "our Original and coloured Peoples", to the ceiling and walls that bear evidence of those who "fight and succumb", she highlights struggles and resistance against genocide. Exclusions from citizenship, and denial of professional and educational credentials and rights within the settler state are the water stains that serve as a constant reminder that one does not belong and that "we only have broken expectations" (Diaz, 2012b). Loss of language occurs through sink drains and window sills, and the marks on the tiles tell the stories of indigenous people and people of colour who are silenced and made non-existent. Diaz describes the spiritual

consequences of these denials and exclusions as she moves through the metaphorical colonizer's house and reaches the basement:

"I feel the ghosts in the basement

I feel their sorrows

of all those broken souls

denied citizenship

denied their rights to land, children

denied their language

culture

beauty

and voice." (Diaz, 2012b)

In the basement, underground, she feels the presence of those who have struggled before her, seemingly sharing the spirit harm she describes as perpetuated through the construction of an 'us' and 'other' by the colonial dominant. She attributes this spirit harm that occurs over generations as coming from denial of dignity, power, and belonging, to indigenous peoples and immigrant communities of colour.

This spirit harm or denial is represented by a flightless bird in Aminah Baig's painting as part of the South Asian Women's Action Collective's *Arts of Resistance* submission. Collectively, the pieces submitted by the Collective are meant to represent the "resistant love and passionate anger that we have all felt at some point but never had the words or colours to express" (South Asian Womens Action Collective, 2012). Thus, the artwork serves as an outlet

for the participants to express and make visible their deep-rooted feelings and experiences. Baig's submission represents the impact of migration and exclusion on migrant bodies: the bird is flightless, but not caged; it has the potential for flight. The bird is perched on a branch alone, giving the semblance of being free to fly (or perhaps free to choose to migrate and come here), but seemingly kept in placed by invisible barriers. The blues and purples of the sky suggest patience and perseverance. The bird sits solemn and mourning, with two teardrops falling. Waiting for possibilities. The painting also gives a sense of solitude and immobilizing loneliness inherent in the adjustment to a new place, or growing up as a racialized outsider in a community. The patience and the somberness are in stark contrast to the reds, the passion, and the fire in Shameela Zaman's *Burning Heart* piece. Zaman displays the fiery resistance and anger one feels in response to the pangs of exclusion and longing in her blood-covered painting of the human heart. The heart is a symbol of life, pumping blood and fuelling the body; it is the seat of human feelings; and shows the visceral and biological impact of Brown experiences. The heart is simultaneously burning from exclusion from social systems, community, belonging; and endlessly yearning for acceptance and inclusion into those same systems. This is a powerful symbol and expression of the experience of the racialized Other and experiences of longing and anger of the broader Brown community.

Such experiences of longing, separation, and experiences of arrival are described by the senior women who participated in the Brown Canada workshop with the South Asian Women's Centre Senior's group. These women from diverse backgrounds with a range of experiences shared their varying stories of loss and grief, as well as their first memories in arrival to Canada. Some women had arrived decades ago, while others had only been in Canada for a few years, but nonetheless there was underlying sense of unity and community reflected in the similarity of

experiences of immigration, racism and Othering. Above all, these women shared "a sense of nostalgia and longing towards the homes and people they had left behind" (Akhtar & Goawala, 2012). This sense of longing was also related to the "trials and tribulations of being the 'other' in Canadian society", the struggles they faced when they moved to Canada, and memories of a place that was home.

The desire for emplacement is also seen with members of the Thorncliffe community, who describe their immigration journey and experience as well as their expectations of Canada before moving here. In a Brown Canada workshop featuring largely Ismaili Muslims who have immigrated from Uganda, Tanzania, The Congo, and India, participants discussed policies of exclusion and discrimination towards South Asian immigrants in Canada. They discussed the myriad of reasons for leaving their homeland, including escape from political situations, being sponsored by family, and searching for better prospects. For them, Canada represented education, opportunities, and jobs; but it also represented experiences of racism and discrimination in their workplace, in school, and in their daily lives. In an activity where participants wrote a postcard to someone back home in their country of origin to tell them about their lives in Canada, participants were prompted to share the challenges they faced. These included homesickness, loneliness, separation from family, language barriers, lack of social supports, and lack of recognition of their lived, schooling, and work experiences. The use of the postcard really emphasizes distance, and draws memories of letters written to family members back home. Many outline their hopes and dreams for their new lives, including "buy[ing] my dream house" (Ghosh, 2012a). While this may be interpreted as a symbol of achievement, status and class, it also represents a sense of *making a home*; or belonging; and resilience in the face of adversity. When participants note what they miss most about their countries of origin, it is the

weather, the food, the beaches - or the warmth and comfort of home. They also dream of family reunification, good jobs, and better education for their children.

Similarly, Philomena (Philoo) describes a sense of loneliness and longing that comes from experiencing racism and missing her family and home back in India. She shares some of her buried and painful memories of racism, including one where her daughter's teacher presumed that Philoo did not speak or understand English, and nothing was done by the school administration when she raised the issue of prejudice. A second painful memory comes from the discovery that a colleague at work "never sat with colored people", despite her preference of tanned brown skin (Lobo, 2012a). Such experiences of racism, the loneliness of the city of Regina with only a handful of Indian Christian families, and having to be the sole breadwinner bore down on Philoo. One night when her infant daughter was inconsolable and would not stop crying, Philoo "cried and cried with her until we both fell asleep on the couch together". Philoo was longing for her mother, for her mother's knowledge and traditional practices, for family support and for home. Spiritual fulfillment would not come for her until years later when she had built up a life for herself, serving her family, and mentoring new immigrants and disadvantaged families - or building community to heal the wounds of loneliness, exclusion, and separation from her own family.

In "Whispered Landings: what it feels like to be brown", authors Asad Ahmad and Mariam Ahmad layer images and narratives with piano to share their Brown experiences (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2012). The piano music sounds like the accompaniment for a children's story. In the first segment, the image is a map featuring labeled landmasses of India, China, and a few unmarked islands. The audio narratives speak to "a family gathering that may never occur" and "explaining to people what it's like to eat with your hands" (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2012). With

this segment, the creators speak to the long-distance relationships between family members spread out across continents and oceans, revealing the transnational character of Brown identity, and a longing to be connected with family. They speak also to the Othering experienced by Brown people seen as being "backward" for not eating with utensils. In the second segment, there is a boat travelling across water; a powerful emotive of the journey many take to escape imperial violence, or to seek a better life. The boat represents nostalgia for one's old home, while struggling to build a new one. It also represents the loneliness of social interactions because "there is no room for you and it's on purpose"(Ahmad & Ahmad, 2012). Taken together these two segments represent the exclusion and racism of an East-West distinction, and the sadness, memories, and separation from migration from an old to a new home.

In her "public service announcement" for the Brown Canada Project, Shaunga Tagore talks about the role that history plays in identity, affirmation, and spirit. She intersperses photographs taken from the Komagata Maru as visuals, and an audio narrative where she tells the tale of the efforts of Gurdit Singh Sandhu and others to challenge racist and exclusionary immigration laws in Canada, with a personal text narrative on the screen. The white text on the black screen speaks to her personal, silencing experiences (and those of other young Brown students in school) taught to believe "my history didn't matter", or that it was something of which to be ashamed (Tagore, 2012). Tagore suggests that never being told the story of the Komagata Maru prevented her from understanding her positionality as a South Asian girl growing up in "what we call Canada" and made invisible things that "physically, tangibly, and emotionally, and intergenerationally shape our lives" (Tagore, 2012). The personal narrative on screen suggests that the word 'history' can be replaced with "i', suggesting that she - or Brown people - *do not matter,* that we should be *ashamed*, or that we're *never really meant to know* who

we are on this land. She thus associates spirit harm in the form of being made to feel inconsequential, ashamed, or a sense of loss of identity due to racism in school and an intergenerational loss of history. She suggests that through uncovering, creating, and imagining our histories and identities, we can come to know ourselves and come to speak through this spirit loss.

Collectively, these stories speak to the affects and effects of the process of migration as enacted physically, emotionally, and spiritually on the bodies of South Asians. These effects and affects, or spirit injury which results from racism, represent the salience of a Brown identity. The spirit injury or loss described is defined by the relationship between race and migration, or the racialization of a migrant existence in a settler nation-state. The effects and affects of migration, exclusion, and racism or Brown spirit injury can also be felt across generations, as demonstrated by the narratives of first-generation participants. These stories also speak to the social exclusion, economic exploitation and political marginalization that influence the construction of race for racialized and immigrant communities in the settler colonial nation-state broadly.

VI. Pride in resistance

The Brown Canada Project provides intimate insights into what Brown represents for members of South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto area. By creating a space for the expression of Brownness, Brown Canada allows community members to tell their personal narratives, share their experiences, and represent themselves. The submissions therefore represent "a self-representation, a conscious doubling of oneself and each other, a way of affecting not only the content but also the relations and politics of representation" (Hall, 1992, p.270). Dominant constructions function to characterize Brown as meek and diligent labourers; conveniently place us in stereotypes of the model minority, foreigner, and terrorist; and through systems of oppression exclude, shame, and denigrate us. Members of the community however resist these stereotypes and assert a proud Brown identity. This pride is expressed in increasing visibility, raising voice, and through forging community engagement in response to racism. At the root, pride is connected to resistance and resilience in the face of adversity and racism.

