

Where is my History?

An Examination of the Representation of African Canadians in the Montréal High School  
History Textbook, *Panoramas* Volumes One and Two

Jodie Glean

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By: Jodie Glean

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Signed by the final Examining Committee:

Dr. Adeela Arshad-Ayaz \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Dr. Ailie Cleghorn \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner

Dr. David Waddington \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner

Dr. Ayaz Naseem \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor

Approved by

Dr. Paul Bouchard  
Graduate Program Director

Dr. Brian Lewis  
Dean of Faculty

Date September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011

## ABSTRACT

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Jodie Glean

Canadian culture is largely depicted as a tapestry of different cultures woven into one. However, there is a growing awareness that the history taught in schools is not reflective of this cultural tapestry. The omission and erasure of topics addressing the presence and experiences of Blacks in Canadian history are particularly pervasive. My research examines the representation of African Canadians in the textbook *Panoramas*, an assigned high school history textbook used in Montréal. I will specifically examine and analyse the extent to which African-Canadians are included in and excluded from the textbook through the use of written and graphic texts. I will also discuss the potential effects of the lack of representation on the concept of 'identity and belonging' in the Canadian context. My research will firstly demonstrate that not only is history important to identity formation, it is a key component. Secondly, it will reveal that there is a gross exclusion and misrepresentation of the experiences of African Canadians in the textbook, and finally it will establish that issues of race and racism, as they affect African Canadians, still have not found a place of priority in the Québec historical discourse. The results of my research will open a dialogue on the need for an in-depth analysis of the current curriculum, textbooks and pedagogies used in Quebec schools, for omissions and biases of experiences around race, gender, sexuality and other differences. It will also continue the discussion on incorporating Afrocentric education as it provides the frame work to depoliticise culture and issues of identity.

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## INTRODUCTION

People of African descent have a rich and deep history to share. Whether in Canada, the US, the Caribbean or elsewhere, each experience, though different, entails the common elements of struggle, bondage, death, triumph and success. Within Canada, Dorothy Williams, a renowned historian and author in Montréal, describes this history to dates back to 360 years. She outlines the experiences of Africans from the time they entered Canada (involuntarily and voluntarily), the poor treatment they endured and the way in which they overcame their hardships and began forming their lives in their new 'homes'. As a result of their unique stories, their encounters with racism and ignorance created a 'Black experience' historical narrative, which Hall (1996) defines as "a singular and unifying framework that is based on the creation of identity across ethnic and cultural difference(s) among the different communities" (p. 441). The 'Black experience' is a cultural analysis formulated to explain the way blacks are positioned as the unspoken and invisible 'other' of predominantly white aesthetic and cultural discourses in Canada.

The 'Black experience' narrative is the foundation upon which the African-Canadian identity is to be established. Due to the diversity of cultures that are represented within Canada, the concept of an 'African Canadian identity' is sometimes met with resistance and is deemed problematic. I am not advocating for or trying to create a well-defined description of an African Canadian identity as I am fully aware of the fluidity of the term 'identity', and the several conflicting approaches towards the definition of 'African'. However, the multiplicity of cultures and the dynamic makeup of Black Communities in Canada cannot negate the shared realities experienced as a result of systemic oppression.

Despite these challenges, African-Canadians have made significant socio-economic and political contributions, both historically and presently, to the development of Canada. As such, the complexity embedded in the term ‘African-Canadian’ illustrates the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of the historical evolution of the community and its effect on their present day realities. Kanneh ( as cited in Puplampu & Tettey, 2005) emphasizes that there is a need to comprehend Black identities as historically and politically determined paradigms, which rely on particular understandings of time, memory, and race so that one may begin tackling the issues that affect this demographic in Canada.

### **Problem Statement**

Canadian society is largely depicted as a tapestry of different cultures woven into one. Nevertheless, there is a growing awareness that the history taught in schools is not reflective of this cultural tapestry. Though History is simply a recounting of past experiences and/or events, a historical narrative is the history constructed to represent a community, nation or country. The grand narrative of Canadian history reflects the achievements of European colonialism and naturalises and excludes the experiences of popular racisms. Stanley (1998) argues that “such narratives effect racialization<sup>1</sup> by creating categories of people whose histories count and others whose histories do not, those who have a history and those who have what is alleged to be their history told for them” (p. 42). The omission and erasure of topics addressing the presence and

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<sup>1</sup> Racialization is a process whereby biological characteristics, such as skin color, define and construct social relations among people (Miles & Brown, 2003 as cited in Satzewich & Liidakis, 2010).



experiences of Blacks in Canadian history are particularly pervasive. My research asserts that to begin acknowledging and addressing issues that affect African-Canadians in Montreal, the Canadian 'Black experience' historical narrative must first be recognized on a national level.

Individuals, communities or nations cannot progress as an entity without first knowing the position from which they started. In her description of the importance of history for aboriginal students David-Cree (2004) stated that

History is not only about the past; it is also about how we understand ourselves, now, as peoples and nations, how we interpret who we are and where we came from and how we value our successes and explain our failures in relations to present morality (p. 3).

Acceptance of the experiences of Blacks as an integral part of Canadian history must first take place within educational institutions. The curriculum and textbooks are the tools utilised to communicate to students what it means to be Canadian and who and what are a part of the Canadian culture. Montgomery (2005) highlights the role of the history curriculum in shaping, informing and defining the importance of various events that have occurred throughout Canadian history. He notes that it is important to realise that the content of the history curriculum is chosen carefully and that it is not merely a repository of the past.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of my study is to examine the representation of African-Canadians within the secondary three and four high school history English textbook. I will be analysing the textbook *Panoramas* by Christophe Horguelin, Maude Ladoucer, France Lord and Fabienne Rose, assigned by the Lester B. Pearson School Board. For the purpose of this research the term 'African-Canadian' will be used interchangeably with the term 'Black' to identify people of African descent residing in Canada. I have chosen to capitalise the word to signify my recognition of Blacks as a racialised cultural group. In this study, I will specifically examine and analyse the extent to which African-Canadians are included in and excluded from the textbook through the use of written and graphic texts. I will also discuss the potential effects of the lack of representation on the concept of 'identity and belonging' in the Canadian context. This study will focus solely on the city of Montreal.

## **Research Questions**

My research will be addressing the following questions:

1. What is the importance of history in the formation of identity and the concept of belonging to a country/nation?
2. To what extent are Black Canadians represented in the high school history textbooks, *Panoramas* Volumes One and Two?

3. What are the implications of this representation on the concept of 'belonging' to the Quebec society and Canada as a whole?

In 2006, the total Black population in Canada was 783,795, 4.7% of the general population. In Montreal specifically, the Black population totalled 169,065, meaning that one in five Blacks in Canada reside in this city. There are five main school boards that govern the Montreal school system. Due to language barriers, I will only be examining the curriculum and textbook assigned by the Lester B Pearson School Board. I have also chosen to focus on one school board as the scope of this particular research does not allow me to conduct a comparison research study between the French and English textbooks adapted by the remaining school boards in Montreal. However, this research can certainly be utilised as a platform upon which further research can be conducted to continue bridging the gap between the Black experience and Canadian history.

The grade levels nine and ten or secondary three and four, were chosen primarily because the subject, *History of Quebec in Canada*, is introduced to students at these levels. Students are required to write a government-administered examination at the completion of these grade levels, which they must pass in order to graduate. The content that is placed within this final examination can be seen as a representation of what is deemed important and meaningful in Québec's history and culture. Consequently, what is excluded is just as important as what is included. An examination of the positioning of Blacks and the African Canadian experience throughout one of the assigned history textbooks would shed light on the value and significance of their experiences within Québec culture as a whole.

## **Methodology**

I will be employing a content analysis methodology to my research. Due to the nature of my investigation, this methodology is suitable as it provides me with a framework that will allow me to conduct a thorough examination of the history textbooks, thereby allowing me to identify and eventually eliminate the negative stereotypes and distorted views of the other (Pringle, 2009). I will be interpreting the textbooks against the background of the assigned history curriculum. This analysis will question what the actual text and illustration tells the reader about the subject area and whether or not it sufficiently covers the topic in question. Finally, with regards to minorities, the content analysis methodology questions how the text represents and confirms group identity and how the fundamental difference between ‘us and them’ emerges from the portrayal of different groups in the textbooks.

An extensive literature review will also be conducted to examine previous studies that have piloted similar investigations researching the importance of history and the impact the lack of inclusion into history narrative has on the construction of self-identity and belonging. The instruments I used to conduct my research were my primary sources – *Panoramas* Volumes one and two, the prescribed textbooks adapted by the curriculum department of the Ministry of Education of Quebec, and my secondary sources, which are previous academic literature in the form of books and journal articles.

### **Who or what is an African-Canadian?**

Despite the longevity of Blacks in Canada, ‘African Canadian’ is an identity that is yet to be understood and constantly needs to be defined when used. Kelly and Yochim (2009)

define African Canadians as “people of African descent whose heritage can more rightly be identified as diasporan in that they or their ancestors have been displaced from the African continent at least once” (p. 144). The displacement of Blacks from the African continent into various parts of North America is due primarily to the institution of slavery, and more recently to voluntary migration. The label African-Canadian refers to persons of African descent who reside in Canada. It is a title that belongs in the family of other labels, such as Negro, Coloured and African-American (Kelly & Yochim, 2009). From a political standpoint, African-Canadian is utilised for identification purposes, but as it stands, it is a label devoid of cultural meaning. African Canadian means nothing more than having a black skin complexion and living in Canada.

To create a cultural significance for the African Canadian identity, I argue that the sociocultural position of African Canadians must first be located in the Canadian historical narrative. In Canada, persons of African descent are generally perceived as being from somewhere else. As a result, hyphenated statuses such as Jamaican-Canadian are the descriptors most commonly used to explain where one is from, regardless of place of birth. The exclusion of the Black experience from the Canadian narrative sustains the title of African-Canadian as an empty label. Unfolding the African Canadian identity is even more complex in the province of Québec. The history of Québec is unique to other provinces of Canada as it is marked by a period of oppression. As a result of their struggle, French Canadians have fought to establish their own separate identity and nationalism which is reflective in their political parties and language laws. The uniqueness of Québec’s history has led me to question if the label of African-*Canadian* is

an appropriate, and more importantly, accepted term by which to identify persons of African descent residing within Quebec.

Though there is no definite answer, my research opens a dialogue to discuss the positioning of Blacks in the commonly used label, 'Quebecer', used to identify individuals who originate from Québec. Is the Quebecer identity any different from the Canadian identity in relation to who is and who is not historically and culturally attached to and included in these labels? According to Austin (2010) the Francophone historical narrative embraces the notion of racial purity embedded in racially charged language such as 'Pur Laine' (pure wool) and 'Quebecois de Souche' (related to the bark and roots of a tree). Austin argues that these terms contain racial undertones, and ignore the reality that French Quebecers were not the sole inhabitants of Québec, as they lived alongside indigenous persons, British, Scots, and Blacks.

Whether or not African Canadian or African Quebecer is a more appropriate term to identify Blacks in Quebec, both require a historical narrative framework that is inclusive of the Black experience to begin injecting cultural meaning to these labels. Hall (1996) mentions the importance of a people that speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience and within a particular culture, because we are all "ethnically located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are" (p. 447). By assessing the representation of Blacks within the history textbooks, educators can tackle the dialogue and context within which Blacks are identified and located within society today.

## **Summary**

My research focuses on the representation of Blacks in the Canadian historical narrative, as presented in the textbooks approved by the Lester B. Pearson School Board. The history of oppression that distinguishes Québec's history from other Canadian provinces has resulted in the implementation of federal and provincial policies and programs to preserve the francophone culture; some may argue that these initiatives have led to the development of a separate and distinct Quebecois nationalism that subsists alongside Canadian nationalism. I am of the opinion that both forms of nationalism have rendered invisible the experiences and contributions of racialised bodies. My research specifically examines the representation of African-Canadians in the historical account of Quebec's development and their inclusion within the overall dialogue of the Quebec identity, as depicted within the textbooks mentioned above.

### **Organization of Thesis.**

This thesis has been divided into four chapters. In Chapter 1, I review the work of past researchers that have articulated the importance and impact of history and historical narratives in the construction of self-identity and belonging in a country. I examine in detail the discourse of race in Canada and Canadian history and unfold the conceptual framework of my research. Chapter 2 will provide the breakdown and analysis of the representation of Blacks present within the textbooks, *Panoramas*. Chapter 3 extends the analysis of chapter 2, by explaining the meaning and the impact of what is missing in the textbook as it pertains to the experiences of African Canadians. The final chapter, will

provide a summary of the overall findings and relate the impact of them to the citizenship and empowerment of African Canadian students in general.



## CHAPTER 1

### **The Role of Race and History in the Concept of ‘Belonging to Canada’**

When the topics of race and history in Canada are to be assessed it is essential to ensure the focus of the discussion is clearly defined. For my research I have divided past studies and literature on these topics into the following categories to establish a clear focus that will explain the relationship between the Canadian historical narrative and minorities, and the impact of this relationship on the identity of Blacks in Canada and their attachment to the Canadian identity:

- The role of History and Discourse
- The Discourse of Race in Canada
- Impact on Acceptance & Belonging
- Cultural Reproduction
- Student Impact

#### **The role of history and discourse.**

Why is power and wealth concentrated in the hands of a few in North America? Why does widespread poverty exist in specific countries? Why is racism still a relevant concept in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The answers to these questions, and many of the other ‘why’ questions that exist, all have a historical root. As explanations are sought to understand and solve the present socio-economic issues that affect racialised minorities, such as

Black and Aboriginal communities, the answer begins in exploring how these issues developed in the past. History as defined by Stanley (1998) is the “the sum total of previous human activities and experiences, that which shapes the present and defines its possibilities” (p. 41). As a result, the social welfare of Blacks as it exists today can only be fully understood when examined in a historical perspective (Christensen, 1998). History needs to be understood not simply as a story of the past but as a totality of a people’s lived experience. It offers cornerstones for discussing a peoples’ struggles, challenges, failures, achievements, successes, and triumphs (Dei, 2010).

In a country, such as Canada, where its history is plagued with events of colonisation, slavery, and blatant acts of racism, it is important to question whose lived experiences are incorporated within the historical narrative. History is more than just a neutral narration of the past, the reader must pay attention to who is telling the story, through which lens the events are being retold, and who is included and excluded. I concur with the view of Dei (2010) who states that, “It is critical to examine the idea that all history is written from a particular standpoint and intellectual politics” (p. 2). Stanley (1998) reinforces this position as he states that history, or properly ‘histories’ refer to the narratives that people construct in order to make meaning of the past.

History is the main tool that explains the present status quo, yet it is the historical narrative that legitimizes who holds power in society this is because “how history works matters more than what history is” (Trouillot, 1995, p. 5). When history is understood as discourse, then one can begin internalising the value of history as a site of power within society.

### ***What is discourse?***

Discourse is the way one may talk, think or write about a particular subject. Foucault (as cited in Hall, 2007), states that ‘discourse formation’ occurs when several statements work together to represent or refer to a particular object. For example, Mills (as cited in Hall, 2007) described the Bible as being a well-known document that contributes to the formation of 'Western Discourse'. The Bible in this instance is just one of the several ‘statements’ that informs Western Discourse. Moreover, not only is the Bible regarded as 'truth' it is regarded as knowledge. Thus discourse formation may be referred to as the production of knowledge.

History textbooks can be another example of a major document that is regarded as ‘truth’ in society that contribute to the formation of Canadian historical discourse. If these books are internalised as knowledge by students and the society as whole, then it is important to be aware of the knowledges that have been excluded from the texts. Mills (as cited in Hall, 2007) argues that discourse is more than just a bunch of statements; discourses are sustained due to a complex set of practices which keep these statements in circulation and blocks opposing views. It is this circulation and dominance of one set of standards over another that allows for the production of ideas or beliefs that are accepted as knowledge. Discourses are produced not only by individuals, but by institutions as well, particularly educational institutions.

One cannot speak about discourse and the production of knowledge without incorporating power. Power has to be understood in relation to knowledge. Though power precedes knowledge they imply each other. In other words there can be no power

(or power relations) without a field of knowledge and knowledge cannot exist unless it is grounded in and constitutive of power and power relations (Foucault, 1979 as cited by Naseem, 2010, pp. 16-17). Understanding the role of discourse is the central factor in understanding the significance and impact of historical narratives. Power is produced through discourse by members of society that believe and act as though these statements are true. Thus it is power and not facts that make discourses real (Hall, 2007). The knowledge that has been legitimised and manufactured by the Canadian history discourse is exclusive of the experiences of African Canadians. As their experiences are not included in the Canadian history narrative as 'knowledge', I am of the opinion that the history discourse in Canada has stripped away power from African Canadians and other racialised minorities.

History provides the legal and social foundation to the power structures that exist in western society, as power itself works together with history (Trouillot, 1995). Only when historical narratives are deconstructed can power structures and the 'fact-creating' process be analysed. As history narratives are commonly known as 'that which is said to have happened', Canadian history inevitably contains a 'bundle of silences' (Trouillot, 1995). As a result, silences and myths have tended to be the two defining characteristics of Canada's history.

The construction of the 'Canadian' is riddled with absences. As grand historical narratives contribute to the construction of the Canadian identity, and to the overall western discourse, then an analysis of what is included and excluded is extremely important. When did the history of Québec and Canada begin? Which groups of people

were present during these times and not mentioned? My research asserts that increased representation of racialised bodies within the historical narrative of a country begins the process of inclusion within the fabric of Canadian culture. An inclusion of the history of Blacks in Canada will bring meaning to the label, African Canadian.

This is not to say that the awareness and recognition of ‘other’ histories will automatically translate into marginalised people gaining power in society. For though marginalised stories are beginning to be told, they are still considered less important than ‘official’ written histories as they do not reflect the interest of the most powerful members in society (Conrad, & Finkel, 2009). In her critique of the book ‘Who Killed Canadian history’ McKillop (1999) breaks down and critiques the arguments of J.L. Granatstein, who asserts himself as the ‘champion of Canada’s true national history’. He argues that Canada’s national history is supposedly a recollection of various actors who have done great things in the past and shared a commitment to a common future. Granatstein is extremely critical of academics that choose to write about the history of ‘particularities’ as opposed to the nation of Canada. I concur with McKillop’s concerns of historians who adopt, a ‘really who cares?’ attitude, towards the historical narratives that represent the stories of marginalised groups. She acknowledges that Canadian social historians understand what Granatstein apparently does not, “that in order for Canadians to take the full measure of what it means to be Canadian, they must be made conscious of all aspects of their shared past”. As more and more social historians (Cooper, 2006 & Winks, 1997) have begun forsaking a national history that excludes racialised groups in

Canada, Canadian history textbooks need to do the same. Unless changes are made at the institutional level, the history of marginalised peoples will remain just that, marginalised.

Canada is known to have two founding nations – The Anglophone and Francophone communities. The grand narrative of Canada particularly focuses on the relationship between the ‘English’ and ‘French’ and this is often reproduced in books that take the ‘1867 federation of four British North American colonies’ as their central turning point (Stanley, 1998). However, the historical narratives of each of these nations are significantly different. While the Anglophone narrative is characterised by a peaceful existence with all communities involved, the Francophone historical narrative tells a different story (Austin, 2010). Quebec’s history is replete with struggle, conquest, heroes and villains. The historical narrative of Quebec is characterised by centuries of exploitation of the Francophone community by the British. The language, culture and identity of French Canadians were essentially diminished and ridiculed by the ruling British minority, who held the economic power in society in New France. In spite of its minority status, English was the language of business and culture.

To gain a clear picture of the oppression of the French people, Austin (2010) recalls that “while few Quebec elites thrived under these conditions, the vast majority of the population lived in state of poverty” (p. 25). As with all stories of historical oppression, heroes always emerge, and the francophone narrative is no exception. For instance, Joseph Papineau in 1837 led a popular rebellion against the British in Québec Rene Levesque, Jacques Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard, are all former Quebec premiers, who have each played a part in helping Quebec establish a certain degree of autonomy to

manage its own affairs. There are also individuals such as Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Jean Chretien that are part of the fabric of Quebec's history though seen as the 'villains' as having betrayed their origins for the interests of English Canada (Austin, 2010).

A critical deconstruction and analysis of Québec's history would show that the voices of racialised groups are absent from the historical narrative. Though the French narrative entails a sentiment of having a peaceful coexistence with indigenous peoples (Austin, 2010) prior to the British conquest, one must question if the aboriginals share the same sentiment. Given that social historians have acknowledged the practice of slavery of both Aboriginal and Negro slaves in New France, can 'peaceful coexistence' still be used to describe the relationship between the Aboriginal population and the French? An antiracist critical analysis of Québec's historical narrative would help us not only determine which perceptions of Québec history have been skewed, but whose views are missing, and what has been the impact of the exclusion. My research is presented with the challenge of finding the voices that are marginalised and omitted within a group that is oppressed and marginalised in a larger social context.

The hegemonic position of nationalist narratives, whether or not their experiences were that of subordination, still hold the power of being the only narratives that matter, and as a result, effectively rule out other narratives (Stanley, 2000). Thus, though the Francophone narrative has been marked by 'social and political processes of minorization and inferiorization', this has not affected the way in which they followed a Eurocentric mode of thought and understanding of social and cultural hierarchies. Their

representation and treatment of the history of racial minorities, particularly African Canadians, remained the same (Austin, 2010).

There is limited literature available that addresses the representation of Blacks or other minorities as a whole in the Francophone historical narrative. However, within the past decade there has definitely been an increase in the literature identifying the impact of the absences of African Canadian voices from the overall Canadian narrative. I will be using the past research that has addressed the absences of representation of African Canadians and the overall impact of this omission/marginalisation on the Blacks position within the Canadian identity and effects of this on students. To comprehensively discuss the state of 'blackness' in the Canadian identity, one must first engage in the discourse of race and the 'other' in the construction of the Canadian identity.

### **The discourse of race in Canada.**

The concepts of 'race' and 'racism' are still rendered as a social phenomenon within North America. Though race has been reduced to an empty biological concept over the years (Satzewich, & Liodakis, 2010, p. 180), it is still an important socially constructed concept that is used to categorise people, usually based on the colour of their skin. According to Dei (2009), race is more than a theoretical concept. It is an idea that governs social relations. It cannot fully be comprehended within the logic of 'science' or 'biology', as this concept has yet to be discarded from all levels of society. Thus, although I adhere to Hall's (1996) description of the term 'Black' as essentially a "politically and culturally constructed category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural or transcendental racial categories" (p. 18) it is still a relevant and



recognized social category that determines and conditions the experiences of people that produces real consequences within society.

Academics frequently compare the way Canada and the United States manage issues and debates surrounding these social concepts. The U.S. has certainly gained the reputation of being the country that addresses and tackles issues of race and racism with more openness and freedom. This is because “race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequality in the United States...” (Billings, & Tate, 2009, p.168). It is the central position of race in American culture that has led to state intervention in racial conflicts within society (Thobani, 2007). This centrality stems from the overall acknowledgement of Blacks as a collective identity within America. Their presence, more importantly, the *meaning* of their presence cannot be denied. With slavery and the civil rights movement being recognised as significant moments in American history, this has played a major role in the formation of a black identity in America.

Canada, on the other hand, has taken a much different approach to address issues that arise in relation to race. Canada has gained the reputation of facilitating ‘hidden’ and institutionalised racism, as it is certainly not an issue that is popularly and easily discussed in the media or within the classroom. Dionne Brand (as cited in Backhouse, 1999) described it best by stating that “a mythology of ‘racelessness’ and ‘stupefying innocence’ – would appear to be the twin pillars of the Canadian history of race” (p. 13). This mythology represents the discourse of race in Canada as either occurrences that did not happen, was necessary to the formation of Canada as it is today, or was not as bad as compared to our American counterparts. Though historical events have confirmed that

'race' has played a major role in the formation of Canadian social policies and relationships, it is important to know the nature of this role, so as to begin to understand the relationships of various groups to the Canadian identity. Omi and Winant (as cited in Thobani, 2007) describe multiracial societies as a 'rigid caste society, a virtual race dictatorship'. They assert that the Canadian state can accurately be characterised as having been an explicit 'racial dictatorship' up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as both the English and the French exercised control over the aboriginal populations through various policies and upheld racialised immigration and citizenship legislation so as to produce a homogenous and dominant white majority. To this I would add that though there were no formal legal policies, racist societal norms certainly governed the lives of Blacks in Canada. The existence of race-based policies in Canada including Québec, cannot be denied. The existence of slavery and national policies on immigration, from head taxes to the outright refusal of entry of 'undesirables or unpreferred' groups are clear illustrations of race in social policies in Canada (Puplampu, & Tettey, 2005).

The poor treatment of racialised minorities in Canada is quite extensive. Aboriginals, Chinese, Japanese and Jews, in addition to African Canadians each have a story that entails oppression due to the racist climate that existed and still exist in Canada. However, I am choosing to focus specifically on the history of Blacks in Canada, to not only make them visible in the historical narratives, but to begin cementing them into Canadian culture. A black historical narrative as it pertains to Canada exists as well. When the history of Blacks in Canada is addressed, the first province usually mentioned is Nova Scotia. 'Scotian Blacks', as they are commonly referred to, are considered to be

the 'original' African-Canadians, as they would have entered Canada either as slaves in Canada, as fugitives from slavery in the US or as 'free persons'.

By the 19th century there was an estimated 60,000 blacks in Canada. The experiences of these Blacks in the 1800s and 1900s were quite similar to experiences of Blacks in the USA. The major difference that existed between the two locations was that in the USA racial oppression was legalised. In Canada, the lives of Blacks were marked by overt prejudice and discrimination (Henry & Tator, 2006). The 1900s saw the Canadian government implementing immigration laws that denied entry to 'Negroes' as they were not considered desirable. Shepard (as cited in Henry & Tator, 2006) notes a 1910 editorial in the 'Edmonton Capital' that summarized the attitude of the white community towards black immigration:

The board of trade has done well to call attention to the amount of negro immigration which is taking place into this district. It has already attained such proportions as to discourage white settlers from going into certain sections. The immigration department has no excuse for encouraging it all... we prefer to have the southern race problem left behind. The task of assimilating all the white people who enter our borders is quite a heavy enough one without the colour proposition being added. (p. 19)

Blacks in Nova Scotia and other provinces lived in largely segregated communities – schools, government, work place and residential housing all suffered from racial disparity. These examples reaffirm that Blacks are not a recent addition to the Canadian landscape. Despite their longevity, the presence of blacks and their past experiences are

continuously marginalized. I stress that educational institutions have systematically contributed to the erasure of the presence of Blacks in the collective mind of Canadian society. Upshaw (1992) duly notes that the ideology which allowed Europeans to take Africans as hostages (slaves) began the educational process in Nova Scotia as “exclusion and dehumanization were made a part of the internationalization process for training, not educating black students” (p. 103). Do the history textbooks and curriculum reflect a different sentiment in Québec? Just as the relationship between African Canadians and the dominant society is characterised by marginality and exclusion, so are their experiences and contributions in the grand historical narratives of both the Anglophone and Francophone communities. These are the conditions that have constructed Blacks as the ‘other’ in Canadian society.