A sense of pride is felt and expressed both in an individual and momentary form, but also across generations and histories of resistance and resilience. In *My far away land*, Diaz describes a sense of pride in her heritage. Using italics and colourful imagery to emphasize aspects of her identity, she describes a fierce pride and passion for her language, her homeland, her skin, and native blood: "dreams… remind me to be proud of my colourful heritage" (Diaz, 2012a). Her pride extends also to a vision of her land, "a place of arches and historic houses, buildings made of stones, the stones stolen from our ancestors", that will continue to exist for "eternity", describing the struggles of community across generations in response to colonization. She asserts a sense of community and unity in resistance, stating: "WE, my people are fighting, thriving to be one blood, one body" (Diaz, 2012a). In evoking images of pre-colonial existence, and

presenting herself as being from a colonized race, Diaz proudly asserts the struggles and pride of her past and her present, and "letting her colours shine" (Diaz, 2012a). In her piece, *Why open the door?* she presents the resilience of colonized peoples in the knowledges that cannot be taken away: "we are here! with our degrees and years of experience never leaving us" (Diaz, 2012b). Here she demonstrates the years (and centuries) of resistance demonstrated by colonized peoples who despite systemic barriers and exclusions, genocide, and violence, can resist through the preservation of knowledge. This is particularly significant given that colonialism involved the deliberate destruction of indigenous knowledge systems, and internalization of "the colonizer's way of knowing" (Dei, 1999, p.23).

Similarly, Juanita Nathan describes a strength and resilience that exists for her in terms of her history and knowledge. She asserts a pride in the Tamil language, "one of the ancient languages of the world". In referencing 'ancient', she references time, duration, and longevity of the language. Language and ancient here are also connected to the idea of civilization, and South Asia as being an ancient, resistant civilization. This asserts the place of the Tamil language - or its legitimacy - in history. It also presents a sense of resilience of a community's existence over time; surviving colonization, and subverting representations Tamil as terrorist, asylum seeker or "illegal" immigrant (Mann, 2009).

The use of voice or visibility as a means of challenging dominant representations is also a source of pride, particularly for Brown women who in particular are portrayed as being "oppressed victims" of regressive and sexist non-Western cultures (Jiwani, 2006; see also Razack, 1998; Bannerji, 2000). In *You are my nightmare,* a young Brown woman describes a sexually abusive relationship with her uncle. She describes feeling helpless, silent, and as having no voice. Her narrative of encounters with her uncle is cloaked in the imagined gaze of family

members, and feelings of shame, guilt, and fear. She confronts feelings of humiliation and violation, and the fear of pointing a finger at a family member for being on the receiving end of judgement or blame. This is the self-policing that accompanies the internalization of dominant expectations and racial loyalty (Jiwani, 2006). She repeats the words of her abuser "don't I have *the right* to hug you?" (emphasis added), demonstrating the entitlement to the bodies of women, especially women of colour, performed by men. She courageously gives her sister a hint towards her secret only to be met with a damning judgment that effectively blames her for the abuse. She continues "drowning further into the darkness" of solitude where she confronts the shame of the secret she is made to bear, and the silencing of her words and screams into "vibrations that hit the four corners of the wall, fading with time" (Anonymous, 2012). However, the author starts to assert over time that her tears, words, and pain have *meaning*, seemingly trying to assert and affirm her own self-worth. This assertion comes from a refusal to play out dominant expectations:

> *"...I refuse.*
>
> *I refuse to hold our little secret any longer*
>
> *For I am a proud woman*
>
> *A woman with self love and dignity*
>
> *So I forever break the silence…"* (Anonymous, 2012)

From here the author tells an older family member (another uncle) about the abuse, and makes arrangements so she no longer has to tutor her abusive uncle's daughter. In talking to this supportive uncle she reveals that she had wanted to quit tutoring sooner but had continued out of

concern for her young cousin. In this way she demonstrates a protectionism that exceeds care and concern for herself. What does Brownness represent here? More than dominant expectations of family expectations, shame, and violence; it represents dignity, pride, and Brown resistance.

Thiviyaa Mohanaraj presents a similar narrative and journey of breaking through expectations. She describes the dominant gender roles for the ideal "cooking, cleaning, decent, quiet, housewife", a construction in which she feels trapped (Mohanaraj, 2012). As she describes wanting to break outside of this prison of expectations, she suggests that she - or perhaps all women - have been confined to these expectations for far too long. She asserts that she will not "get abused and stay quiet", nor will she stay home and clean; instead she will speak out and pursue her education (Mohanaraj, 2012). As part of this journey to leave behind expectations and discover her true self, she asserts her pride in self-identity: "I will become myself and no one can change who I am" (Mohanaraj, 2012). Brownness here does not represent the dominant expectations, but the assertive woman who resists these expectations and journeys to self-identification.

With her photo essay *Pride Toronto 2011*, Hamidah Hemani seeks to increase visibility of Brown queer community. The images are captured from Toronto Pride where, for the very first time, there was an Ismaili Queer contingent. Her pictures focus on bringing visibility to marginalized peoples, to nature, to community, and to queerness. In the first photo, we perceive a queer woman of colour on stage, performing on the microphone. She is the focus of the photo, with lots of negative space in the form of black stage background as well as the smaller shape of a perceptibly man-identified DJ behind her. Her presence on stage is commanding, arms extended; there is a glow of bright yellow light on her. The bright glow of stage light envelopes her and shines off of her brightly coloured dress. A second photo of a woman-identified DJ also

places her in the centre and middle-ground of the composition. Despite the fact that there is no need for a microphone for the DJ, a microphone is in the foreground of the composition, with light reflecting on the edges of its outline. The photographer again tries to emphasize voice and visibility, especially of queer Brown women. She also performs an intervention in the dominant representation of South Asian women with representations of queerness, and power, in contrast to images that emphasise their exoticness, or their culture.

In two outdoor images, featuring lots of natural light, the artist depicts balloons shaped like the red ribbon associated with the Aids Walk of Toronto. She captures them floating, indicating movement, possibilities, and happiness. The angle of the red ribbon balloons makes the tips look like hands extended, reaching out to provide support, giving a sense of community. In a close up shot of the ribbon, its loop looks like a window - bringing visibility to the community. The balloon is seen floating away in the sky like a balloon of hope in a third image of the pride parade itself, featuring the Ismaili Queer contingent marching down the street towards some unknown bright future. Crowds of people in the broader community watch this unprecedented moment. In close up photos of parade participants, the photographer focuses on their backs, so the message "advocates for pluralism" can be read. She does not focus on their faces, because it is this collective identity of advocacy that she wishes to emphasize. We see difference in the bodies represented in the march, but feel a sense of unity across difference seeing the same message. The final photo in the essay is striking as it zooms in closely to the decorative fabric on the pride parade vehicle. The photo is cut so the fabric that features a characteristically Brown design in peacock blue; and the bright yellow flower garland to its left, look like a flag. A bright flag for a new queer Brown nation.

Hemani similarly tries to raise visibility and give voice to her community in Thorncliffe Park in Toronto through a second photo essay, entitled *Thorncliffe Park Drive Diaries.* Thorncliffe is a community of over 30,000 people, with a high proportion of Muslim, Pakistani, and immigrant community members (Keung, 2010). In this series, the author endeavours to capture the "everyday hum drum" of life in Thorncliffe, "in all honesty with no filters and no bars" (Hemani, 2012b). The photo essay begins with a picture of the Thorncliffe Park sign. Signs map the presence of communities, they demarcate belonging, and they mark histories of who is or was here (See Mawani, 2009; Oikawa, 2012). Here the sign marks the presence and visibility of the Brown community in Thorncliffe, and the sign welcomes us in. In her photos Hemani captures the seemingly mundane aspects of life, and yet each shot poignantly captures presence of the community embedded into these everyday aspects. In one shot, Hemani juxtaposes a grey Canada Post mailbox, with a bright red newspaper distribution box for the Urdu daily *Pakistan Post*, and English daily *24 Hours*. In some ways this layering represents how Canada is constructed and constituted: there is acceptance of an Urdu daily, side-by-side the mainstream daily, but it will always form the Other in so-called multicultural Canada. Still, there is a sense of belonging and community. Her shot of the side of a brown neighbourhood mailbox captures an advertisement that's been pasted on with wheat paste and has worn away around the edges. The advertisement is in Arabic, signalling a Brown presence. The wearing away of the advertisement gives a sense of the passage of time and the endurance of the community in the neighbourhood.

The themes of time and community are also seen in the photograph outside of the front entrance to an apartment complex, featuring two Brown men of different generations. The older Brown man is seated in an assistive mobile chair, wearing a suit jacket and taqiyah, head tilted forward, looking down. His presence is calm, quiet, pensive. In contrasting presence we see a

younger Brown man sitting on a bicycle beside him, one hand on the handlebars and the other holding his cellphone to the ear. His presence asserts youthfulness, cool, voice, and agency. There is simultaneously a sense of unity across generations in the photo, a sense of community reflected in their comfort in each other's presence.