Understanding the discourse of the ‘other’ is essential, as it is the focal point in which to understand the identity of African Canadians and other racialised minorities as represented by the dominant group. The ‘other’ refers to the individuals or collective communities that have not been sewn into the fabric of who and what constitutes the ‘Canadian’. Many academics have addressed the fact that the Canadian identity is not void of social ascriptions. According to Bannerji (1997) the construction of the Canadian identity is represented by a particular history, skin color, religion, language, “all of which can be subsumed under the ideological category – white” (p. 24). To be a part of 19<sup>th</sup> century Canada was to be white; the presence of Blacks was simply discounted, creating a “painful sense of invisibility for black Canadians, who are not only few in numbers but continually reminded of their outside status” (Rhodes, 2000).

Kelly (2004) argues that the process of ‘othering’ continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it has been reinforced by discourses such as multiculturalism. She summarises an argument by Walcott that the multicultural narrative is founded through the status of white Anglophone and Francophone Canadians as being the founding peoples of the nation, with ‘special’ mention to native Canadians. All other groups that exist create the Canadian ethnic mix or multicultural character of Canada. As a result, “the colonising English and French are textually left intact as ‘real’ Canadians while legislation is needed to imagine other folks as Canadian” (p. 25). This argument is reinforced by Thobani (2007) who argues that the categorization of persons into Canadian, Indian and immigrant ranks them in terms of their legalistic and sociocultural status. As a result it has become rather difficult for those constructed within Canadian society as non-white and therefore the ‘other’ to situate themselves with ease as Canadian (Kelly, 2004).

Prior to the construction of the ‘other’, the narrative that surrounded the presence of Blacks in Canada was what I term, ‘the narrative of invisibility’. Academics such as Walcott (2000) Rhodes (2000) and Abdi (2005) have all highlighted the ways in which the ‘invisible Black’ has been constructed throughout Canadian history. The near destruction of the slave cemetery, known as ‘nigger rock’ in St. Armand, Québec by locals, the demolition of the village of Africville in Nova Scotia and the dehumanising removal of its residents and the changing of the name ‘Negro Creek Road’ to ‘Moggie Road’ in Ontario in 1996 are all examples of events that contribute to the invisibility of Blacks by making their presence absent in Canada (Walcott, 2000). The title of ‘other’ for African-Canadians started taking root when the narrative surrounding the Black

presence in Canada was reduced to 'new-comers'. If certain races have been erased from Canadian history, how would they fit within the Canadian identity?

It should not come as a surprise that race plays a vital role in the formation of a person's self-identity and how that person is identified in society. A racial identity can only emerge out of a specific historical, social and political context; however, differences between races can only be determined in the context of power and domination (Dei, 1997). In other words, one cannot begin to understand the way in which race impacts lived experiences without knowing the privileges or discrimination that shape and conditions the experiences of the other races. Thus, it is important for my research not only to highlight the subordinated position of racialised minorities but to explain how the narrative of white privilege helps construct the Canadian narrative. White privilege is used to describe the unearned assets/advantages white people inherit due to the colour of their skin (McIntosh, 1988).

This privilege stems from whiteness being more than just a skin tone. Whiteness is linked to relations of domination and power that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced (Frankenberg, 1996). In an era where being 'colour blind' seems to be most desirable, naming 'whiteness' begins to displace the myth that white persons do not have a 'colour'. In other words, it begins to define the part 'whiteness' plays in racist discourses, which involves the construction of what is deemed normative and invisible in society, particularly their privileges (McIntosh, 1988). Within history, it is important to recognize who has been able to access social and institutional power. Though the ideology of meritocracy makes people believe that power is equally distributed, this myth

ignores the socio-economic and political disadvantages of racialized minorities in Canada. Pupilampu (2005) argues that understanding how particular groups fit, interact and respond to the structures, institutions and processes established by the founding nations, is the first step in understanding the role identity and representation play in integration.

It is this concept of whiteness that provides the framework in which to define what 'blackness' is not. Henry and Tator (2006) made note of Essed's arguments as she stated that "whiteness is associated with overwhelmingly positive connotations, while 'blackness' in Roget's thesaurus has no fewer than sixty distinctively negative synonyms, twenty of which are related to race" (p. 55). These negative images of blackness are also generated within the media as racial minorities are often portrayed as problems and repeated images on television feed into the negative stereotypes of what it means to be Black. Within Canada, the discourse of race has constructed Blacks as being adversative to the 'progressive environments' dominant groups in Canada want to cultivate. This tension between 'real' and 'other' Canadians reinforces the sense of Black and Canadian as binary opposites (Kelly, 2004).

Blackness is not the product of some pure Africaness. It incorporates the relationships formed across cultural boundaries, the combination of more than one cultural tradition and the negotiations between subordinate and dominant groups throughout history (Sealy, 2000). The detachment of 'Blackness' from the identity of the 'Canadian' did not happen by chance. To share an identity is to be bonded on the most fundamental levels: national, racial, ethnic, regional and local. The history of a country is one of the main sources for

locating this identity. Yet the reality of the situation is that “the founding narratives of Canada leave little, if any room for imagining Blackness as constitutive of Canadianness” (Walcott, 2000). ‘Canadianness’ is the image of law-abiding citizens who are responsible and compassionate citizens who are committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism (Thobani, 2007). If the Canadian identity is largely represented in this way, Walcott’s (2000) view is then validated as he argues that the use of blackness to elaborate on ‘Canadianness’ would surely unsettle the definition of ‘Canadianness’, as it is a counter-narration of the normalised image of Canada as white and peaceful.

As the history of Blacks in Canada is unique compared to other ethnic groups, incorporating their position in relation to national ideologies of citizenship is not a simple task. The construction of the Canadian identity leaves little space to include a Black identity. The implications of this construction led a number of academics and theorists such as Sealy (2004) to propose that to be both black and Canadian at the same time is impossible, since Canada is imagined either as a place without Black people or where the few Blacks are well behaved. Simon Gkandi argues that the clear differentiation between Englishness and Blackness is a historical formation that has “presented an intellectual and political challenge to the crowns as black subjects seek their place in the post-imperial nation” (as cited in Rhodes, 2000, p. 2). I argue that the dialogue of an African-Canadian identity in Quebec begins with the restructuring and rewriting of its history. Many historians have clearly demonstrated that blacks were present in Québec dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, though these stories are present they are still kept on the outskirts of the Quebec historical narrative.



## **Conceptual framework.**

I use an Antiracist Framework to address the social issues of race, as it pertains to the concept of ‘nation’ and ‘belonging’, that surface within the teachings of the Canadian historical narrative. George Dei (2008) defines anti-racism as a “discursive and political practice to address the myriad forms of racism and the intersections with other oppression” (p. 220). It is a theory that analyses societal, institutional and systemic structures through the lens of race, to identify the ways in which social inequality and injustice is being perpetuated. Moreover, Dei (2009) highlights that race is not the only entry point through which oppression may be analysed. Antiracism is mindful of the intersections of other identities such as gender and sexuality that would have an impact on the experiences of oppression within institutions. Within the education system this framework recognizes that the dynamics of everyday relations and the interplay of school culture shape the construction of learners’ identities (Dei, 2009). This theory refuses to ignore that race has played and continues to play an integral role in a person’s lived experiences as it does not overlook the reality of racism.

Though acts of racism have changed over time and location, racism itself still exists. The core goal of anti-racism is to bring about systemic change. As a result, this framework calls for an understanding of the complexity of oppressions that exists on a systemic level within society. It challenges ‘white’ power and its rationality for dominance, as its efforts are directed toward removing structural disadvantage across groups. For my research, an Antiracist framework will be applied as a means to explore the way power plays out in the contestation over knowledge, culture and values in the history textbook, *Panoramas*.

By grounding the anti-racist theory to my research, I will be examining and analysing the way the textbook, *Panoramas*, has constructed the identity and experiences of the African-Canadians.

It is important to stress the fact that the anti-racism theory does not deal with racism directed solely towards Black people, as every racial minority has experienced some form of racist or oppressive act. Critics of the anti-racist framework may argue that the literature only tackles the oppression of Blacks, thus a multicultural framework is necessary to be more inclusive of all minorities; however, this is not the case. Any racial minority or marginalised group has the capacity to engage and implement an anti-racist framework as it critically analyses the structures that facilitate oppressions as it affects their community.

### **Impact on acceptance and belonging.**

At some point individuals ask the question – who am I? And who do 'they' say I am? Within Canadian society there is usually a disconnection between how one identifies one's self and how a person is identified in society. It is this dynamic that begins to foster a sentiment of 'unacceptance' among Black and other racialized minorities in Canadian schools. When addressing the notion of 'acceptance and belonging' in Canada, two important factors must be mentioned: ethnicity and citizenship. To define 'ethnicity', I am going to utilise Max Weber's definition of the term, as it truly encapsulates the way in which this term is applied in society:

Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of

memories of colonialization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic membership differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity, not a group with concrete social action, like the latter ... ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized that inspires the belief in common identity (quoted in Puplampu & Tetey, 2005, p. 28 ).

Ethnicity is a major determinant in the notion of acceptance and belonging, because the formal recognition of a person 'belonging' to a nation does not always translate into social acceptance within society. It is at this point we begin to see the limits of citizenship in the integration process of racialized minorities into society. Citizenship as 'formal recognition' and citizenship as entitlement and belonging produces two different realities for racialized minorities. Canada is not only a geographic location but an ideological space as well, as a dominant set of values and belief system encapsulates the Canadian culture. Thus nation-building embraces a definition of 'Canadianness' that relies on 'racist, sexist and nationalist ideological criteria of belonging' (Sharma, 2008). The Multiculturalism Act has made great strides in promoting harmonious living of different ethnicities, races and religions within Canada. However, as a weapon to combat social oppressions such as racism, this policy has fallen short. According to Fleras and Elliot (1996), multiculturalism operates within limits and "rejects any customs that violate

Canadian laws, interferes with the rights of others, offends the moral sensibilities of most Canadians, or disturbs central institutions or core values” (as cited in Satzewich & Liodakis, 2010, p. 164). In other words, multiculturalism operates within the very systems that facilitate societal inequalities.

What needs to be understood is that multiculturalism was not constructed to break down and analyse the core institutions, values, or laws of Canada, upon which the country operates. Moreover, as the government of Quebec did not sign onto the multiculturalism policy, and has chosen to pursue a policy of interculturalism instead, the dynamics of race, language and inclusion is even more complex. In addition to integrating minorities into a common language, French, interculturalism promotes cultural exchanges in hopes that the different exposure to various lifestyles, foods, fashions and traditions would lead to tolerance and an understanding of the ‘other’ (Satzewich & Liodakis, 2010). Cultural exchanges may be a significant step in understanding the ‘other’, but to dismantle this concept fundamental change must be made to core Canadian institutions.

Within Québec, the discourse of citizenship is even more complex. As a result of Québec’s unique history, and the desire to preserve the francophone culture, civic nationalism is the framework which best describes the integration process in Québec. Civic nationalism works to foster an attachment to the distinctive history, language and institutions of a society’s culture, while attempting to maintain a firm commitment to cultural and ideological pluralism (Webber, 1999). This framework looks beyond one’s individual identity, and binds citizens together by citizenship, “they [citizens] are all unmistakably and unreservedly Quebecers who partake of the same political

community, with the same rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis each other and the same commitment to up hold common values” (Banting, Courchene, & Seidle, 2007, p. 109). However, one must question if this can be executed successfully. Like all European colonies in America, Québec was born under the blanket of racism and must, like all other societies, own up to this reality (Icart, 2001). There is a rising dissatisfaction amongst the minority population stemming from their disadvantaged socioeconomic position. It is becoming clear that the state has not yet fulfilled its promise of equality and justice and many are beginning to question whether they truly belong to Québec society (Banting et al, 2007).

Thus, the argument can be made that ‘Blackness’ cannot be incorporated in the concept of Québécois, as the latter does not only indicate a political membership, but ethnic membership as well. Regardless of the diversity management framework utilised, i.e. multiculturalism or interculturalism, both do not address, and to an extent reinforce, the systemic marginalisation of African Canadians from the Canadian/Quebecer identity. Though there has been much effort to broaden the term Québécois to include all residents of Québec, regardless of ethnic or linguistic origin, I am arguing that steps must be made on a systematic and institutional level to usher in a period of reform that addresses the exclusions of racialized minorities from the fabric of Canadian/Québec culture, beginning with history.

### **Cultural reproduction: Curriculum and textbooks.**

The preceding discussions examined race, marginalisation and historical narratives in the context of Canadian culture. In this section, I will address the role of the education

system in sustaining the marginalisation of minorities in Canada. The idea of the classroom and, by extension, the education system as a whole being a politically neutral territory is a myth. Functionalist theorists, perpetuate this myth by maintaining that the major role of schools is to sustain the organization of society and the current status quo by teaching the necessary skills and norms for students to participate in society (Barakett, & Cleghorn, 2008). Several theorists have expounded on the functions of schooling.

Conflict and Marxist theorists have both argued that the main elements of the school system - teachers, administration and the curriculum - all contribute to fostering what Weber had coined as a 'status culture' and reproducing the class structure in society. The work of Collins and Bordieu (as cited in Barakett & Cleghorn, 2008) suggests that schools teach a particular lifestyle of language, dress code, peer association and interests deemed desirable by the dominant group. The work of Bourdieu that is referred to as the cultural and social reproduction theory argues that "the language and texts used in schools reflect the interests, values and tastes of the dominant group" (p. 37), thus Bourdieu establishes a link between class, power and education. This perpetuation of structural and cultural inequalities through the reproduction of the dominant cultural and knowledge forms ultimately sort groups, creating differential treatment in the classrooms (Codjoe, 2005).

The education system in Canada fundamentally reflects the culture, values and experiences of a white, middle-class, largely urban population of northern European origins. This is reflected in the curricula presented to students where racialised minority students find little that they can identify with in the classroom and as a result, "their

education dries up; they drop out” (Codjoe, 2005, p. 64). One of the biggest challenges of addressing issues that affect racialized minorities stems from the belief that schools in Canada are “race-neutral zones, bastions of pluralism and equality that reinforce depoliticised interpretations and perceptions of race and racialization” (Kelly & Yochim, 2009, p. 145). In order to emphasize homogeneity and reduce the significance of ethnocultural heritage and lived experiences of racism, a colour-blind approach in education was essential. Thus, multicultural education used white, western culture as their point of departure (Hampton, 2010).

The ‘myth of benign pluralism’ has a negative effect on attempts to develop solutions to curricular or school policy issues based on race, as these solutions are constantly pegged as radical or irrelevant. Many teachers in Canada view racism as a myth perpetuated by ‘at risk youth’, who constantly target innocent, well-meaning educators with false accusations (Hampton, 2010). This has contributed to shifting the racialized experiences of African Canadian students to be taken as a matter of culture and not as a matter of race, as race is a social construct which bears no significance (Kelly & Yochim, 2009). As the myth of meritocracy is embedded in our school system, success of students is placed solely on their ability to ‘work hard’, and it ignores the effects of race, class, gender and other social identities have on the schooling experiences and successes of students.

One of the major tools needed to fulfill the roles of schools as cultural reproducers are the textbooks and curriculum “the curriculum field has played a major part in this history of the relationship between school and community” (Apple, 1990, p. 62). These differing

schools of thought (Functionalism, Conflict theory, Marxism) on the function and impact of schooling has led many academics to take a closer look at the role of the curriculum and textbooks used within the classroom, to understand the impact of the messages being transmitted to students.

When acknowledged as a political text, the dominant messages within the different curricula can be easily spotted particularly within fields such as history. Pinar (1993) argues that it is important to understand the curriculum as a racial text. When debates present themselves as to what should be included within the curriculum, it also becomes a debate about what should be left out, about who we perceive ourselves to be and how this identity should be represented. Here we begin to understand how the education system contributes and even begins the ‘othering’ process in society. By constructing African-Canadians as the other or as a special interest group, their claims for inclusion in the curriculum is consistently denied, as this is seen as contrary to the ‘greater good’ of the nation state (Kelly & Yochim, 2009). The curriculum plays a major role in constructing identity formation. Pinar (1993) argues that the curriculum is a major site of negotiation where identity formation is to be expressed through representation. Thus it is necessary to begin examining the documents which facilitate the formation of identities.

Textbooks are the documents used to disseminate such information, as the contents of these books reflect what is deemed important and significant within the respective subject matter. Pingle (2009) gives a comprehensive description of the roles of textbooks as he explains their role in transmitting knowledge, anchoring the political and social norms of society and conveying a global understanding of history and the norms of society. He



uses the example of history and geography textbooks in particular to emphasize how they “attempt to explain our roots, how and why we happen to be living in a certain place and how that place can be described and characterised – in other words who we really are” (p. 7).

By extension, this means that history textbooks are able to communicate who are and who are not allowed to be situated in a particular space and who is and who is not entitled to that particular space. According to Naseem (2006) textbooks are the site where meanings of different signs are created. Privileging and valuing of certain signs results in the creation of binaries and the ‘other’. He argues that “subjects come to be understood by means of their inclusions in (or exclusion from) the dominant meanings fixed by the discourse...what this essentially means is that, by including few and excluding some the society is ordered in such a way that some are more privileged than others” (p. 451). Many textbooks fail to acknowledge African Canadians as active participants in the shaping of Canada. Pinar (1993) argues that the absence of black knowledge in the school curricula is not a simple oversight. Its absence represents an academic instance of racism or what has been described as “wilful ignorance and aggression towards blacks” (p. 62).

It is imperative to begin analysing the aims of the curriculum, and the selection of the textbooks available to the teachers, to see if they are truly reflective of the diverse social landscape. The overall perception of Blacks as being ‘newcomers’ to Canada, contributes to the overall omission and in some instances, marginalisation, of Blacks in Canadian history. Shifting the representation of Blacks in Canada, from ‘new comers’ to ‘contributors’, of the Canadian nation would create a source of empowerment for African

Canadians. Glaze (1994) explains just how devastating the psychological effect of non-recognition and devaluation can be on the self-esteem of Black Canadian students, as the confidence that allows most Canadians to lead balanced lives cannot be taken for granted by African Canadians. Moreover a shift in the representation of Black Canadians would usher in a new stage of generating an atmosphere of acceptance and belonging to Canada. What few have begun to acknowledge is the key role history - the curriculum and the textbooks- play in being the glue that could begin to bond its members of society together. Unfortunately, as it stands, racialised students are made to feel like perennial strangers in the classrooms (Brown, 2008).

### **Student impact.**

To shift from the theoretical to the everyday lived experiences of students, I have extracted examples from research that has interviewed and recorded the personal experiences and opinions of students on ‘feeling Canadian’, racism in their schooling experiences and the lack of representation of African Canadians in the curriculum. Though the voices of one cannot represent an entire ethnic community, it would be erroneous to discard these student voices as insignificant.

Professor Henry Codjoe has written a number of articles that focus on the experiences of African-Canadian students living in the Edmonton area. He observes that in addition to having to disprove some of the common stereotypes held by teachers of African Canadian students as being ‘lazy, loud and criminal’, they also underwent unfair treatment by the school’s administration, especially by the security guards on their campus, and had to contend with racial slurs expressed by other students on a nearly daily

basis. All of the problems they encountered were accorded to the race to which they belonged. Most importantly, he noted the way the students did not identify as being Canadian, despite their Canadian citizenship. One participant from his study stated that “people say because I was born in Canada, I’m Canadian, but I don’t consider myself Canadian because I’ve never been treated in the way most Canadians have... I say I’m in Canada to get my education ...” (Codjoe, 2006, p. 43).

In relation to how African Canadian students identify themselves, Jennifer Kelly, a professor at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, posed the question – you wouldn’t call yourself Canadian? The student responded:

Usually I say I am born here. But obviously my mum’s from the Caribbean. Cuz usually ...that’s what people are asking. I figured that out. Cuz they don’t expect to hear that you are Canadian. They just know what they want to hear. Like whether you are born here or not. I’ve learnt that. Cuz some people always ask you. If I say, “oh I am Canadian”. They will say, “oh well where are your parents from?” or something like that. They ask you a further question. So I usually always put in a [qualifying] sentence (Kelly, 2009, p. 149).

Both examples produced two different types of responses to the same question. The first student felt no attachment to the Canadian identity, as he demonstrated that no sense of attachment to the Canadian society. The second student, though acknowledging that Canada was the place of his birth, understood that this was not a sufficient answer, when asked where he was from. His entitlement to the Canadian identity is called into question based on the color of his skin.

Professor George Dei, a leading researcher on anti-racism in Canada at the University of Toronto, has also written extensively on the subject of inclusion and exclusion in the education system as it pertains to African students. He concluded that the African student narratives relating to their school experiences could be summarised as negative and dissatisfying. Teachers demonstrated an inability and/or failure to deal with questions of race identity, social difference, and differences of power which has led to an overall pejorative impact on the schooling experiences of the students (Dei, 1998). His research highlighted the students' dissatisfaction with the school's curriculum as well. Being Canadian students, they had strong feelings about how the inclusion of Black history in the mainstream curriculum would enrich their educative experiences. A grade 10 student named Natasha explained that the reason why one of her friends dropped out of another school was largely based on curricular content, she states: "I thought Black history would be good to learn but they don't teach that there in [her] school... sometimes I think that's why she dropped out, because she wanted to learn black history too" (p. 68).

Another participant in his study, Stephen, also gave his perspective on the importance of Black history being introduced into the schools. His response made a link between culture identity and knowledge as he stated, "Because I'm black. They're robbing you of your past... and unless you have the interest ...you're not gonna learn anything" (Dei, 1998, p. 68). In some instances, many Black students have begun associating their identity with African American culture. When Kelly (2004) asked her student participants if there is such a thing as a Black Canadian identity, the student (Denzil) responded: "no er [pause], when you say African American, it encompasses like black people in North

America” (Kelly, 2004, p. 26). Also speaking on the influence of Black American culture, one of Codjoe’s participants stated:

Canadian history just seems to be about white Canada. Except, maybe, the States, because they’re so close to the States, they’re not really concerned about other countries. I never knew anything about the history of blacks in Canada until I joined Ebony [a black club in Edmonton] (Codjoe 1997, 172).

These responses demonstrate students are aware that the curriculum places Blacks outside of Canadian history, rather than acknowledging them as an intrinsic part of it (Dei, 1998).

As argued throughout this section, the situation in Québec is unique. Montreal’s communities are socially and geographically divided by language. Rosalind Hampton, a graduate student at Concordia University, addresses the overall disengagement of Black youth in Québec in public schools. Within Montreal there are language laws set in place which force the children of many English speaking immigrants to attend school in French. Hampton (2010) argues that one of the consequences of these language laws is that it leads to the double marginalisation of English-speaking Black students. For instance, there has been a consistent report of Francophone teachers and school authorities openly expressing their scorn towards Anglophones and intolerance for ethno-cultural differences. Their inability to make useful connection between the education and their lived experiences leaves much to be desired. Hampton argues that the only clear connections students have made are between the disenfranchisement and alienation they experience at school and the wider society.

## **Summary.**

Addressing issues of diversity, equity, power and marginalisation requires people to understand the dynamics of race as a social category in Canada as a site of oppression and difference. Within the city of Montreal in particular, the issue of race usually takes a backburner or is sometimes completely overshadowed by the issues of language identity. With the Francophone community being recognised as a minority culture that was oppressed in the past, very little literature has tackled the discrimination and power inequities that exist within this Afro-Quebecois population. However, despite their unique history, the Montreal community has mixed the melting pot and pluralistic approach to integrate visible minorities into the Quebec culture. Yet contrary to popular belief not every racial minority is a new immigrant. Racial minorities, particularly Blacks have been living in the city of Montreal since the 1600s. The history of Blacks in this city is certainly rich, but it is marginalised to the outskirts of the dominant historical narrative taught in schools.

My research does not intend to become a search for lost or absent history. I intend to join the academics that have chosen to highlight the effects of the erasure of Blacks from the historical narrative on the academic performance and the overall connection of Blacks to the city of Montreal. By highlighting the absences present within the textbook, I can begin constructing meanings of the omission.

The relationship between identity and belonging, and the effects of this relationship on a student's academic performance is extremely important when addressing the problems racialized minorities encounter in their schooling experiences. I will argue that this

feeling and reality of the un-acceptance of Blacks and other racialized minority students in Canadian culture within the school environment is one of the root problems of student academic failure. This is because this sentiment of 'not belonging' can be felt in daily interactions with other students, teachers, administrators, and the curriculum.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Deconstructing *Panoramas* Volumes 1 and 2**

“We haven’t got an identity, until someone tells our story” - Robert Kroetsch (as cited in Strong-Boag, Grace, Elsenberg & Anderson, 1998, p. 4)

#### **Organisation of data.**

‘Representation’ is defined by Du Guy et al as “the practice of constructing meaning through the use of signs and language” (quoted in Kelly, & Yochim, 2009, p. 158). Based on this definition, I examined the representation of African Canadians within the *Panoramas* textbooks; I took into consideration graphic and textual portrayals that incorporated Blacks. I recorded the number of times Blacks were mentioned or graphically illustrated and in what capacity they were positioned within the focal points of the chapters. I recorded African Canadians within the textbook by noting three key factors: 1. Pictures of persons identified as being of African descent; 2. Written text that made reference to persons of African origin, through the use of the words ‘negro’, Black, African origin or African Canadian; 3. Sections dedicated to countries that are dominantly populated by persons of African descent, namely countries from the African continent or Caribbean region. From my analysis of the textbook, I classified the position of Blacks into four sections:

- Blacks represented as slaves
- Blacks represented as immigrants



- Blacks represented as working class and entertainers
- Blacks represented as existing ‘outside’ Canada

Previously, researchers have shown that within the Canadian history discourse there is an overall omission of ‘Blackness’ from the Canadian and Quebecer identity. This is then transmitted onto the educational landscape, via curricula and textbooks. An anti-racist understanding of Canadian history affirms that the narrative is largely representative of a particular racialised and gendered group, in this case the white, Francophone and Anglophone male. As a result, I take into account not only how many times African Canadians are referred to in the text but how their experiences are positioned and valued. Naseem (2006) states that “one of the major ways in which meaning fixation takes place and subjects are constituted and positioned within discourse is through an across-the-board homogenization of theory and explanation” (p. 455). This can be applied to the *Panoramas* textbooks, as demonstrated in the Table of Contents (see Appendix), there was an already outlined totalizing notion of who constituted and contributed to Québec society – the Aboriginal populations, the French regime and the British regime.

This categorization leaves room for the assumption that unless otherwise stated, all peoples regardless of race, gender and sexuality had a homogenous experience underneath each regime. Establishing the degree of representation of African Canadians can only be accomplished by providing a comparison of the experiences of Blacks in the textbook, and what *could have been* included in the textbook, based on other teaching resource materials. This comparison of included and omitted materials will reveal the

inadequacy of *Panoramas* in fulfilling the goals of the History curriculum explained below.

In this section, I provide an in-depth textual analysis of the *Panoramas* textbook, beginning with an overview of the goals of the curriculum secondly I address those are central and celebrated within the textbook and finally, by explaining and examining the categories of representation listed earlier I demonstrate how African Canadians are represented.