In a similar photo also located at the front entrance of an apartment complex, we see a young Brown man with a backpack on, holding open the complex front door for an older Brown man who is pulling a stroller inside. Here we have a similar sense of community between generations, and an overall sense of unity. The photo also evokes a sense that this feeling of community is insular or limited to the Brown community, and there is a lack of unity across communities of colour in the neighbourhood. This sense comes across as the framing of the photograph extends beyond just the two Brown men. A tall, young, Black woman is also in the photograph. She is standing tall and straight, with her back directly towards the two Brown men trying to keep the door open so as to move the stroller inside. The author seems to suggest that this is a relationship that needs examination in the least, if not suggesting that there is a lack of communication, solidarity, or engagement between Brown and Black communities in Thorncliffe, and across communities of colour broadly. It's not clear how the author suggests such engagement can occur, except for consideration that these two communities find themselves in proximity to each other in the same neighbourhood, or perhaps that they in fact exist in this neighbourhood for the same reason.

The brightest shot of the essay features two women walking down a path near an apartment complex. They are showered in sunlight as they walk with their backs towards the camera, passing by a fence with a sign, "Thorncliffe Community Board". Here there are brightly coloured notices in English as well as a notice in Arabic. The women walk casually by the sign,

dressed in Pakistani clothing enjoying a late afternoon stroll. The bright colours give a sense of hope, and the casualness of the women walking implies comfort and belonging as well as pride in who they are. Many immigrant and racialized communities experience struggles in arrival, but these are not represented here. As Hemani intends, these photographs show "life as it is" in Thorncliffe Park, which from her perspective is to demonstrate a sunny quotidienne. Her photos challenge the dominant ways in which Thorncliffe Park is represented in media, which is poor, racialized, and overflowing with immigrants. The images emphasize a positive sense of fostering community and belonging.

The struggle of migration and its accompanying misery, as well as the perseverance and resistance of the Brown community in response is reflected in the personal narratives of Khalida Shahzadi, Humera Siddiqui, and Vanita Sabharwal (along with many other women and members of the community). Shahzadi's story invites us to the moment that she walked into her first home in Toronto, a feeling she describes as though "she was entering a box" (Goawala, 2012a). Like many recent arrivants, she would have to share a small living space with her husband and kids. The physical box is also a metaphor for her how she felt mentally and emotionally - life as a newcomer is difficult and there are so many doubts and feelings about the decision to come here, and all that has been left behind. The difficulty of adjustment can be overwhelming. Shahzadi embraced Toronto and was determined to overcome the language barrier so she enrolled in English classes and began the first job of her life, cleaning a grocery store. After years of similar jobs where she was made to feel ashamed, she decided to pursue her dream profession of being a hairdresser, eventually opening up her own salon. Through her perseverance, she learned to speak English "flawlessly", and grew to be a "proud working woman" (Goawala, 2012a). Shahzadi's story also includes the pain, struggle, and depression of caring for her husband for

four years as he battled Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; working two jobs, and raising her daughters. After her husband passed on, she battled depression but refused to take anti-depressants. It was difficult for her to cope without social and family supports being available to her. Without her husband she had no one to understand her two identities because her daughters could not fully understand "the Pakistani in her", only the bit of Canadianness she exemplified and shared with them (Goawala, 2012a). Shahzadi displayed resilience in the face of her loss. She continued to work, looked after her daughters, was active and partook in sewing clothes as a therapeutic hobby. Today she is "proud to be in a house full of independent women" (Goawala, 2012a). She exhibits the values of perseverance and resistance in the face of struggle: "sometimes in life we need terrible things to happen so we realize how beautiful life can be during the good times" (Goawala, 2012a). Siddiqui who in her twenty-seven years in Canada has always proudly resisted conformity to the norms of "western society" also demonstrates these values of sacrifice and perseverance. She has consciously chosen to wear traditional Pakistani clothing and despite the discrimination she has experienced including overt harassment and Islamophobia, and discrimination at work due to her race and religion, she "remains proud of her identity" and refuses to let others deter her from expressing herself (Goawala, 2012b). It was only when she decided to wear a niqab for a short period of time and had it torn off by a man in a grocery store, that she felt unsafe and decided against continuing to wear the niqab. Aside from that she has spoken out against the discrimination she has experienced, in one stance retaliating to the verbal abuse and racist insults she received from a stranger in line at the mall, only to be attacked physically. Siddiqui's complaint to the police rendered only discouragement from pursuing the matter further. Experiences of racism inspired Siddiqui to become an advocate for others. As tenant representative in a community housing project in St. Jamestown, she "voices

the complaints of other tenants" and "protests if appropriate action isn't taken" on behalf of low income newcomers (Goawala, 2012b). As her interviewer notes, Siddiqui "defies all racist, Islamophobic and sexist stereotypes about Muslim women" (Goawala, 2012b). Her shared experiences of racism have motivated her into community organizing.

Similarly, Sabharwal transformed her experiences of social exclusion into building community for others. As a newcomer, she felt isolated and confined to the home. As she engaged with other South Asian women in the neighbourhood park, she learned about social services and resources that were available. Seeing very few seniors engaged in the community, she decided to become more actively involved herself to mentor others and get them involved because "we have to own our own issues" (Shaikh & Syed, 2012). Sabharwal demonstrates initiative, resilience, and the value of community solidarity as she works to raise issues facing South Asians, and women in particular. Like Siddiqui and Shahzadi, she exudes a pride in finding her own way, in contributing to her community, and overcoming personal challenges and discrimination. For all three women, pride comes from the resilience and direct engagement in resistance for others.

This resilience can be seen in *Whispered Landings: what it feels like to be brown* where the authors use a bright and flourishing tree to represent the strength, resilience and beauty of Brownness. The tree metaphorizes for the burden and responsibility shouldered by labourers, migrants, and immigrants who support imperial economies and who are globally displaced, exploited for their labour and marginalized by law, by their employer, and by social systems. The beautiful and strong tree "that holds and supports", and whose "beauty that the world at large sees" and all at once is "needed, and unnoticed" highlights values of responsibility, strength and resilience, and sacrifice (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2012). It evokes the image of a strong mother, who

diligently cares for her family seemingly without notice by them (like Shahzadi and Sabharwal). In the final segment of the video, the visual is of feminine hands putting on bangles. Associated with the bangles and the hands are the memory of home stirred with the aroma of spinach being cooked, and the myth of multiculturalism that celebrates and appropriates the exotic elements of South Asian culture and requires the negotiation of identity. The "clanging" of bangles against each other also signifies a pride in one's self, one's identity, and one's community. As the video credits come on screen, a laughing feminine voice says "why should i justify myself to anyone?!", projecting youthful resilience while challenging subjectivity and dominant representation (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2012).

"My resistance are my words, my life and my memories which I share with you" states Krittika Ghosh in her personal narrative *The Revolution Starts at Home* (Ghosh, 2012b). She speaks to the dominant expectations of women, taught about "our roles as dutiful daughters, sisters, and wives". She demonstrates her self-pride in choosing to live her life openly with her same-sex partner at the cost of moving out of her family home, and home city of New York, to Toronto. As a community activist she has demonstrated solidarity to others around her, fighting for justice for women fleeing abusive relationships, those facing deportation or abuse by employers, and others suffering the consequences of racism in North America. Her personal resistance comes in the form of "verbalizing the things I have been taught to hide", challenging heteronormativity, and seeking to create her own history in addition to honoring the history of her community.

There seems to be a particular contestation and transformation of the representation of Brown women in the Brown Canada Project. In place of constructions of Brown women as submissive victims of culture, we see representations as fierce, independent, working women;

who will engage in physical resistance to defend themselves from racist violence. The relationship between gender and race in Brownness may suggest a type of Brown feminism that can be probed in the future.

As these stories demonstrate, members of the Brown community take pride in their resilience and resistance in the face of racism. This pride and the resistance can manifest differently across the community - with increasing visibility, raising voice, honouring histories and community resistance over time, survival and adjustment, and challenging overt racism. In this way, through the Brown Canada Project, members of the Brown community transform dominant narratives through self-representation. This is consistent with the resistant politics of self-representation seen particularly within Black, Chicana/o and indigenous communities (among others) in response to white supremacy and settler colonialism.

VII. Pedagogies for Education and Community Building

In framing the Brown Canada project, coordinators take the Komagata Maru story of 1914 as "our collective entry point". This seemed to generate a narrow vision of Brown as post-1914 and as primarily a Sikh or Indian entry point for the project. The Komagata Maru arrived on the shores of British Columbia well over three decades after South Asian migrants began arriving to the settler state of Canada. In addition, with the ship largely carrying migrants from India, this seemed exclusionary to the broad diversity of South Asian identities. However, project coordinators chose this entry point as significant in the history of South Asians because it represents the desire of the Canadian government (and settler community broadly) to maintain a "white Canada". Thus Brown Canada as a project brings to the forefront the racism and colonialism inherent to the creation and the maintenance of the settler colonial state. It also takes an anti-racist and anti-colonial entry point to the histories of South Asians on this land, in order to inform collective consciousness about a shared history, with the aim of transformative social change. The relevance and significance of the Komagata Maru incident is a thematic current through many of the Brown Canada submissions. In this section, I analyze my third thematic cluster of pedagogies for education and community building. The submissions suggest a pedagogy that evolves from shared values, shared resistance, and the use of history to engage and politicize South Asians across generations.