### **Overview of the Curriculum.**

The main objective of the ‘History and Citizenship Education’ course is to enable students to “develop their understanding of the present in the light of the past” and “to prepare students to participate as informed citizens in the discussion, choices and community life of a society that is democratic, pluralistic and open to a complex work” (Québec Education Program, p. 1). In this program, students are expected to develop the following three competencies:

1. Examines social phenomena from a historical perspective – this allows students to see that the present is essentially the product of the past and the present needs to be understood by approaching it from a historical perspective. It consists of making connections between the different aspects of the society presented over a long period of time. This should eventually lead the students to take an interest in the evolution of society over time.

2. Interprets historical phenomena using the historical method – This develops the students’ ability to reason by enabling students to learn to seek information and analyse and interpret social phenomenon using the historical method, tools and techniques specific to the studying of history. It involves interpreting the past by making connections between events and determining their consequences over time.
3. Strengthens his/her exercise of citizenship through the study of history - The third and final competency promotes the exercise of citizenship by helping students grasp the impact of human actions on the course of history, and the importance of fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens. To establish the foundations of participation in social life it is necessary to be able to define one’s identity and recognize that there is a diversity of identities.

Thus, it is my opinion that by the end of the program students should have developed an understanding of their own self-identity, expanded their sense of empowerment and have gained a comprehension on world views.

**The main focus of *Panoramas*.**

Understanding the goals of the curriculum and the entire program is essential, as this is what guides textbook writing and production (Naseem, 2006). The ‘Table of Contents’ section is the first point of contact for students to begin identifying the major actors and whose history is going to be given meaning in the text. It is also the point in which racialised and gendered subjects can be identified and positioned within the overall

framework of the curriculum and history discourse. Each chapter focuses on the first occupants (Aboriginals), the French and British regimes and the ‘contemporary period’.

Chapter one explains the Distribution of Quebec’s population from two aspects; firstly, the change in population growth due to natural growth and migration flows, and secondly, the change to the demographic of Quebec society, noting the diversity changes in the Québec society. Chapter two focuses on the people, industries and policies that fuelled economic development in Québec and Chapter three explains the development and transitions of the different ‘currents of thought’ that has made Québec culture what it is today. Chapter 4 explores the dynamics of power and power relationships historically and currently as they developed in Québec under the different regimes. It is important to note that there is no recognition or explanation of the power structure that existed within the Aboriginal communities prior to the French and British regime and Chapter 5 explores and highlights the political, economic, social, cultural and environmental issues that are deemed relevant in Québec society today.

**Who and what are central and celebrated within *Panoramas*.**

Population, Economic Development, Culture, Power and Social Issues, are the main focal points expanded within *Panoramas* to explain the development of Québec historically and currently. From the outset, i.e. the table of contents, some problems stand out in respect to the position of African Canadians within the textbook. Firstly, the lack of reference to African Canadians as significant actors in the development of the Québec society is the first indication that their experiences, if mentioned, were going to be marginalised and will not be a central part of the historical narrative. Secondly, the marginalisation of the

experiences of African Canadians is emphasized by the many representations of Blacks living outside of Canada, as opposed to highlighting the experiences of Blacks in Québec or other parts of Canada. The positioning of the experiences of Blacks on the outskirts of the focal points of textbook, makes it clear to the readers that the African Canadian experience are not to be celebrated as significant occurrences within Québec's history.

Volume 1 of *Panoramas* (2010) provides a detailed breakdown of the 'Chronology of the main events of Québec History'. This list indicates the specific actors/events and the time periods that are deemed significant in the History of Québec and Canada. The main events of Québec History are as follows:

1. The first Occupants (Circa 33000 BCE to circa 1500 CE) – This section highlights specific dates which focus on a range of activities; from the arrival of the aboriginal peoples in the Americas to Verrazano reaching the Atlantic Coast of North America.
2. The emergence of a society in New France (1534 to 1760) – The events highlighted in this section included Cartier and Roberval establishing a fort near Stadacona (Québec city), the founding of Québec City Champlain, the Great Peace Treaty of Montreal and the deportation of Acadians.
3. The Change of Empire (160-1791) – The events tackled under this major topic include the capitulation of New France in Montreal, British military rule, the aboriginal peoples' revolt, the emergence of the Québec Act, the invasion of the

province of Québec by insurgents, the arrival of the first loyalists in the city of Québec and the establishment of the Constitutional act in 1791

4. Demands and Struggles in the British Colony (1791 to 1850) – The events during this period that was deemed important was the first elections in lower Canada, the beginning of the increased British migration to Lower Canada and the rebellions of 1837-1838 in Upper and Lower Canada
5. The Formation of the Canadian Federation ( 1850 to 1929) – This time period focused on events such as the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of industrialization, the establishment of the British North American Act of 1867, the adoption of the Indian Act in 1876, the First World War 1914-1918, the year women obtained the right to vote and the crash of the New York stock exchange in 1929
6. The modernization of Québec Society (1930 – 1980) – This time period focused on the beginning of the Great Depression, the rule of the Duplessis government, the adoption of the Québec flag, the creation of the royal commission of inquiry on Education in the province of Québec, the 1970 October crisis and the adoption of the Act to preserve Agricultural land
7. Issues in Québec Society (since 1980) – This time period introduced issues such as the 1980 referendum on sovereignty-association, the non-ratification of the Meech Lake Accord, the 1990 Oka Crisis, the creation of the territory of Nunavut and the adoption of the act to combat poverty.

The chronology of the main events of Québec's history brings attention to the movements, contributions and experiences of the Aboriginal peoples, the French regime and British Empire. However, who is central and celebrated within the text, is not only dependent on which story is being told, but who is telling the story. Thus, the Aboriginal viewpoints within the textbook must be examined with a degree of scrutiny. The sections that focus on the history of the Aboriginal communities and their relationship with the French and English regimes demonstrate that the narrative of *Panoramas* is told from the dominant group's point of view. The description of the villages and lifestyle of the first occupants, to the impact of their encounters with the colonisers was not told from the Aboriginal perspective. For example, in Volume 1 Chapter 1 page 17 of *Panoramas*, a description of a village and longhouse of the Iroquoian community is provided by Jacques Cartier. At the end of Cartier's description, the question that followed was, "*what does this document tell us about Iroquoian social organization?*" As the description of the village was not taken from the point of view of an Iroquoian, students are then required to shape their opinion of the social organisation of the Iroquoian society, based on the interpretation by a Francophone male, as opposed to an actual inhabitant of that society.

One means of identifying who has been constituted as central to the historical narrative, is through the simple process of identifying the names of people within the text. Though the Aboriginals are recognised as being the first occupants of the territory, it was clear their presence is not considered central to the formation of Québec, as their existence was reduced to general titles such as, 'Nomadic

populations’, they were also divided into three linguistics populations in the text – “Iroquoian”, “Algonquin” and “Inuktitut”. The text did not provide the specific names for Chiefs or leaders of any of the Aboriginal nations. This can be compared to the section that focuses on the ‘population’ under the Francophone community, where specific names were mentioned such as Jacques Cartier who used the stories of the Iroquoians to locate metals upstream, yet it was his voyages that “improved the map of the Gulf” and located land suitable for agriculture. Samuel de Champlain is another person celebrated as the founder of New France/Québec.

The recognition of persons and their contributions from a specific social group within the textbook begins to signify which experiences are privileged over others in the overall historical narrative. For example, in Volume 1 Chapter 1, Pierre Boucher de Boucherville (1622- 1717) is an author who is described as being a hard worker who devoted his life to the development of New France, and is known for establishing one of the most prosperous seigneurie in the colony. The following passage from his book is highlighted within *Panoramas*, it states:

*Poor people would be much better off here than they are in France, provided that are not lazy; they could not fail to get employment and could not say, as they do in France, that they are obliged to beg for their living because they cannot find any one of to give them work... (p. 25)*

A quote such as this tends to generalise the experiences of all persons and neglects the lived realities of persons of different races and gender. ‘Poor people’ in this context



would only be referring to poor white males during this period as poor men of African origin would not have been ‘better off’ in either territory.

The celebration of a specific group or experience also occurs when there is no inclusion of other voices. Throughout the textbook there is no mistaking whose story was being told and whose stories were omitted. There is no denying that all the events and persons that were deemed notable are representative of a specific demographic. The text addressing the economic and cultural development of Québec centered solely on the white European male demographic. Though many historians have documented the experiences of minorities within the economic development of Québec, these stories or groups are yet to be incorporated within the overall historical narrative and textbooks. The dominant group was also celebrated in chapter 4 which focuses on the official power established in Québec, as there was no representation of other social groups, either by pictures or written text.

To summarise, what is central and celebrated within Volumes 1 and 2 of *Panoramas* are events that occurred in Québec’s history that are reflective of the experiences of the white, francophone and Anglophone male. Despite the representation of the history of Aboriginal peoples within the text, their experiences are not only marginalised, but told from the dominant group’s point of view. This analysis of the textbook clearly implies that the celebration and central positioning of the dominant group inevitably leads to the marginalisation and omission of the experiences of African Canadians.

## **Who and what was marginalised and omitted in *Panoramas*?**

### ***Representation of Blacks as slaves.***

Although it was not made explicit within the textbook, the initial presence of Blacks in Québec, what was called New France at the time, was not a result of Blacks being the original inhabitants nor was it a result of voluntarily migration, Blacks first entry into Canada was as slaves. The section entitled, ‘The outcasts of Canadian society’ in Volume 1 of the *Panoramas*, was the first textual reference made to the presence of persons of African origin during that time period. However, the acknowledgement of Blacks did not translate into the acknowledgement of their experience within the textbook. The representation of the overall practice of slavery in Quebec and particularly the experiences of Negro slaves was inadequately addressed within the textbook. The following is the passage that explains the practice of slavery in New France, where specific reference was made to persons of African origin:

*“The prospect of working as a servant in a developing colony was not very attractive to colonists. There were many tasks to perform, the salary was low, and freedom of action was virtually non-existent. To remedy the labour shortage, the royal administration legalized the practice of slavery. There were between 2000 and 3000 slaves during the French regime. The majority of them belonged to various Aboriginal nations that were enemies of the French, such as the Pawnee originating from Western Mississippi. Others were of African origin. Stripped of their rights and their freedoms, these men, women and children could be bought and sold.”* (Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 40)

The use of the phrase ‘Others were of African origin’ as the only representation of negro slaves, is a gross and blatant disregard for the lives and experiences of Negro slaves that were brought into New France. Moreover, this phrase belittles and reduces their contributions as insignificant in the overall discourse of Québec’s development. A few noteworthy Negro slaves that could have been mentioned within the text were:

- (a) Mathieu Dacosta - He was among the intrepid crew of Samuel Champlain, the "Father of Canada". Da Costa's importance to the venture was partly a result of his linguistic skill, because he spoke and understood the languages used by the Indians in the Maritimes; as a consequence, he acted as Chaplain's interpreter.
- (b) Olivier Le Jeune - the first slave of whom there is any adequate record, though he was neither the first slave nor the first Negro in New France.
- (c) Marie-Joseph Angélique – The slave of a wealthy Montreal merchant, set fire to her owner's house in order to cover her escape. The fire engulfed and destroyed 46 buildings in Old Montreal. She was captured, tortured, paraded through the streets, then hanged and her body burned” (Québec Board of Black Educators, 1996, p. 6).

The inclusion of names not only begins celebrating individuals, but as mentioned earlier, naming enables a shift in the position of Blacks within the historical narrative from marginalisation to being central within the history discourse. Until this shift is made, the reputation of insignificance would relentlessly represent such experiences. The practice of slavery is consistently trivialized within the text. For example, the following is the

pronouncement by Intendant Jacques Raudot as recorded in *Panoramas* that affirmed the approval of slavery in New France:

*“Ordinance by Intendant Raudot on the subject of slavery in Canada, 13 April 1709.... Hence, in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty, we order that those who have brought or who will hereafter buy any Pani or Negro are to be granted complete ownership of that slave”*

(Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 34)

Now let me compare the above passage to the complete version of the Ordinance:

*“We are well aware of the benefits that this Colony would derive if inhabitants could, without risk, purchase and import the Savages known as Panis [Pawnee Indians], whose nation is very far from this country. The Panis can be obtained only through Savages who go and capture them in their own territory and most often trade them with the English of Carolina. These Savages have also, on occasion, sold Panis to the people of this country, who often lose considerable amounts of money because those who have not bought slaves instill in the Panis a desire for freedom. Consequently, they almost always leave their Masters, claiming that there are no slaves in France, which is not always the case, since there are Colonies that depend on slavery. For example, on the Islands of this continent, any Negro bought by an inhabitant is always regarded as a slave. All Colonies must be treated equally, and the inhabitants of this country need the Panis nation to do agricultural and other types of work as much as the*

*inhabitants of the Islands need the Negroes. Furthermore, these types of contracts are very important to this Colony, since those who have bought slaves and who will buy them in the future must be guaranteed ownership of their slaves. Hence, in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty, we order that those who have bought or who will hereafter buy any Pani or Negro are to be granted complete ownership of that slave; that these Panis or Negroes are to be forbidden from leaving their Masters; and that a fifty-pound fine is to be levied on anyone who incites slaves to leave their Masters. This decree shall be read and published in the usual locations in Quebec City, Trois-Rivieres and Montreal and shall be filed with the Clerk of the Court of each of these rovoistships at the request of our subdelegates. Completed and filed in the town hall of Quebec on April 13, 1709”*

(Québec Board of Black Educators, 1996, p. 3)

The longer version of the Ordinance certainly creates more discussion about the practice of slavery in New France. Apart from affirming his approval for slavery in the colony, the complete version of the Ordinance gives a more in-depth understanding as to why slavery was seen to be a necessity in Québec. This could potentially raise discussion about the impact the practice of slavery had on the economic and political development of Québec. Secondly, the illustration of Aboriginal and Negro slaves perceived as less than human would reveal how racism has manifested itself in Québec. As racism is constantly reduced to acts of individuals, as opposed to a social oppression ingrained in our major institutions, greater recognition of occurrences such as slavery would begin to change this dialogue.