Shared Values

The Brown Canada Project comes full circle in a sense with the interview of Dr. Gurcharan Singh Jauhal, son of Puran Singh Jauhal, a passenger on the Komagata Maru. Where Brown Project coordinators use the history of the Komagata Maru as an entry point for education

and community building, so too the interview demonstrates how these objectives can be achieved. The interview reveals Puran Singh Johal's first-hand experiences on the Komagata Maru, allowing for the documentation of details of a history not even told in South Asian descriptions. It also shows the intergenerational linkages and fostering of pride in one's community and history that can happen in sharing these narratives across generations.

Learning that Puran Singh Jauhal was born in China reminds us that borders around the world look very different today than they did in the 19th century. While in many ways the flexibility of some migrants occurred under British imperialism, the transnationalism of migrant communities flies in the face of contemporary narratives of globalization. As Bannerji (2000) suggests, globalization is an "economic and cultural imperialism" (p.3). It also speaks to a "flexible passport" to which some migrants, particularly well-educated members of the British Empire in South Asia, had access and which continues to influence their social and class privilege particularly in relation to other people of colour today (Ong, 1999). Gurcharan Singh introduces us to his father, who he respectfully refers to by full name, through childhood memories. In recounting the ways in which his father and mother, Mohinder Kaur, contributed to the community and helped the poorer members of the community, he gives us insight into the Brown values that shape their relationship to community activism. His mother would help poorer families in the community organize weddings for their children; lending bedding supplies, cooking equipment, and money to use for the celebrations. This is a significant contribution given class and caste boundaries, as well as the value and function of the institution of marriage among Indian families. Dowry continues to play a big role in Indian marriages and demands are placed on families regardless of their wealth.

We are also introduced to the value of solidarity as we hear of Puran Singh's experiences on the Komagata Maru. Having boarded the ship as a scholar who was to study at the University of British Columbia, Singh had valid documentation and had paid the relevant fees for permitted entry into Canada. As most narratives of the Komagata Maru recount, most of the ship's passengers were refused entry. Singh attempted to negotiate with Canadian officials on behalf of the denied passengers but was unsuccessful. The ship was ordered to return to India with the threat that refusal would result in the ship being blown up. Singh refused to disembark "in solidarity with the other passengers" (Lobo, 2012b). We also learn from Singh's narrative that the ship carried Japanese and German nationals who expressed support for the Sikh cause of Indian independence from the British Empire. The ship's passengers faced the guns of the British upon arrival in Calcutta, and many were shot and killed, while others were captured and jailed. Puran Singh was captured and placed in solitary confinement for five years. Upon his release, he went underground for fifteen years to continue his work in the freedom struggle; participating in demonstrations, liberating Sikh temples, and even surviving the Jallian Walla Bagh massacre of 1919. Singh's efforts (and those of freedom fighters everywhere) were met with success in 1947 with India's formal independence. Singh demonstrates values of selflessness, sacrifice and perseverance in the cause of justice, despite the personal costs to himself, including risk of death. The impact of his legacy is demonstrated in his son's commitment to education and increasing awareness of South Asian languages; and community engagement through the building of the Weston Road Gurdwara. Sikh gurdwaras are places of worship but also sites of community and support where anyone is welcome to partake. Gurcharan Singh thus shares his father's values of serving others. His narrative also makes me conscious of the idea that if the Komagata Maru remains symbolically representative of South Asians, we are also always going to be seen as the

violent revolutionaries that dared to challenge, and eventually successfully overthrew, the colonial dominant in attaining independence from the British Empire. In the same raw manner that the Komagata Maru story paints bodies Brown, so too does this realization, though it is also accompanied by a sense of power, resistance and pride in being Brown. Singh's narrative thus reflects how Brown values of sacrifice and justice inform solidarity and action, as well as how history can be a tool for anti-racist education and building community across generations.

Shared struggles

Chris Ramsaroop also demonstrates the impact of shared values of sacrifice and justice, as well as shared experiences in motivating resistance. Ramsaroop, a community organizer, tells us what motivated him to get involved in the labour movement advocating for migrant workers:

> *"My grandmother was a sugar cane worker in Trinidad. She was somebody who raised her kids all by herself and my mom was also a single parent .... Something's fundamentally wrong when some people have to work but they can't eat. And for me I thought that was something that needed to be re-dressed.... When I was a kid I promised myself that if I saw anything that looked like slavery and indentureship, I would do something to fight it. When I looked at the fields of Ontario, and I saw what was going on with farm workers, this was something we couldn't turn our back on."* (Ghosh, 2012b).

Ramsaroop links the struggles and injustices faced by his own family with those of farm and migrant workers broadly and engages in migrant justice and labour organizing. He also injects these values into his organizing, seeking to bring workers together across lines of race in

recognition of the ways in which employers and governments pit communities, such as Indo-Caribbean, South Asian, Afro-Caribbean, Thai, Filipino, Mexican and Latin American communities, against each other. Ramsaroop tries to bring workers together across lines of race in recognition of the divide and conquer strategy invoked in a capitalist and white supremacist society. He also aims to unite workers across boundaries of difference in terms of class, language, and gender, recognizing that they are fundamental and relational aspects of experience that affect their lived realities (Dei, 1996b). In this way, he demonstrates how critical anti-racism praxis can be used to build coalitions across identities and shared experiences.

The values of sacrifice and commitment to justice can be felt as Ramsaroop shares the painful stories of migrant workers who are being deported, values that he himself and the workers share. These workers are in the painful position of being "discarded by their employers" because they are injured, and made to return to their country of origin, never to be allowed back into Canada (Ghosh, 2012c). Nonetheless, in their final hours of being in Canada, they will fight for compensation that is owed to them, and fight for justice for others to receive their compensation. Regardless of the extreme conditions of oppression that they face, or the personal costs or potential harms, these workers demonstrate selflessness and resilience. The importance of history is demonstrated as Ramsaroop describes an event hosted by the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance and the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians where members were able to share personal stories of resistance on the job that they "cannot tell elsewhere" (Ghosh, 2012c). He suggests that in the absence of creating such a space, these stories and the lessons of these experiences would be lost. However by ensuring "our voices are not lost in this", they can be shared with the aim of informing community organizing. They can also be celebrated to honor members of the community that have come through before us and paved the way (Ghosh,

2012c). Ramsaroop suggests that sharing and learning from these stories also allows us to challenge dominant narratives of immigrants and racialized communities having the "floodgates" opened to us in 1965, as if our history on this land begins there. He notes that in truth, Brown people have a proud history of over 100 years of resistance - developing community organization, political parties, organizing different sectors of workers.

Just as Ramsaroop suggests organizing across multi-racial lines, so too do other contributors suggest a framework of linking struggles against racism. From the initial use of her metaphor of the wooden colonizer's house, Diaz takes as an entry point the joint struggles of indigenous and arrivant communities. Rather than framing the differing experiences of coloniality experienced by indigenous and arrivant communities as divergent and irreconcilable, she talks about the differential impacts of the *same tools* such as the use of "twisted laws" that allowed for the dispossession and destruction of land, and prevented the docking of the Komagata Maru. Here Diaz describes the differential ways in which the logics of white supremacy are applied to indigenous communities and non-indigenous people of colour and articulates how resistance to these logics can form common ground among these communities (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010). She links imperialism to genocide of indigenous peoples as well as the continued engagement of the Canadian military in imperial war around the world. She highlights the irony of telling immigrants that they do not belong, as if Canada was nothing before European settlement; an irony that manifests itself in the form of broken treat promises and "failed environmental protections" that are offered to indigenous peoples today in recognition of their presence and entitlement to land. She demonstrates the impact of colonization in the telling of history and in education, where the histories of racialized and indigenous peoples are ignored; and in dominant discourses where they are constructed as

stereotypes. The contradictory myths of nationalism, multiculturalism and immigration are highlighted in the waving of a "racist multicultural flag". Diaz also highlights the dynamics of power and agency in the relationship between immigrants and indigenous peoples:

> "*I was not invited to the table*
>
> *No welcoming feast*
>
> *I was not invited to eat with the old settlers*
>
> *But I was made an accomplice in colonial practice and realities"* (Diaz, 2012b).

She highlights complicity, but makes it clear that immigrants do not share the power of the colonial dominant. She suggests that indigenous and racialized peoples can come together with common cause at the table "to the side". Seeing the intense consequences of racism and colonialism on members of these communities, there is an opportunity for these communities to work together against the logics of white supremacy and colonialism.

The need to connect struggles and document history is also reflected in the reflection piece by Rana Khan about the launch of Ali Kazimi's book, *Undesirables.* The talk itself allowed for Kazimi to engage members of the South Asian community in the details of the Komagata Maru event, as well as the broader history of immigration at that time. Kazimi is explicit in the talk and the book about the positioning of South Asians in the context of white Canada and the Komagata Maru. As Khan reflects about the book launch, she says issues of race and racism are "topics that aren't discussed very openly but impact the communities thus affected" (Khan, 2012a). Unlike Kazimi, who tries to position the significance of the Komagata Maru in the context of today's "multicultural Canada", Khan relegates the episode to a "sordid

chapter" in Canadian history. She suggests in light of the Brown Canada Project and the book launch, the importance of documenting and sharing histories and "learning from the past", seeing Kazimi connect the Komagata Maru to the boats of Tamil refugees that have been turned away from the shores of Canada in recent years. Khan also reflects on the entry point of the Brown Canada Project:

> *"As a South Asian, I know that the struggle for identity and acceptance still continues, so Komagata Maru is a valid reference point in the history of South Asians in Canada."*
> (Khan, 2012a)

Other contributors to the discussion connected the Komagata Maru to Japanese internment during the second world war, the Chinese head tax law, and detainment of Tamil asylum seekers on the MV Sun Sea. In this way they paint the Komagata Maru as just one example among many other exclusions and policies that exist to support the maintenance of a white Canada. As Khan suggests, this history provides a "subtext that still endures", suggesting that she recognizes ongoing racism in the contemporary political moment (2012a). As Kazimi's book, and the Brown Canada Project demonstrate, moments like the Komagata Maru are examples not only of racism, but also resilience and resistance against racism. The discussions at the book launch also suggest the need to frame these incidents as being part of a broader racism that pervades Canadian society as a framework for engaging in their challenge.

Philomena (Philoo) Menezes also demonstrates this approach with her "helping hand". When she arrived in Canada, she had a difficult time adjusting with no resources and lack of community. She was involved in the Catholic Women's League, which supported her spiritually,

and benefited from the kindness of colleagues who provided necessary items to help her with raising her children. In her career as an occupational therapist, she mentored immigrants and disadvantaged families with similar experiences. When she fractured her humerus, she lost the use of her right hand and arm, though she trained to recover much of its use. Regardless of her pain or the loss in function of her arm, she and her family continued to support their community through the organizing of Christmas parties for disadvantaged youth; and barbecues, pancake lunches and international food nights for their parish. Philoo also continued her work through the Catholic Women's League, fundraising and doing advocacy for the Native Women's Association of Canada where her focus was on supporting indigenous women and children, and clean water projects for Northern Ontario reserves. She thus demonstrates that values of solidarity and engagement trump circumstance or hardship. She also approaches her community work from the perspective of connecting communities and issues, taking a broader approach to addressing racism and exclusion by supporting the struggles of indigenous women.

The linking of resistance movements also occurs in the Crescent Town celebration of International Mother Language Day, hosted by CASSA and the Ontario Bengali Cultural Society. Here, a member of CASSA links the struggle that followed Pakistan's declaration of Urdu as its sole language, which resulted ultimately in the creation of Bangladesh as a nation, to the struggles of the Komagata Maru. He suggests that these struggles can come full-circle, noting that the Canadian government that prevented the Komagata Maru from docking is also funding CASSA and its Brown Canada Project[6] (CASSA, 2012). While the linking of struggles is important and there is recognition of the racism of the Canadian government with respect to the denial of entry to Brown people, there is a very significant difference in the oppressor-oppressed

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[6] As noted earlier, the Brown Canada Project is funded in part by the Community Historical Recognition Program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

relationship of Canada-India and Pakistan-Bangladesh. The partition of India in 1947, and subsequent creation of Bangladesh must be understood in the context of British imperialism and the propagation of religious divide under colonial rule, rather than an equation to settler colonialism.

The talk also featured elected representatives of Crescent Town, including Minister of Parliament Beaches - East York Matthew Kellway and Councillor Janet Davis, who thanked the Bangladeshi community for their "contributions to enrich Canadian culture and society". In this way they frame Bengalis as welcome immigrants under a multicultural framework, whose contributions are limited to injecting diversity and culture into Canadian society. Kellway also spoke to wanting to create "a more socially just society", touching on the need to address systemic inequities, but refraining from articulating that we need a more *racially just* society. Amidst congratulating the Bengali community, Davis also takes up space in the event to give thanks to the Massey family that "founded" Crescent Town, repositioning the colonial dominant in the conversation, and inviting Bengalis to be a part of the history of the town. She further thanks the community for making her feel "welcome", denoting a sense of xenophobia and fear towards the racialized, immigrant Other. She also reminds immigrants and racialized peoples of our economic worth admiring the "success of businesses along the Danforth." She does note her hope that there will soon be a monument erected in the community similar to the International Mother Languages Day monument in Dhaka. While the impact of the monument on the community in Crescent Town remains to be seen, and it may contribute to a greater sense of belonging of Bengalis, it can also be coopted into a framework of multiculturalism. Such a framework suggests that immigrants are welcome but nonetheless do not enjoy true inclusion and representation. For example, if there is a large presence of Bengalis as well as other people

of colour in Crescent Town[7], what does it suggest if there all three representatives on the municipal, provincial, and federal levels are white? The monument also looks to celebrate the languages of arrivant communities, and does not honor indigenous languages that have been erased and lost or that continue to be spoken today. While the absence of invited participation from the councillor as well as members of parliament could be portrayed as not being supportive of the Bengali community, members of the community must also interrogate what it means to have or to desire recognition from white politicians or the state. In their summary of the event, CASSA notes that "Bangladeshi and Canadian snacks" were served and that the event was a reflection on the "history and culture of Bangladeshi Canadians". We still see therefore a sense of hyphenating of identity that takes place, and a racial exclusion from being Canadian.

Creating critical spaces

Beyond the role of shared values of sacrifice, justice and selflessness; and the coming together on the basis of shared resistance against racism and colonialism; the Brown Canada project submissions suggest that history plays a key role in cultivating identity, race consciousness, and political engagement. They also emphasize the creation of spaces for sharing and vocalizing experiences of racism as a means of engaging South Asians into anti-racist work. As Sukhvinder Johl suggests, engaging South Asians in labour justice and organizing requires teaching about the work of unions and why they exist (Ghosh & Goawala, 2012a). This is not to say that members of the community do not understand the purpose of unions, but more so the nature and value of the work that can be done through union representation. As Johl reveals, members of the community have stories about discrimination with respect to promotion, pay,

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7 Using language as a proxy, there is a significant if not majority presence of people of colour in Crescent Town (See City of Toronto, 2013).

favoritism in the allocation of overtime but they do not get involved or think about unions as a space to bring forward these issues. He states that if organizers create spaces for these stories to be told, they can motivate more members of the community to get involved with their unions and in labour organizing. More of this work is needed if people of colour hope to shape the goals of the labour movement in Canada, in particular to address the racialization of labour and systemic inequities that exist. Johl suggests that there has been some change in the general perception of South Asians in the state, but that in other ways racist perceptions continue to prevail. He notes that racism is less overt than saying "you're brown, we're not gonna let you in", and acts in more insidious and hidden ways, such as in the racialization of labour policies (Ghosh & Goawala, 2012a). Using the Foreign Temporary Workers Program as an example, he argues that the government aims to create a two-tiered system of labour that undermines the power of unions or structural resistance as has been enacted in the past. He underscores the need to know the history of union organizing in Canada. In speaking about the importance of history in South Asian communities broadly, Johl also points to the need to name colonialism:

> *"It's always been somebody else telling our stories to someone else. And those stories are always never really the truth. Even the history; it it isn't written by us, if you look back thousands of years. It isn't written by us. It's written by those that ruled us over the years, from Britain and whatever... It is the colonial history… told from their perspective. We have to have our own stories told by us. I think that's how you can learn from the past plus hopefully inspire the future generations because that's who we exist for." (Ghosh & Goawala, 2012a).*

The importance of documenting history lies in the capacity to build power in labour organizing, and organizing for rights on behalf of South Asians. However in articulating a need to decolonize South Asian histories, Johl also suggests that knowledge of history and the act of decolonizing history is about gaining agency, and challenging dominant representations and constructions of South Asians. The act of sharing decolonized histories furthers the fostering of community across generations, and links generations together in a path to make life better for those that follow us.

Similarly, Jaimungal Ramdyal saw the need for greater participation of racialized and immigrant people in unions in Canada, and chose to get involved. He was inspired too by previous experience in Guyana where he saw the role of unions in representing "less educated and less fortunate" workers in the sugar industry (Ghosh & Goawala, 2012b). He suggests that there is a greater acceptance of immigrants seen in Canada, an acceptance that can be felt when he walks in Toronto's "ethnic" neighbourhoods and sees someone of his own background. While Ramdyal articulates a progressive position of an open immigration policy, he suggests that those that are rejected from entry by the state would contribute to the economy, reinforcing the place of South Asians in Canada as through labour and immigration under a framework of multiculturalism. Ramdyal demonstrates the ongoing and material consequences of race by affirming the contributions of South Asians in terms of labour and economic value to the state than affirming the value of South Asians as people (Omi and Winant, 1993). In this way, he falls prey to the harsh realities of how South Asians are constructed in dominant discourses and our place in the capitalist, settler-colonial state. Like Johl, he suggests that sharing South Asian histories can build community across generations, allowing for contemporary generations and activists to learn from the struggles and the eradication of barriers done by those that preceded

them. Taken together, the two articulate history as a pedagogy for building an intergenerational community and anti-racist labour justice.