It is also important to note that the topic of slavery in *Panoramas* was mentioned under the focal point of 'Population', yet it was not positioned under the topic of 'Economic Development' within the textbook. As a result though Blacks were acknowledged within the social organisation of New France, this was not translated into them being represented as economic contributors to the society. This reveals African Canadian history as being concomitantly acknowledged and dismissed within the Canadian historical narrative. The failure of *Panoramas* to position the experience of slavery within the dialogue of economic development in Québec, creates the assumption that there was no relationship between the economy and the practice of slavery in Québec, and once again erases the presence of Blacks from the overall discourse. However, the work of Winks (1997) explains the connection between the economy and the practice of slavery. The state of the economy had a direct influence on the growth of Negro slavery in New France. As the economy began to diversify under the rule of the British regime, so did the workforce. Despite the fact that two wars broke out which prevented the further growth of the slave trade in New France, slavery had certainly expanded. The need for Negro slaves was most blatantly expressed by Governor James Murray, the first British Governor of Québec as he wrote to a friend in New York stating:

"I must earnestly entreat your assistance, without servants nothing can be done. Had I the inclination to employ soldiers, which is not the case, they would disappoint me, and Canadians will work for nobody but themselves. Black slaves are certainly the only people to be depended upon" (Québec Board of Black Educators, 1996, p. 3).

Though it would be extremely erroneous to characterise Québec and Canada as having a slave economy, it would be just as erroneous to dismiss the practice of slavery in New France as having no relevance or effects on the development of Quebec. Moreover, as the goal of the curriculum is to encourage the critical thinking skills of students, responses to questions provided in the textbook such as: “*What were the effects of economic activities on the organization of the society and the territory under British Rule?*” (Volume 1, chapter 2, p. 174) would automatically be missing the effects and impact of slavery, as this was not positioned within the textbook as an ‘economic activity’. One of the main reasons why these experiences need to be shared is to create pockets of agency and empowerment for African Canadian students. The inclusion of these topics within history textbooks would begin to see Blacks being represented more than just pariahs in society.

The social landscape of Québec and Canada during the time period covered within the textbook was not devoid of Blacks; however, the historical narrative delivered in *Panoramas* seems to be. The beginning of the Black experience in Quebec is not granted a prominent space in *Panoramas*, which is a reflection of its position in the grand historical narrative. The representation of Blacks as slaves clearly demonstrates how the experience is deemed insignificant due to the lack of information provided on the topic. The dismissal of such an historical and arguably most significant portion of the Black experience in Quebec, can give an indication as to the tone of further representation of African Canadians throughout the textbook.

### ***Representation of Blacks as immigrants.***

The representation of Blacks as immigrants is demonstrated at several points within both volumes of the textbook. I determined the construction of ‘Blacks as immigrants’ when persons were identified in *Panoramas* as being from a country that is predominantly populated by persons of African origin and when the pictures used to depict immigrants were of persons of African descent. This is demonstrated in Volume 2, Chapter 5, page 217 under the title: ‘The Rights of Newcomers’. Underneath this section was the picture of a man of African descent hosting a radio program entitled ‘Ici Radio-Rouge’, a forum for multicultural expression and information. The text provided underneath the photo is as follows:

*The Bouchard Taylor report recommended that members of ethnic minorities make their cultures and realities better known. It hoped that the government would encourage and finance initiatives aimed at the general public, such as ici-radio-refuge, a radio program conceived and hosted by immigrants in Montréal.*

Depictions of persons of African descent as immigrants are prevalent within the textbook. This overwhelming representation of Blacks as immigrants fuels the myth that all African Canadians came from ‘somewhere else’. Moreover, the representation of Blacks as immigrants is misrepresented as the textbook does not adequately explain the manifestation and impact of racist immigration policies and societal norms on Black communities. The incorporation of the roles of race and racism in the Quebec history discourse will begin to create a space within society to begin discussing the ways in



which societal factors have an impact on the lives of African Canadians and other racialised minorities at present.

To begin the analysis of the representation of Blacks as immigrants, the first starting point would be to determine how the textbook explains and describes the immigration policies of the past in relation to the way in which they affected the movements of Blacks. To describe the official Canadian immigration policies of the 1800s in the textbook two passages were recorded from Volume 1 of *Panoramas*:

*In 1869, the Canadian Parliament enacted its first immigration law... This first law had few restrictions concerning the numbers of immigrants Canada was prepared to accommodate. As a result, practically everyone interested in the dominion was welcome. The government, nevertheless, undertook some measures to forbid entry to criminals (p. 62)*

*... From 1871 to 1901, about 1.5 million immigrants arrived in Canada. They mostly came from the British Isles, Northern Europe and the United States. Scots, Irish and English arrived in great numbers in Québec and began to form a significant segment of the population. (p. 64)*

Though these passages do not make any direct reference to persons of African descent, it would be incorrect to assume that 1. these selected passages are a full representation of the nature of the policies that existed and 2. that the lack of direct reference implies that Blacks were not adversely affected by the immigration policies. For instance, the first passage quoted above, describes how open and welcoming the immigration policies were

in Canada. Yet, it ignores the fact that this open and welcoming sentiment was not extended to all demographics. Contrast these examples from the textbook with a description of the immigration policies by Trevor Sissing author of 'How they kept Canada almost Lily White'. A different picture is painted to illustrate the nature of the first set of immigration policies in Canada, especially as they as affected Blacks from America. He writes:

...Canada didn't want them [Blacks], and didn't get them. In the period 1896-1907, when 1.3 million Europeans and Americans became Canadian immigrants, less than nine hundred blacks were admitted. The reasons were never clear, but certainly there were plenty of reasons given. Canadian officials tended to think blacks were poor farmers, were perhaps immoral, were generally undesirable immigrants, above all, it was repeated again and again that black people couldn't stand the cold. (Québec Board of Educators, 1996, p. 8)

At certain points within the discussion of immigration *Panoramas* does allude to the discriminatory nature of the immigration policies, as is portrayed in the following text:

*...Article 5. No person... shall be admitted to Canada if he is a member of any of the following classes of persons:*

- a. Persons who*
  - i. are idiots, imbeciles or morons,*
  - ii. are insane or, if immigrants, have been insane at any time,*
  - iii. have constitutional psychopathic personalities, or*

- iv. if immigrants, are afflicted with epilepsy;*
- b. persons afflicted with tuberculosis in any form, or any contagious or infectious disease...*
- c. immigrants who are dumb, blind or otherwise physically defective ...*
- d. prostitutes, homosexuals or persons living on the avails of prostitution or homosexuality, pimps, or persons coming to Canada for these or any other immoral purposes...*
- e. professional beggars or vagrants ...*
- f. persons who are chronic alcoholics ... (Volume 1, chapter 1, p. 84)*

And -

*The early 20<sup>th</sup> century was also marked by the application of new discriminatory immigrant policies. In 1906 and in 1910, for example, two immigration laws established categories of immigrants considered 'undesirable' due to their origins, culture, state of health, political opinion or level of wealth. These laws further sanctioned the deportation of newcomers according to the same criteria. These, and subsequent immigration policies, had significant effects on the composition of Canada's population. Since they favoured immigrants from the British Isles, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Canadians of British origin constituted the majority of the country's population (Volume1, Chapter 1, p. 76).*

To express the racist undertones of Canada's immigration policies, phrases such as 'New discriminatory immigrant policies', 'undesirable due to their origins, culture...' and 'favoured immigrants from British Isles' were utilised. These phrases provide a vague

picture of the impact of the immigration policies on racialised minorities, particularly on persons of African descent. Yet, Calliste (1993) as cited in Mensah (2010) revealed that in 1910, the immigration act empowered the government-in-council to prohibit the entry of immigrants belonging to any “race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada, or of immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character” (p.70). Work such as this, explicitly highlights the racist policies and mentalities that negatively affected the migration of Blacks into Canada. The softening of the racist impact of these policies within *Panoramas* does not communicate the concerted efforts that were made to keep Blacks as well as other ethnic minorities out and white people in.

A fuller representation of the experiences of Blacks as immigrants is crucial as it allows students to be better informed and more critical of the society as it exists today. I stated in the beginning of this chapter the goals of the curriculum to aid students to make connections of their past with their present realities, in addition to discovering their identity and responsibilities as citizens. If a textbook only provides the history/experiences of a particular demographic, how are the goals of the curriculum met with respect to strengthening a student’s exercise of citizenship? Moreover, fuller representation is important particularly when questions such as, “*Why did the government favour immigrants of British origin*” (Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 76), and *whether specific sections of the immigration act of 1952 was discriminatory* (Volume 1, chapter 1, p. 84), meant to encourage critical thinking, are present within the textbook. If students are not informed of the major impacts of the policies on racialised groups, then a misinformed

representation of racism in Canada is going to be established. The marginalisation of these events translates into the marginalisation of the people affected.

Misrepresentation due to omission also takes place within the textbook when the struggles and livelihood of Immigrants in Québec are addressed. Under the title, 'Immigration Challenges', the following is stated:

*...From the 1980s onward. The origins of immigrants were much more diverse than during previous periods. European immigration, once dominant, was replaced by immigration from Asia in particular. In fact of 664,500 immigrants admitted into Québec between 1986 and 1996, 40.6% came from Asia, 25.1% from the Americas and 21.5% from Europe. (Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 93)*

*...Beginning in 1981, the Ministère des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration made it their objective to ensure that these communities adapt to the institutions, laws, values and the language of the province. In 1986, in order to prevent all forms of racism and racial discrimination, the National assembly passed the declaration by the Government of Québec on ethnic and race relations (Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 95)*

I selected these two passages from the text as they demonstrate the omission and marginalisation of Blacks in the dialogue. The first passage is a good example of how persons that migrated from dominantly Black populated countries are not represented throughout the text. With the exception of a bar graph that indicated the presence of Jamaicans constituting 4% of the immigration population (Volume 1, chapter 1, p. 85),

the overall significance of this time period, as it applies to the increasing presence of Blacks in Québec is lost. Though they may not have constituted a majority of the population in terms of numbers, the second major influx of Blacks in Québec and Canada in general occurred as a result of immigration policies becoming more relaxed as a result of their need for labour.

It is certainly ironic, that though the presence of Blacks in Québec is dominantly represented as newcomers within the textbook, the overall narrative still excludes the presence of Blacks from the Canadian landscape. This erasure is facilitated by the representation of racism and discrimination demonstrated in the second example. The aim of this section was to highlight the challenges immigrants encountered, yet instead of explaining the way in which racism manifested itself and actually affected different groups in society, the problem was minimised and portrayed as something that has been solved. Bearing this in mind how can questions such as “*what have been the challenges related to immigration in Québec since the 1980s*” (Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 95) be adequately answered?

It is only by including the realities of groups, such as African Canadians, that students can be fully equipped to critically dissect the society in which they live. Mensah (2010) provides a good example of the description of the experiences of Blacks as they immigrated to Canada. I have chosen to quote sections from his text, ‘Black Canadians’, to highlight what could and needs to be included in the history of Québec and Canada, to begin removing the experiences of Black Canadians as non-existent, he writes:

The major influx of Haitians into Canada occurred around 1967 to the early 1970s. The first wave was made up mostly of political exiles, scholarship students and professionals working in health services, education and social services. These pioneers, numbered a few hundred per year and were from the privileged class of the Haitian society (p. 113).

Or -

The second and much larger wave of Haitian immigration occurred around 1973 to about 1980. These immigrants included thousands of artisans and skilled and unskilled workers, most of whom went to work in Québec's plastic and textiles industries, as well as in the service sector, especially as domestic workers. Unlike the first wave of immigrants, this group experienced more problems adjusting to life in Canada; this was due to their low educational and socioeconomic backgrounds; many were illiterate and only spoke creole (p. 115).

Passages such as these not only acknowledge the presence of Blacks, but they also highlight racism as the major contributor to immigration challenges for Blacks, and arguably other racialised minorities. The representation of the experiences of Blacks in *Panoramas* is by no means attached to the impact of racism and by no means indicative of a struggle. For instance, the textbook highlights the picture of smiling comedian Boucar Diouf, a male of African descent originally from Senegal, residing in Montréal. Within the textbook, his work is used to demonstrate how and why the integration of new comers should go smoothly:

*...Newcomers benefit from the quality of life in their adopted society and in return contribute to its improvement. They try hard to get in tune with the local population. As for their descendants... they consider themselves to be fully fledged citizens of the country chosen by their parents... they develop such a bond of belonging that they see themselves first as local citizens, in spite of their legitimate attachment to the native land of their parents” (Boucar Diouf, La commission Boucar pour un accommodement raisonnable. Les editions des intouchables. 2008 p 46-47) (Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 94).*

The use of a Black man to represent such a statement creates a number of meanings. Firstly, it creates a totalizing notion that all Blacks can and have integrated smoothly into Canadian society. Secondly, it implies that the presence of Blacks is only relevant once they are established as immigrants. Finally, it completely removes one's ability to speak French, as a major factor of a smooth transition in Québec culture. One must question if this feeling of 'belonging' can be just as easily established for Blacks that migrate from the English Caribbean countries. Highlighting the challenges endured because of racism in history textbooks opens room in the classroom for a dialogue which could address the different policies, significant actors, and different organizations that have contributed to fighting racism in society. It also changes the color and the tone of the Québec historical narrative. Names such as Marcus Garvey and the contributions of his organisation, the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Montreal, can be mentioned and be made relevant in the overall historical dialogue. Only when a space is created for the inclusion



of the experiences of African Canadians, and other ethnic minorities, will their realities be recognised and valued within curricula and textbooks as well.