The need for creating critical spaces around questions of identity that cater to youth is demonstrated by Hindurika Satchithananthamoorthy and Rana Khan with a reflection on the York Region District School Board South Asian Student Leadership Conference. The conference aimed at "inculcating a sense of self-respect and leadership skills" within seventh and eighth graders, and featured guest speakers, such as the Executive Director of CASSA, Neethan Shan. Shan is a social justice activist, former school trustee and political leader. Other speakers included representatives from the York Regional police (Khan, 2012b). As an active member of the Tamil community in Toronto, who has done much political and anti-racist work supporting the Brown community broadly, Shan is a good choice for presenting to and engaging South Asian youth about leadership. In addition, Shan can challenge racist stereotypes and expectations, and educate youth about history, identity and engagement. On the other hand, it is not clear why the police were brought in to do a presentation to the youth. This is regressive and not demonstrative of an anti-racist praxis. It is reminiscent of state-sponsored security curriculum and programs that encourage police presence in schools that exists across the Greater Toronto Area[8], which have stated objectives of reducing violence and crime, and engaging youth, but instead contribute to the policing of racialized bodies. The presence of cops only serves to reinforce racial stereotypes and expectations of young South Asians as being engaged in criminal and gang activity. In this way, "leadership" becomes about creating positive relationships between youth and the police, rather than about supporting community and challenging injustice.

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[8] The Toronto District School Board has a "School Resource Officer" program that has been criticized by community members (See Public Safety, 2014, CTVToronto, 2009).

The conference also included discussions about personal and collective histories, as well as identity. The history of the Komagata Maru was shared with the youth as a lead up to the exercise on identity. In the two-part exercise, students were first given set categories, such as family, hometown, hobbies, history and school with which to define themselves; and in the second part they were able to freely express their identities. This engaged the youth in a conversation about what restrictions can do to self-identity, and they identified the ways in which media stereotypes and family/societal expectations can influence self-identity. When asked why their histories mattered, students identified history as defining their identities. As Khan notes, spaces such as those created by the conference are crucial:

"I believe the success of the workshop (and the leadership conference) was that it provided a space for students to critically think about and discuss topics that they otherwise would not have the opportunity to do in their schools." (Khan, 2012b)

Khan articulates here that schools are not sites for meaningful engagement for youth to engage in questions of self-identity, representation, or community history. Looking at the identity mindmaps created by the youth, the influence of the prescribed categories can be seen on the scope and detail of the maps created, with more detail in the free reign maps. Notably, in the prescribed categories, students were made to choose between South Asian and Canadian, which limited their ability to adequately identify themselves. Contrarily, in the free reign mind map, students were able to choose multiple and/or other signifiers. For example, some of the students expressed a proud Tamil identity. The free-reign maps also give insights into the ways in which students conceptualize their gender identities, sexual orientations, and relationships with

families, friends, and other youth. This workshop seems valuable in its capacity as a consciousness-raising project for youth, creating a space for them to challenge notions of identity and self-identity, the role of media and family expectations in representation, and affirming the value of knowing one's history.

CASSA's Brown Canada workshop with seniors from the South Asian Women's Center was framed in a similar manner as the youth workshop, but generated a very different discussion. The workshop facilitated by two young women, engaged senior women from diverse backgrounds and experiences in arrival to and within Canada. The introduction of the workshop with the story of the Komagata Maru generated strong expressions of shock from the women, most of who were not aware of the story. In sharing their personal experiences of immigration, the women contextualized the incident as part of the "trials and tribulations of being the 'other' in Canadian society" (Akhtar & Goawala, 2012). This led to a discussion of current policies and issues of immigration in the historical context of the Komagata Maru, as well as the pros and cons of life in Canada. While South Asians often face many challenges in arriving to Canada, and hardship when they arrive, there is often a sense of opportunity that exists here which is used to justify to one's self that moving here was worth it. As the exercise the seniors did of writing postcards to family members in their home country suggests, there are some hard truths about life in Canada, and being able to write these on the postcards is cathartic for the women. Out of pride, many immigrants pretend to those that they left behind that things are great in Canada when they are not. The value of the workshop is demonstrated in how participants "felt closer". The workshop demonstrates how such critical spaces can assist in building community through the sharing personal stories and experiences, and facilitate spiritual healing. In this way, the

workshop brings a critical reading of race and racism that considers the spiritual implications and realities alongside the political and ideological ones (Dei, 2007).

A new framework

While the Brown Canada project has facilitated valuable and critical discussions of identity, history, and community; some of the participants revealed the need for a broader framework of political engagement and resistance for South Asians. This broad framework would engage South Asians across generations, across ethnicities, and across class in political activism through education about the history of Canada and Canadian politics.

Arsalan Samdani came to Canada as an international student from Pakistan, figuring Canada was a safe place for South Asians post 9/11, and that credentials from a Canadian university would serve him better than those from institutions in Pakistan. Consistent with one of the many national myths about Canada, Samdani saw Canada as "neutral" in international affairs (Goawala, 2012c). When he took on jobs in factories and warehouses to help pay his tuition fees however, Samdani saw mostly South Asian workers working long hours for minimum wage. He realized that life in Canada was a struggle for many immigrants and racialized peoples, which "tainted" his perception of Canada as a "flawless" society. He began to follow Canadian politics and saw that Canadian foreign policy was biased, though he continued to perceive Canada as better than elsewhere. Samdani sought critical spaces in campus clubs to discuss political issues but did not find them. The death of a friend in a Pakistani earthquake due to a poorly constructed building led him to pursue public policy and development. This combined with his experiences of seeing racialization and exploitation of labour led him to create the Pakistan Development Fund (PDF), a space for students to come together across lines of class to discuss political issues

continuously. PDF aims to support marginalized people in Pakistan and encourages and engages participation from Pakistani diaspora from across various backgrounds. The group functions with the principles of pooling advocacy and resources in support of political projects in Pakistan (such as relief efforts following the 2010 floods), and democratic, membership-driven, decision-making (such as to decide where resources are allocated). The group also hosts and engages members in discussions of political issues in Pakistan where group members take turns researching and educating other members in the group about the issues. Samdani and PDF demonstrate a type of diasporic activism, making the most of resources and agency available to them in Canada and connecting with social justice organizations in Pakistan. The active engagement of diverse perspectives on political issues is key to ensure that the approach that PDF takes to activism and development is well informed, and reflects the will of the marginalized communities in Pakistan that it aims to support.

Samdani suggests that the main hurdles to getting South Asian youth engaged in politics in Canada include a lack of a broad organizing banner for the community, lack of awareness of Canadian historical context, and a sense that socioeconomic circumstances are worse in their home country and thus require priority. He highlights an interesting aspect of the immigrant experience by suggesting that for many, there is a lack of awareness about being systemically marginalized because they are not minorities in their home countries. This has implications for how we engage members of the diasporic community into activism. He suggests that "that we need to form a united group" that brings South Asian issues into the mainstream, noting there is still a significant level of systemic discrimination to address since the Komagata Maru:

"While such actions are not happening as openly as they used to, we still see that there is clear discrimination on the basis of colour, especially in the workforce. I think it is high time we call a spade a spade…. By not discussing these issues, we are only encouraging discrimination. Things have certainly changed in the sense that you do see people of colour and people of South Asian origin working, however one would have expected much more in 100 years." (Goawala, 2012c)

He also suggests more favourable representation in media of South Asians sharing their experiences, as well as teaching youth the political history of Canada and the history of South Asians in Canada, can further their politicization and engagement. He thus articulates that social, economic, and political circumstances for South Asians have not changed, and that a broader framework for political engagement is needed.

Like Samdani, Maya Bhullar suggests that not much has changed in the hundred years that have passed since the Komagata Maru incident. She suggests that this is the key to politically organizing South Asians in the current political context of Canada:

"If we get people to understand that things have not changed from Komagata Maru to now, right, and the new immigration policies are very much in line with the mentality that was there then, right, we can then start building enough of a movement to bring the different elements of our community together." (Ghosh & Goawala, 2012c).

Using examples of two-tiered labour (skilled and unskilled) and the government's treatment of refugees more recently, such as on the MV Sun Sea; she suggests that the state

propagates a divide among South Asians. While she does not explicitly name race, she frames race as being central to how policies of immigration and labour are established. She also suggests that a framework of naming racism in these systems will motivate South Asians to action. Naming race and racism is also an integral aspect of decolonization projects (Dei, 2007). She notes that the current government is particularly "difficult to move" and the only way to achieve change on the federal level will be through community organizing. She thus emphasises the development of a strong political and electoral base for making change, and suggests that such a base can only be achieved through the political engagement and empowerment of South Asians themselves. While targeting regressive, racist, and exploitative policies and laws, and dethroning of the Harper government are important; it does not represent an ends but a means. From there, we need to challenge the structures of a government that overwhelmingly does not represent the shared interests of the broad community and the land that sustains us. We need to develop structures where indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour have full participation in the processes, institutions and decisions that affect our lives.

Organizing for this vision must occur in stages. A starting point for such a process is to amass a critical mobilization of community members, particularly from racialized and indigenous communities. One means of achieving this critical mass is through solidarity actions and relationship building, which can foster multi-racial coalitions. Solidarity is not an identity, it is a process; it requires ongoing engagement and renewal. Another means of organizing is through the mobilization of a broad framework under which communities can organize, such as an identity-based framework (like Brownness), an issues-based framework (anti-racism, anti-colonialism, anti-capitalism), or a sector-based framework (labour, schools). Through

engagement of more community members at-large, a broad base for gaining political power can be amassed.

Social movements also need to offer potential models for problematizing liberal notions of democracy. This includes models that actively facilitate shared participation across communities, and aim to mitigate power differences across race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, status, empire, and geography. There can be no compromise on the path to ensuring a decision-making structure where participants are given an equitable opportunity to participate. One model is the creation of constituency-based caucuses, such as for indigenous communities, and non-indigenous racialized communities. Caucuses could also be created to account for differences across gender, sexuality, and other axes of difference. These cannot be merely tokenistic or symbolic caucuses - they must be embedded into decision-making structures. This will allow for the perspectives and experiences of marginalized communities to be built into decision-making processes. It also affirms community experiences, identities, and knowledges, which can be brought forward. It also helps to place marginalized voices and communities at the centre, on an equitable platform for making decisions that affect them. This is exemplary of truer democracy and inclusion. Such a model would need to adequately address intersectionality. It would also need to create spaces for the caucuses to reflect on the impact of policies, systems, and decisions on their constituency; to consult community members at-large; and to systematically bring forward their insights to the larger decision-making body. In this way, over time, the direction of our governance structure can reflect the values, priorities and visions of indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour.

The Brown Canada Project submissions reveal that members of the Brown community are engaged in anti-racist work that links struggles and aims to foster broader community

engagement and resistance. In particular, there are linkages being drawn between the struggles of indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour, and the experiences of colonization. Shared values of sacrifice, selflessness, and notions of justice, and shared experiences of racism foster community engagement. There is a recognition of the need to unite in a common cause of destabilizing systems of oppression. The submissions also articulate a pedagogy of education through history to engage and develop community, and mobilize towards broad-based resistance. The story of the Komagata Maru plays a big role in this pedagogy as it demonstrates the construction and maintenance of Canada as a white settler nation, and the dominant racisms towards South Asians and other communities of colour. Many of the participants express the need for a broad banner or framework of organizing for South Asians in Canada, as well as the need to link community experiences of racism. Some of the shared insights for this broad framework included identifying racism and colonialism, using histories of experiences of the self or community to educate across generations, engagement in the community for self-healing and/or to help others, and addressing systemic racism. The linking of racist experiences within the settler colonial nation-state is already occurring between and across indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour, in recognition that similar logics of white supremacy underpin their propagation.

VIII. Conclusion

The stories contained within the Brown Canada Project give voice to the courage, suffering and resistance of members of the Brown community, experiences with which I too am intimately familiar. Engaging in the stories has allowed me to connect with the spirit injury, courage, and resistance of my parents who arrived in Toronto in the late 1970s, and my own experiences of exclusion and negotiating belonging. Arriving young, having limited resources, being confronted with overt discrimination on the streets, and lacking the support of family, friends, or broader community; my parents had to rely on each other. I think of how my mother moved to Canada in the month of December two weeks after she and my father were married, and what it meant for her to be separated from her family. I remember the countless ways in which my parents lent support to other members of the community and our extended family. I think back to the experiences growing up, experiences of *feeling brown*, and being taught values of sacrifice, selflessness and justice, and above all, self-worth. I recall being taught that being able to do hard work, and to do it honestly, was valuable onto itself; that education was the most important thing, and no one could take that away from you. All of these values and lessons, and the histories that accompanied them - stories of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, India's successful independence from British colonial rule, and the genocide of Sikhs in 1984 - have allowed me to really know myself, and to be proud of who I am. I am thankful for being able to assert and affirm Brown identity. I am thankful for the strength and resilience of my community. I respect the work of members of the community who currently and on an ongoing basis, engage in challenging racism and discrimination (and those who have come before us and will come after), and do not require a new framework. The Project highlights some of the exercises, workshops, and methodologies developed by South Asians to raise consciousness in youth, build community

among seniors, and organize across a diversity of experiences along the axes of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. I am privileged to be able to connect with their stories and experiences, to learn from them, and to be energized by the vibrancy of the community. Through the narratives, knowledges, and experiences that are shared, the Brown Canada Project has helped me to better understand my own positionality. It has made me reflect on how I do anti-racist work. It has made me thoughtful about the ways in which I will teach my children about who they are in the future. I only hope to contribute in an ongoing manner to the community and towards shared struggles against injustice all around us.

Towards a pedagogy of Brown

In April of 2014, an organization that calls itself "Immigration Watch Canada" distributed a series of flyers in the Greater Toronto Area targeting members of the Brown community. The flyers expressed racist and xenophobic sentiments towards (racialized) immigrants, suggesting that they were replacing "Mainstream Canadians" in the community's social fabric (Canadian Press, 2014a). Using a before-and-after set of photos featuring white people in the before, and Sikhs in the after, they ask "is that really what you want?" A second set of flyers was distributed in August suggesting that "third world immigrants" threaten the future of "White Canadians," who will soon become "a minority in their own country" (Canadian Press, 2014b). The flyers once again feature images of Sikh members of the community. As these flyers demonstrate (among many other examples), racism continues to be alive and well in our society because the systems that feed it are well-nourished. They also demonstrate how it is also possible to perpetuate racism without making explicit reference to race at all (Omi & Winant, 1993, p.7).

In this case the use of terms such as "mainstream," "immigrants," and "third world" perform the racism required to render Brown members of the community the racialized Other.

From opening the door to one's house and finding this flyer on your doorstep, to countless other experiences in everyday life, "race is a relatively impermeable part of our identities" (Omi & Winant, 1993, p.5). Recognizing its material, social, political, and spiritual consequences, I have tried to "reconstruct and unveil, rather than submerge and obscure" the meaning of race (Hutchinson, 2001, p.1486). In theorizing Brown identity and doing an analysis of the Brown Canada Project, I aimed to bring forward and reveal the racial meaning assigned to Brownness and Brown identity for members of the South Asian community and to bring forward our experiences, struggles, and self-representations. I also sought to ask new questions about the saliency of Brown identity, and possibilities of Brown acting as a framework for anti-racism and anti-colonial resistance as a starting point of decolonization.

Through a critical discourse analysis of the community submissions of the Brown Canada Project, this thesis demonstrates the link between race and identity, and between experiences of racism and community engagement. It also reveals the need for critical spaces to discuss, learn from, and honor personal and community histories, experiences, and acts of resistance. Finally, it offers some lessons for resistant politics and solidarity. The relationship between race and identity is seen first and foremost in the naming of race, both by participants and by CASSA in the creation of the Brown Canada Project. The Project takes Brown as the entry point in marking the terms and grounds of political struggle (Dei, 1996a). The salience of Brown identity is seen in the spirit injury described by members of the community, which is associated with the impact of migration, loss, and a sense of longing and/or dis-locatia. The salience of Brown identity is also demonstrated in the racialization of social, economic and political systems, and technologies

of labour and citizenship, that have been "fundamental to the creation of racialized nations, space and national identities" (Dua, 2007, p.449). These systems allow for the state, employers, and individuals in society broadly to perpetuate racial discrimination and deny power and agency to South Asians and other racialized communities without naming race. In particular, racism is facilitated through constructions of South Asians as foreigners, immigrants, or unskilled labourers.

The Brown Canada Project also reveals the need to interrogate the relationship between race, gender and Brown identity more closely. Brown women experience racism and oppression in particular ways that intersect with sexism. For example, one of the Brown Canada Project's participants shared her story of experiencing a violent racist act where a man in a public space tore off her niqab. Here, Islamophobia intersects with entitlement to the bodies of women of colour to perpetuate sexist racism. Brown women also experience a particular type of dominant oppression that occurs through the perpetuation of stereotypes of them as domestic and submissive within family spaces. This dominant oppression further marginalizes them through notions of honour and shame. Brown women also display a particular Brown feminism and pride in the ways in which they resist the dominant expectations (internal and external to the community), representations, and values that are placed on them. Many of the stories shared in the Brown Canada Project reflected the experiences of racism and resistance of Brown women, who seek education and pursue careers as means of empowerment, becoming independent, and becoming activists in the community.