***Representation of Blacks as working class, entertainers, invisible.***

Culture within *Panoramas* is defined as, “*All of the customs, approaches, skills, ideas, values, beliefs and conceptions of the world that are shared by a society*” (Volume 2, chapter 3, p. 4). Thus far, it has been clearly demonstrated that the construction of Canadian history constitutes the experiences of the dominant group and the exclusion of the experiences of racialised minorities. However, when minorities are discussed within the textbook, the experiences of African Canadians are either never addressed or swept into an overgeneralised group, completely ignoring their unique experiences. The incorporation of the experiences of minority groups, as it relates to ‘Culture’ appears under the ‘Contemporary Period’ section in the *Panoramas*; for example it was stated that:

*The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was also a decisive period for Québec. The calling into question of traditionalism and the influence of the Church on Québec society led to a change in the role of the state and redefined the concept of nation... the demands of Aboriginal peoples and of feminists in this context were also heard*  
(Volume 2, chapter 3, p.47)

Here is an example of the presence of minorities being introduced but no specific recognition of Blacks. The erasure of the struggles and demands of the Black communities from the historical narrative implies that the Black communities had no

reason to make any demands; it also contributes to the silencing of the experiences of the African Canadian communities as it exists today.

The position of Blacks within the dialogue of ‘Culture’ in Québec’s history explains the effects of Québec ‘culture’ on the socioeconomic position of African Canadians. Under the section, ‘*Capitalism and its cultural consequences between 1867 and 1930*’ in the textbook the following is stated:

*The cultural makeup of the working-class districts in the west of the city was also more diversified. While the majority of the Irish that arrived in Montreal in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century settles in the Griffintown district, the Little Burgundy district, for its part, had a strong concentration of black Anglophones originally from the United States and the British colonies of the Antilles.”* (Volume 2, Chapter 3, p. 50).

This passage demonstrates a gross omission of the experiences of Blacks as ‘working class’, and as such has represented Blacks as being an insignificant fixture in the overall narrative. However, if the manifestation of racism in the beliefs, conceptions and values of society was incorporated within the dialogue of what constituted Quebec ‘culture’, this dismissal of the Black experience would not be taking place. The replacements of the word ‘racism’ with ‘capitalism’, is a clear reflection of the way in which the concept of race and racism is positioned within the Québec history discourse as being something deemed irrelevant in the explanation of the conditions of racialized minorities in general. Moreover, the ‘Interpretation’ question provided under this section was, “*what were the*

*social and cultural effects of capitalism?”* A question such as this removes racism from the equation as being a significant player in the experiences of Blacks in Canada.

Academics such as Mensah (2010) explain the realities of African Canadians in his book, *Black Canadians 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. He describes the struggles Blacks endured in the labour market due to racism, and argues that these struggles were the root of the problems for Blacks in Canada. He also highlighted the challenges Black domestic women from the Caribbean encountered, to explain how this demographic had suffered financially in society. To only portray Blacks as working class is also misrepresentation because it excludes people of African descent who were able to own their business and attain wealth such as Charles Humphrey Estee who was the minister of the only black congregation of the of the Union United Church and the owner of a Newspaper company in Québec. He is also known for fighting for Black women to be admitted to nurse-training programs in Montreal hospitals. When such information becomes ingrained in the historical narratives, the title of ‘newcomer’ can be removed as a descriptor for African Canadians.

When Blacks were not represented as ‘working class’ within the focal point of ‘Culture’, Blacks were positioned as contributing to Québec’s mass culture as entertainers. For example, a portrait of Oscar Peterson was provided with a short description:

*Oscar Peterson was a jazz pianist and composer who was born in the Petite Bourgogne (Little Burgundy) district in Montreal, to an immigrant Antillean family...He signed recording contracts with major record companies and played alongside the most famous jazz instrumentalist and signers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*  
(Volume 2, chapter 3, p. 55)

The inclusion of Blacks as entertainers and the omission of their contributions in other areas, such as education, politics and the economic sector continuously sustain the myth that successful Blacks are only entertainers or athletes. It also alludes to the devaluation of the contributions of African Canadians in other fields in Quebec and Canada. Notable contributions of Blacks in Canada expands into politics as Yolanda James became the youngest and first black cabinet minister in Quebec's history in 2007 and in education as Dr. George Dei amongst other educators have developed and challenged mainstream theories that focus on inclusive education.

Another area within the textbook that could have included Blacks and their experiences would be in the section that addresses 'Issues in Québec Society'. In this section they address a number of issues such as when different groups received the right to vote:

*In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, obtaining the right to vote was a major issue: women were able to vote at the federal level in 1918 and in Québec provincial elections in 1940. Canadians of Japanese origin only obtained the right to vote in 1948; as for aboriginal peoples, they could only vote at the federal level without losing their status beginning in 1960 and Québec beginning in 1969 (Volume 2, chapter 5, p. 213).*

The passage above can be interpreted in two different ways. On one hand, the information is presented as though African Canadians always had the right to vote in Canada, and as such need not be listed in this section. On the other hand, the omission of Blacks as a demographic to be mentioned in this context creates the impression that either Blacks were not present or they were not relevant enough as a racialized group to be

mentioned. Both interpretations contribute to the erasure of 'Blackness' from the Québec nation ultimately building the sentiment of 'not belonging' amongst Black students. The book, 'The Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples' (1999) sheds light on the omitted information as it explains that in addition to not obtaining the land rights they deserved, Black Loyalists were also deemed ineligible to vote. However, on a legal level, Blacks (though it is not recorded if Black women were included) received the right to vote earlier than other groups. It is recorded that Black people gained the right to vote in 1847 in Nova Scotia, in upper Canada as "naturalized adult black males who owned taxable property were legally qualified to vote and serve on juries, but local convention frequently prevented them" (p.164), it went on to state that, "... discrimination in the matter of voting rights did not have the sanction of law, when legal authority became involved, it was to enforce the rights of blacks and not deny them" (p. 164).

By removing the race/skin colour as a determinant of an individual's access to rights and resources, the full scope the evolution of human rights in Québec, particularly as it affected Blacks and other racialised minorities is not fully addressed. Racial segregation was a problem that Black communities faced in Québec and other parts of Canada. Walker (1999) provided several descriptions of oppressive incidents based on race occurring, such as the experience of Fred Christie who was refused a beer from a tavern located in Montreal. He sued the tavern and appealed all the way up to the Supreme Court of Canada. In December 1939, the highest court in the land pronounced that racial discrimination was legal. This decision was also followed in a Vancouver court case as the rights of a hotel to decline service simply due to the colour of a person's skin was

deemed acceptable. Many other stories can be told from across Canada; however, they have not made their way into history textbooks. How were the Human Rights events and experiences retold in *Panoramas* chosen? Failure to address the challenges that Blacks encountered implies not only how unimportant these occurrences were but it also excludes the stories that explain how these challenges were overcome.

### ***Representation of Blacks as outside culture.***

Section 2 of every chapter within *Panoramas* was dedicated to focus on countries around the world in relation to the main focal point of the respective chapter. Within these sections Blacks were represented to a large extent; 4 out of the 10 countries focused upon has a population that is dominantly of African origin, and 1 other country, Brazil though popularly classified as a 'Latin' country, has a large Black population as well, as a result of slavery.

The representation of Blacks as an outside culture is a bisectional problem. Firstly, more attention was paid to Blacks that resided outside of Montréal than to the Black populations that resided within. This removes the presence of Blacks from the historical narrative, and restricts the significance of their experiences to areas outside of Québec/Canada. Secondly, the portrayal of each of these countries in the text left much to be desired.

To compare the population development in Québec, South Africa was one of the countries selected. The introduction was as follows:

*Southern Africa was settled in the very distant past. Aboriginal populations that still live there today, such as the Bushmen (also known as the San) and the Hottentots (also called the Khoekhoe), were already living in the territory in the first millennium BCE. Shortly before the 10<sup>th</sup> century ... The Portuguese were the first Europeans to set foot on South African soil in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, it was only two hundred years later that the colonialization of the territory actually started with the arrival of the Dutch, whose descendants in Africa are called Boers... (Volume, chapter 1, p. 101)*

Attention needs to be paid to fact that with the exception of the first sentence acknowledging past inhabitants, the onset of colonisation begins the history of South Africa in the passage above. This completely removes the rich history of these countries that took place prior to the colonisation and renders it non-existent and insignificant. The Congo is introduced in a similar fashion within *Panoramas*:

*“Until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Congo was comprised of several kingdoms. The Portuguese arrived in the region in 1482” (Volume 2, chapter 3, p. 79).*

If the purpose of introducing outside cultures was to help draw a comparison between the Québec society and the country represented, one must be critical of the way social oppressions are represented between Québec and the outside cultures. There is more focus on historically oppressive events in the countries being compared to Canada. For example, in South Africa the occurrence of apartheid was explained and described in detail within Volume 1 of *Panoramas*.

One must also be very critical of the Black populations that were selected to be compared within the text. For instance, Haiti and Cote d'Ivoire were chosen to showcase their economies in comparison to Québec. What message is being sent to students of the portrayal of 'Black' countries as destitute and politically chaotic? The lack of information adequately explaining the development of the economies also contributes to the misrepresentation of these countries as being incapable of governing their own countries successfully.

### **Summary.**

What should be concluded from the explanation and analysis of the representations established? Firstly, it is clear that *Panoramas* is a reflection of the grand historical narratives of Québec. This narrative marginalises and omits significant experiences that were unique to the Black demographic. The representation of Québec's history as dominantly 'white francophone' history, with bits and pieces of the experiences of minority communities being included from time to time, inevitably establishes who constructed and 'genuinely belongs' within Quebec. Ironically, though this section aimed to explain the way in which Blacks were present within the textbook, exclusion was the common theme that ran through every representation created. A closer look has to be taken at the meanings of these omissions.



## CHAPTER 3

### **Constructing meaning from the Representation of African Canadians in *Panoramas***

*In history and citizenship education, students who develop the subject specific competency 'strengthens his/her exercise of citizenship through the study of history', learn to identify social issues, and to establish and defend their opinion. The broad area of learning Health and Well-Being can thus serve as a springboard for the development of this subject-specific competency. Furthermore, although these issues concern the students as individuals, they often originate in or affect aspects of life in society. For example, behaviours involving exclusion and discrimination - or aggression - have important repercussions on students' physical and psychological health. By promoting openness toward a pluralistic society and the diversity of values, the History and Citizenship Education program can help counter this sort of behaviour. It also helps students to define their social identity and that of others, while respecting differences (Québec Education Program, p. 5 - 6).*

This quote is taken from a section of the History curriculum that explains the potential objectives and goals of the program. This particular connection is highlighted because it notes the goal of the program to 'help students define their social identity' as well as help deal with issues of 'exclusion and discrimination', by promoting openness and a respect for differences. I question if there is adequate information in the textbook, *Panoramas*, to achieve these goals for students of African descent. In my analysis of the representation of Blacks in the *Panoramas* textbooks, it has been clearly demonstrated that though

Blacks were acknowledged, their experiences were largely omitted from the textbook. Instead the discussion of Blacks tended to be located outside of Québec or Canada, as experiences that had little or nothing to do with this history.

What is an omission? According to the Collins Dictionary, Omission is defined as “something that has been left out or passed over”. The omission of African Canadians occurred at different points within the textbook. This section is meant to address the construction of the various omissions that I categorise as follows: omission by numbers, omission by gender and omission by knowledge, and to demonstrate the way in the connections and the overall curriculum goals of the History program cannot be met by the use of textbooks such as *Panoramas* that reflect the grand historical narrative.

### ***Omission by numbers.***

At its most basic level, the omission of African Canadians by numbers was created through the lack of physical representation of Blacks in the textbooks. Pictures depicting persons of African origin or written text that made reference to persons of African origin with words such as ‘Negro’, ‘Black’, ‘African origin’ or ‘African Canadian’ were absent. Below are two tables detailing the breakdown of the number of time persons of African origin were illustrated within the entire text. Some might argue that the numbers present in the tables below simply correspond to the population numbers of Black persons residing in Montréal during that time period. However, I am of the opinion that low population numbers should not result in the minimization of experiences. It would be useful to compare the number of graphic and textual depictions between African

Canadians and other ethnic minorities with the textbook, however this fell outside the scope of my research.

Table 1a. **Panoramas Volume 1: Total number of pages – 334**

Section	Number of Graphic Illustrations	Number of Textual References <sup>2</sup>
<b><i>Population and Settlement</i></b> Chapter 1, Section 1: (Focus on Quebec)	4	4
Chapter 1, Section 2: (Focus on S. Africa)	5	Pgs. 101 – 107
<b><i>Economy and Development</i></b> Chapter 2, Section 1: (Focus on Quebec)	0	0
Chapter 2, Section 2: (Focus on Haiti and Côte d'Ivoire)	6	Pgs. 244 – 257

Table 1b. **Panoramas Volume 2: Total number of pages - 302**

Section	Number of Graphic Illustrations	Number of Textual References
<b><i>Culture and Currents of Thought</i></b> Chapter 3, Section 1: (Focus on Quebec)	2	2
Chapter 3, Section 2: ('Elsewhere' – Congo)	6	Pgs. 78 – 83
<b><i>Official Power and Countervailing Powers</i></b> Chapter 4, Section 1: (Focus on Quebec)	0	0
Chapter 4, Section 2: (Focus on Burma)	0	0
<b><i>Issues in Quebec Society</i></b> Chapter 5, Section 1: (Focus on Quebec)	3	1

<sup>2</sup> I determined that a textual reference to African Canadians was made if the following words were written: Blacks, Negro and/or African Canadian, or if reference was made to a country that is dominantly populated by persons of African descent.

These numbers clearly support my argument that the presence of Blacks is excluded from the textbooks. This omission is a clear reflection of the treatment of Black Canadians in the overall discourse of Canadian history narratives. It is this lack of representation which students in past research have protested against. The politics of sight is important and powerful, and the inability of some students to be able to identify with persons as they flip through the pages of the textbook has the potential of sending the message to students that persons of African descent did not make any significant contributions to the development of Québec, which is a false representation. Furthermore this also contributes to this construction of Canada being 'white'. Though past immigration policy-makers and policies made a concerted effort to keep the composition of the population to be dominantly white, Canadian history textbooks should not be reflective of this composition, as the development of the Québec society, and other Canadian societies were built on the backs of ethnic minorities.

### ***Omission by gender.***

When utilising an anti-racist lens to analyse a document, race is just the window through which all other identities can be viewed. From the pictures illustrated, it was clear the overall narration of the textbook was representative of the white male perspective. Attention was only given to women when the textbook was addressing the feminist movement in relation to the focal points of 'culture' and 'power'. However, by generalising the demands and contributions made by the women's movement for their rights, the misconception is then created that the demands of all women were recognised and addressed as a central issue within the women's movement.

The lack of recognition is demonstrated within the textbook through pictures, as there is not one depiction of an African Canadian woman or any other ethnicity present in the textbook under the discussion of the rights of women. The experiences of white, Francophone women representing the experiences of all women in Quebec erases the uniqueness of the realities of African Canadian women and other ethnic minorities from the history of Quebec. For example, the textbook states that “*women gained the right to vote at the federal level at 1918 and at the provincial level in Québec in 1940*” (Volume 2, chapter 5, p. 213), however if the Aboriginal population did not get the right to vote until 1960, does this record truly apply to all women? Additionally, the exclusion of the work and contributions of organisations ran by Black women, does not erase the significant assistances they would have shared with their communities. For example, the publication ‘Some Missing Pages’, highlighted the work of several organisations such as the ‘Colored Women’s Club of Montréal’ created in 1990. This organization worked to relieve the hardships of the poor of any race, but particularly the Black community in Montréal as there were social agencies created to assist them.

An ‘African Canadian woman’ is a social identity that can be commonly described as an oppression within an oppression, as Black women are faced with double oppressions based on race and gender. Due to their unique social identities, their historical experiences and their social realities differ from Black men and white women. As a result, their omission from *Panoramas* is even more perilous for Black female students because the construction of self-identity and the agency of empowerment which could have been provided in the textbook is not present.

***Omission of Blacks as oppressed.***

How can the Québec History and Citizenship Education program seek to promote openness and a respect for differences, if the textbook assigned does not comprehensively address how these social oppressions have manifested themselves in society? From the analysis of the representation of Blacks in the previous chapter, there was an evident disregard for the role racism played in shaping the lived experiences of racialised groups, particularly African Canadians. The comparison of the history that was included and what could have been included in the *Panoramas* textbooks demonstrates that there is no difference between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in their ideologies of societal hierarchies, as argued by Austin (2010). When addressing the issue of ‘equality’ as a social issue in *Panoramas*, under the title The rights of Newcomers, it states:

*“In Québec, women, children, people with disabilities and minorities lived without any legal protection of their rights for a long time. It wasn’t until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that laws guaranteeing citizens’ rights were extended to these groups”* (Volume 2, chapter 5, p. 212).

The overall objective of this section is to highlight the struggles newcomers to Canada. The omission of the experiences of Blacks occurs with the very title of the section, ‘Rights of Newcomers’. Not only does it sustain the belief that ‘all of Blacks are immigrants’, it is yet another generalising category implying the sameness of experiences for all racialised minorities. This myth that Blacks are new comers to Canada fuels their integration difficulties and amply explains their economic status today. However, given their long standing contributions and distinct struggles, it is imperative to recognise the

experiences of Black Canadians as unique (Christensen, 1994). The final major error that arose from this section is that the description of the struggles encountered by ethnic minorities is explained as ‘integration and accommodation issues’. This pushes the role of social oppressions, such as racism to the periphery of the dialogue. Below is a passage from *Panoramas* describing the problems newcomers encounter:

*The issue of immigrants’ equal rights is closely connected to the issues of women’s rights, poverty and discrimination toward minorities. According to the Bouchard-Taylor report, the socioeconomic inequalities experienced by certain immigrants hinders their integration. In addition, immigrant women may experience situations of multiple discrimination to their ethnic origin, their gender, or their economic situation (Volume 2, chapter 5, p. 217).*

This omission of oppression that is the omission of racism, sexism and homophobia from the historical narrative, has structured and conditioned the lives of racialised minorities differently in Canada/Quebec. The issues that arose specifically to African Canadians could not be adequately addressed in *Panoramas* because the topic of racism is constantly swept under the rug. This has resulted in an erroneous representation of the social climate of Québec historically. However, omission only played a partial part in the construction of this representation of the struggles of Blacks in Canada. The normalization of the selected historical events within the Canadian narrative, permitted acts of racism to be perceived as something that occurs from time to time, but not as an integral part of Québec’s culture. Normalization can only occur, when events, policies, actions are not problematized within the discourse.

The representation of Blacks as outcasts, as working class, and as recent immigrants, was discussed without once mentioning the racist culture that created these conditions for Blacks in the first place. Stanley (1998), explains this position best as he stated that

The absence of fully historicised understandings allow racism to be variously represented as eternal and unchanging, as the product of recently arrived diasporic populations or as belonging to a long and distant past. In each case both the contemporary and historic realities of racism are underplayed and marginalised (p. 42)

The normalization of the conditions of African Canadians historically, has normalised their present conditions. This normalization ultimately places blame on the African Canadian communities as being lazy, or not working hard enough to improve their conditions, as opposed to focusing on the societal oppression that is woven into institutions of Québec. When social phenomena are positioned within the discourse as events that are “natural, ever present and given” (Naseem, 2006) hierarchies, regulations and societal norms that regulate and govern relations in society are rarely analysed. For the representation of African Canadian historical experiences in the textbook, not only are the experiences themselves normalized, but the marginalisation of their experiences further expounds the normalisation as instances that may have occurred but are not relevant in the grand scheme of events.



## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

*“The history of Canada, according to the usual view of history is told in white and red: white for larger than life creators of momentous events; red for the native Indians. But a deeper look reveals another distinct color – Black” – Hill & Bruner (as cited in Codjoe, 2005, p. 82).*

What is the importance of history in the formation of identity and concept of belonging to a country/nation? My research has demonstrated that not only is history important to identity formation it is a key component. Historians such as Cooper (2006) and Winks (1997) have attempted to remove the history of African Canadians from the periphery and make it a more central focus to the Canadian historical narrative. The Québec History Education Program strives to cultivate within the students a sense of empowerment and identity, yet the textbooks have clearly demonstrated that it was not constructed to identify with or explain the shaping of the social interactions that construct racism as social and material conditions (Stanley, 1998).

The grand historical narrative has constructed African Canadians largely as recent newcomers into Canada. As a result of this construction, in addition to the discourses of multiculturalism and interculturalism, the perception of Canada as just a geographical location in which different cultures exist peacefully is sustained. However, if fundamental changes are made to the grand historical narrative to include minority histories then Canada will be understood as an ideological space as well, as asserted by

Bannerji (1997) and Sharma (2008). A space that has not only embraced capitalism, reformism and Duplessism as mentioned in *Panoramas*, but one that has embedded racism and other social oppressions which were reflected in their politics, economy, institutions, laws and societal relations. Students can begin to make meaning of their past as there would no longer be a denial of experiences and realities (Stanley 1998).

To what extent are Black Canadians represented in *Panoramas*? My research has demonstrated that there is a gross exclusion and misrepresentation of the experiences of African Canadians in the textbook. The examples I used of passages from outside sources proves that a more in-depth look can be taken into the history Blacks in Québec within high school history textbooks. The comparative analysis between *Panoramas* and other resources illustrate that a 'Black experience' narrative can be constructed within the province of Quebec. This narrative would be a story of oppression and empowerment. Blacks as slaves, Blacks as 'undesirable', and Blacks as subordinate, may demonstrate struggles, but agency can also be demonstrated by explaining how the Black demographic overcame societal and systemic barriers. The incorporation of the experiences of Blacks in Quebec into the grand historical narratives would be the tool needed to fulfill the goal of the history curriculum to provide a sense empowerment for all students.

More importantly, the integration of Black people in the overall dialogue of Québec history aids in creating a sense of entitlement of the Black population today to the Québec society. Webber (1999) mentions the concerted attempts made in recent years to broaden the term Quebecois to include all residents of Québec, regardless of linguistic or

ethnic origin. Change to a cultural identity does not happen by building more ethnic restaurants or celebrating diverse festivals, significant change must take place at the foundation of any culture. Education would have to play a fundamental role as the curriculum needs to be reformed to reflect the multiplicity of the cultures in the classroom which would create real meanings for students in relation to their identity and sense of belonging. Classrooms are 'sites of contestation and sites of hegemonic struggles'. They are spaces where social identities and communities are legitimized while others are deligitimized (Roman & Stanley (1997).

Wherever Eurocentric education exists, Europeans are celebrated while Africans are forgotten or pushed to the outskirts of dominant history (Dei, 2008), Canadian history is no exception. This marginalisation was demonstrated by the limited number of references made to persons of African origin whether through pictures or text in *Panoramas*. The representation of Blacks and their experiences demonstrate how severely omitted they are from the history pages. Furthermore, in the few instances where Blacks referred to they were portrayed in a less than flattering light. For example, Blacks were depicted minimally as slaves, working class, immigrants and more prominently as existing outside of Canada. Further, compounding this problem is the omission of Black women and Black men that would have made significant contributions to the Québec society. My research complements and strengthens the conceptual research such as that of Brown (2008) who argues that because knowledge of the colonized other is either subjugated or erased in academic disciplines, curricular choices have left teachers unprepared to deal with stories slavery and societal oppression whether historical or contemporary.

Textbooks such as the *Panoramas* demonstrate the way in which the goals of the curriculum cannot be adequately met. According to Stuart Hall, identity construction occurs at the point where the ‘unspeakable’ stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history or of a culture (as cited in Roman, & Stanley, 1997). Unfortunately, the ‘unspeakable stories’ of Black Canadians were not incorporated within the textbook. As Quebec history is a narrative told from the white, francophone, male point of view, the textbooks do not adequately represent the experiences and realities of the diverse composition of Québec’s classroom. Topics such as exclusion and belonging as they affect the Black population in Quebec will continuously be overlooked in the classroom as they are constantly misrepresented and underrepresented within the present discourse of race in Canadian history.

What are the implications of this representation on the concept of 'belonging' to the Quebec society and Canada as a whole? Whether it is the Francophone or Anglophone histories, issues of race and racism, as they affect African Canadians, still have not found a place of priority in the Canadian discourse. If ethnicity serves as a basis for determining one’s privilege within society, then it can be inferred that the marginalised position of Blacks historically and present day has placed African Canadians in a subaltern position in society (Puplampu & Tettey, 2005). The discourse of race in the construction of a nation also allows for the issue of belonging to be addressed within the historical narratives. The conflict between these two concepts, ‘race’ and ‘nation’, define the contested space of determining who belongs and who does not belong in Canada as a

whole. Until curriculum advisors make a fundamental change to the History program, racism and imperialism will not be effectively challenged.

Norm', 'dominant', 'majority', 'minority' and 'others' are all words widely used when addressing multiculturalism in the classroom. These are the words that divide a society, and impart privileges and obstructions to one's social life depending on the social category in which one identifies with and is identified. A large part of one's living experience in Canada is based on the attitude of the dominant culture towards the specific cultural group to which one belongs. In Canada, the criterion in identifying who 'belongs' to Québec is defined by gender, class, race and more recently sexual orientation. One of the tools that can be used to facilitate the change of this criteria is the history narratives and textbook, by reflecting the voices, faces and experiences of minority groups. Codjoe (2005) argues that western education continues the fiction that Blacks have been marginal to the history and growth of Canada. This fictitious story does not need to be perpetuated in Québec as well.

Similar to the responses of the interviewed students noted in Chapter 2, minority groups in Québec have demonstrated reluctance to rally behind the sense of nation and civic belonging (Courchene et al, 2007). Establishing a sense of belonging requires a relationship between culture and state. The relationship between African Canadians and the Quebec state has been difficult to form. The presence of exotic foods, music and dress that are celebrated within Québec does not equate into the existence of a strong relationship between culture and the state. It is the inclusion of the struggles and contributions of African Canadians to the makeup of Quebec society and culture that

builds the connection between the Quebec identity and African. Embedding 'other' histories in the history textbooks, would begin to remove their experiences as events that happened in Canada, and instead be represented as *Canadian* events.

Dorothy Williams (2010) addresses the absences of Blacks from the Québec narrative and wrote an article in the Montréal Gazette entitled, 'Where am I from? Right here'. In this article, she expresses that the main reason why individuals automatically assume individuals of African descent are not from Canada is due to the color of their skin. Williams (2010) makes it clear that "this assumption is not only wrong, it is destructive". This is a common occurrence for African Canadians. As a result of the erasure of colour from the Québec history narrative in addition to the prominent representation of Blacks being from somewhere else, African Canadians are constantly subjected to having to justify their presence in Canada. In other words, the response "I'm Canadian" is generally not accepted as an adequate response. My research argues that it is only when Black Canadian history is incorporated into the Canadian historical narrative will this prominent assumption of Blacks being from 'elsewhere' cease.

Dr. George Dei (2010) has opened a dialogue on the importance and need for Afrocentric education. Afrocentric education enhances inclusive education as it provides the framework to depoliticise culture and issues of identity. An analysis of curriculum, textbooks and pedagogy for omissions and biases of experiences around race, gender, sexuality and other differences are the steps that need to be taken to create change. Afrocentric education not only calls for the piecing together of Black history in Canada, it challenges the dominant stereotypes and notions that are known to define 'Blackness'

today. An incorporation of the philosophy and framework of Afrocentric education into Canadian education landscape will aid in developing a truly inclusive education system.

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