As the Brown Canada Project reveals, a politics of Brown identity must counter the perpetuation of racism and the underlying white supremacist ideology of social, economic, and political systems by explicitly naming race and racism. In short, it must act as a race

consciousness project to reveal the deliberate creation of "empty suitcases" and facilitate the spiritual healing through forging of community under a broad banner of Brown identity. The work of Brown identity cannot end there, however. The spirit injury and ongoing experiences of racism must also be addressed through individual and community self-affirmation. This involves subverting the colonial dominant's representation of Brown people in media, in discourse, in literature, in histories, in curriculum, and through the perpetuation of stereotypes. The Brown Canada Project is about self-definition and self-representation, allowing the voices, experiences, narratives, and histories of Brown people to speak for themselves. Subversion occurs in the images of Brown as active, engaged, and resilient in the face of systemic racism and oppression. It counters the stereotypes and representations of Brown people as perpetual foreigners, undesirables, model minorities, and terrorists with images of Brown as revolutionaries, community organizers, independent working women, openly queer, strong, and *proud*. This act of self-definition is in and of itself, an act of resistance (Dei, 2007). The Brown Canada Project, or Brown identity broadly, can further act as a launching pad for a politics of representation. A politics of representation is not merely expressive; it is also *constitutive* in social and political life (Hall, 1992). As such, the deliberate mobilization of a Brown identity as demonstrated in the Brown Canada Project can be used challenge and transform the representation of Brown people in society. Maya Bhullar reflects on the potential impacts of such a mobilization:

"If people tell our stories for us, it's unfortunately a broken story, it's half the story, and from their perception. If we tell our own stories, it's about our own empowerment. It's not about how they empowered us, or they let us. It's how we did it, you know. And it allows us then to also create the kind of linkages that we want." (Ghosh & Goawala,

2012c).

As Bhullar notes, self-representation is key to empowerment and to forming communities in a manner unfettered by intrusion and influence of the colonial dominant. As demonstrated by the Black Power movement and its intersecting Black is Beautiful cultural movement, a Brown politics of self-representation can also lead to individual and community self-affirmation. Such affirmation responds to white standards not with an "anti," but a pride in being "different not less," subverting the very basis of such standards in the first place.

The desire for and value of a Brown framework beyond transforming discourses and representations is also expressed by community members who suggest the need for a broad framework to facilitate mass mobilization of South Asians for the purpose of political influence within the nation-state. While the formation of a political lobby group would represent a significant accomplishment in terms of organizing and unity, having the potential for making anti-racist change, there is a need to collectively shift focus from solidarity in challenging discrimination (such as that contained in policies of labour or citizenship), to solidarity in decolonization (such as challenging these systems of oppression or the basis of the state as a whole).

The potential for Brown identity to act as a decolonization framework is reflected in the pedagogies of education and community building contained within the narratives and submissions of the Brown Canada Project. Members of the community suggest that shared values of sacrifice, solidarity, and selflessness inform their approach to community activism. Further, personal experiences of racism also inspire them to engage in efforts to build community and challenge injustice on behalf of others. While Brown activists and community

members also make connections between the struggles of indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour, including the linking of racism and colonialism; an anti-racist project must move beyond revealing the material conditions that structure inequality to question white racial hegemony (Dei, 1996a). This questioning occurs through the framing of the Brown Canada Project in terms of the Komagata Maru because it reveals both the desire for Canada to be a white man's country, as well as the pedagogy of history that is reflected in the workshops and interviews with Brown community members. Participants also suggest the need to create spaces for sharing of individual and community histories of South Asians as a means of teaching about identity, racism, and white supremacy; as well as for building community. More than merely asserting a Brown identity to reinforce racial Othering, marginalization, and inferiority, this pedagogy aims to open up questions about power and privilege in terms of who can assign value to difference. In this way, members of the community, especially youth, can be given the tools to "challenge racist discourses that construct exoticized and stigmatized Others" (Gosine, 2002, p.199). Through its use of critical pedagogies to explore the white supremacist pillars underpinning our society and the relationships across indigenous and non-indigenous communities, Brown has the potential to become a framework for shared anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance. However, there remain some limitations to the achievement of these aims. Brown as a discourse has different connotations across Canada including negative meanings assigned by the colonial dominant, which may influence its salience as a community signifier. It continues to be salient for Latina/o and indigenous communities. The signifier of South Asian has a long history and continues to have significance for the community in the Greater Toronto Area. Brown can also be perceived as having a closer proximity to whiteness in relation to Black and indigenous, contributing to the reinforcement of racism against these communities and

sustaining the white settler project. Finally, Brown can be coopted by the colonial dominant to perpetuate racist, essentialized notions about the Brown community. Given these limitations, more research and dialogue across communities is necessary.

To be clear, in putting forward a call to decolonization, I do not suggest that there is no value in seeking to make changes within the state to improve the material conditions of racialized peoples. It is necessary to an extent to increase the shade of protection for those who are seeking to challenge state-based oppression and to increase their capacity for subversion. In addition, for those who are able to escape more exacerbated socioeconomic and violent political situations in another nation-state, an affinity for Canada's stated policies of multiculturalism and asylum is understandable. However, as Bannerji (2000) notes, multiculturalism is offered to racialized peoples "because they are lesser or inauthentic political subjects" to address oppression in a limited manner if at all because "no significant political effectiveness on a national scale is expected from them" (p.116). In accepting state-based frameworks such as multiculturalism, racialized peoples also settle for tolerance instead of valued difference, rights instead of responsibilities, and celebration of culture over power, self-representation and agency (Dei, 2007).

The discursive analysis of the Brown Canada Project reveals that while many members of the Brown community recognize how multiculturalism only creates a façade masking the white colonial policies of Canada, there are still many who remain invested in the limited benefits it seems to offer. Brown as an anti-colonial framework must reveal, interrogate and challenge the white supremacy that perpetuates orientalist wars, racist capitalism, and genocidal colonialism (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010). It is crucial also to recognize how these logics are linked, and the multiple ways in which they perpetuate oppression: "These pillars don't simply oppress

you in whatever sphere of white supremacy you might be located. They also oppress you by making you think that the way to survive is to take part in the other pillars" (Khan, Hugill, & McCreary, 2010). An anti-colonial approach seeks to resist the logics of white supremacy and challenge the underlying assumptions and foundations of racism, capitalism, and colonialism, such as wealth, labour, ownership/property, relationships to land and people, and the value assigned to difference. Asserting broad community in the face of individualism and shedding zero-sum ways of thinking also allows for us to redefine notions of justice, dignity, and belonging.

The classroom can be a site of complicity or a site to challenge systems of racism, colonialism, capitalism and heteropatriarchy. The current context of public education is one where climbing rates of tuition fees disproportionately affect access for racialized and indigenous students (CFS Ontario, 2010) and there are moves towards a U.S. security-based model of schooling that introduces police and so-called "School Resource Officers" into schools to attend to the bodies of racialized students (CBC news, 2008; May, Rice, & Minor, 2012). This context requires anti-racist intervention(s) that can centre education as a social equalizer, and a means for creating more socially (and racially) just visions for society.

Brownness offers some possibilities and implications for classroom practitioners and anti-racist education. In terms of interaction with students, Brownness reveals the spirit injury and impacts of racialization on Brown students in particular and on students of colour more generally. Educators (white or racialized) must recognize spirit injury and the burden that multiculturalism, assimilation, and racist exclusions place onto the bodies and minds of students. They must also understand the processes of negotiating identity and belonging for racialized students in order to understand them holistically and to facilitate a space where these students

can be their whole selves. This includes an acknowledgement of their racial embodiments, and social, cultural, political, and spiritual aspects (Dei, 1996b). This can support students in feeling like they *belong* in their classroom, that they can express their identities, engage spiritually, build relationships and work towards shared ways of knowing.

In terms of curriculum, educators must examine whose histories are included and taught in Eurocentric paradigms of education. Rather than teaching "Canadian history" in a manner that centres the colonial dominant, educators can critically examine how white supremacy shapes the experiences of indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour. They can also engage students in locating their positionality and exploring their personal and community histories. The introduction of Brown history (and the histories of other indigenous and non-indigenous communities of colour) can also act as a means of educating students about how different bodies/communities experience racism and white supremacy, similar to how the history of the Komagata Maru is used pedagogically in workshops of the Brown Canada Project. It can also act to affirm their individual and community identities.

A critical approach to pedagogy can reveal how white supremacy operates in educational and other social institutions broadly. This approach must also emphasize naming race and racism, as well as the rejection of proxies for race such as ethnicity or culture (Dei, 2007). Such an approach must encourage self-reflexivity, teach students to understand intersectionality, and help to develop critical thinking and analysis. This approach can be used to develop racial literacy for revealing and dismantling systems of oppression structured on race (often disguised as more neutral systems, or systems premised on class or geography). By engaging in activities and workshops that encourage students to share their experiences of racism, educators can help mitigate spirit injury, support students in building community, and create spaces of

empowerment and affirmation of individual and community identity. Activities and workshops seen in the Brown Canada Project challenge the national myths about Canada and challenge the Otherness experienced by communities of colour broadly. Educators in anti-racist classrooms must challenge constructs like citizenship, immigration, and multiculturalism, for the ways in which they marginalize non-indigenous communities of colour and continue to perpetuate settler colonialism. They must also affirm non-hierarchical difference and the importance of collectivism while encouraging self-representation and embodied learning. Through critical anti-racism education, the classroom has the potential to become a site for Brown subversion, and its embodied learners can become active in dismantling whiteness, racism and dominant systems of oppression.

In putting forward this theory of Brown identity, I suggest that Brown identity can increase race consciousness and engagement of members of the Brown community, and foster shared anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance. It also has the potential to achieve individual and community self-affirmation and support a Brown cultural politic. However, these political goals depend on the salience of the race ideas that inform them, and "human beings to believe in them and act upon them" (Hier, 2007, p.47). A framework of Brown identity demands a lot, but we must demand more than we're willing to settle for.

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