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Review:
Multiculturalism and The History of Canadian Diversity& Misconceiving Canada:
The Struggle for National Unity

Donna Schatz

dschatz@yorku.ca

Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (: Press, 2000). 288 pp. ISBN 0-8020-4231-7 (hardcover), 0-8020-8075-8 (paper).

Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving : The Struggle for National Unity*(Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997). 395 pp. ISBN 0-19-5412233-8 (paper).

Richard Day and Kenneth McRoberts provide two very different accounts of contemporary Canadian multiculturalism in their books, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* and *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*. Day advocates an abandonment of the discourse on Canadian unity and disputes the very goal of Canadian unity itself. [1] McRoberts, on the other hand, holds firm to the ideal of Canadian unity. He analyzes over three decades of Canadian politics dedicated to national unity and strongly critiques Pierre Trudeau's strategies and their contemporary effect on Canadian politics. [2]

Richard Day distinguishes among three prevalent usages of "multiculturalism" in *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*. They are: *to describe* (construct) a sociological fact of Canadian diversity, *to prescribe* a social ideal, and *to describe and prescribe* a government policy or *act* as a response to the sociological fact and an implementation of the political ideal. In addition, he includes a fourth category of multiculturalism as an *already achieved ideal*. [3] He explains this final category by arguing, "inasmuch as the fact of multiculturalism is conflated with the act, the problem of Canadian diversity is thought to contain its own solution, to be in the process of solving itself, of achieving its own *ideal*". [4] Instead of achieving its purpose, he argues, "this state sponsored attempt to design a nation" paradoxically leads "to an increase in both the number of minority identities and the amount of effort required to 'manage' them". [5] Thus, while Canadian multiculturalism presents itself as a solution to diversity, it really reproduces and proliferates the problem. Day concludes, moreover, that any forms of local autonomy and

identity which currently do exist in "have survived, not by virtue of a history of multiculturalist tolerance, but through determined *resistance* to a statist dream of a perfectly striated space of social order". [6]

Day outlines "a theoretical-methodological justification" for what he calls "the appearance of the policy of multiculturalism within the field of Canadian diversity". [7] Lacanian theory supports his claim that "there is no entity such as an 'individual' who can take on an 'identity'". [8] Thus, the individual takes on a socially constructed subject position: [9]

> Paradoxically, the perennially problematic and excluded Other is in fact *required* in order to create a simulation of wholeness for the Self. In the Canadian context, this means that multiculturalism as problem of diversity not only 'prohibits' multiculturalism as social ideal, it also provides its condition of possibility, through the very failure of its attempts at a hegemonic suture of the social space which would achieve 'full' inclusion. [10]

According to Day, when the problems of multiculturalism recreate themselves, the Other becomes a symptom of the lack of unity. In an attempt to control this symptom by bringing others into the boundaries of the Canadian state, a fantasy of unity is recreated. [11]

Day displays the various influences on the discourse on Canadian diversity through the texts of Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle. [12] He observes that the ancient antecedents of this discourse constructed a hierarchical differentiation of beings in which, "ancient philosophers and statesmen, medieval theologians and missionaries, and renaissance travelers and Conquerors, all contributed to the construction and maintenance of a highly adaptable system, a sort of tool kit, ideally suited to the task of Self/Other differentiation and management". [13] Day declares that the resulting Canadian discourse was significantly informed by influence of dividing individuals into groupable types, arranging these types hierarchically, distinguishing some types as problematic, and attempting to provide solutions to the constructed problem. [14]

The influence of such antecedents becomes visible in Day's analysis of the Canadian immigrant "Other". In his account of Canadian history, he demonstrates how the British and French adapted the ancient Western discourse on diversity to the new circumstances of the European colonization of . In their creation of a binary form with a Self-Other distinction, Day argues that the figure of the savage "provided the crucial negative pole to the New World European identities". [15] He concludes that the notion of racial discourse,

furthermore, became lodged "in official Canadian political discourse" when Canada was divided "into two large pieces, with one (Upper) space for those who identified with Britishness, and one (Lower) for those who preferred Frenchness" [16]. He cites the example of a very racialized Canadian policy on aboriginal people which shifted from "past methods of ignorance and physical elimination by extermination to softer forms of physical elimination involving orderly, legal displacement". [17] Day states, "[w]hen the limits of displacement were reached, the Indian was then acknowledged to be 'inside,' placed on reservations and subjected to various forms of rational-bureaucratic management designed to eliminate *signs* of difference via assimilation". [18] He argues that this form of "paternalistic rational-legal domination- through integration and administration" came to define the "" of dealing with non-French, non-British ethnic groups. [19]

Day sheds light on other methods of assimilation, transportation, deportation, and internment which were later used by the Canadian state to deal with an "explosion of racial subject positions" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. [20] He describes this period as being dominated by "a *design theory of identity* that required strict conformity to an Anglo-Canadian model". [21] He also presents two other predominant theories of Canadian policy in this discussion: the "*free emergence theory* which assumed that a 'proper' and 'desirable' Canadian identity would evolve on its own, out of an unconstrained mixing of 'racial qualities'" and the *constrained emergence theory* which combines "elements of both design and free emergence". [22] Day asserts that the constrained emergence theory "was the ancestor of multiculturalism as state policy after 1971" [23] For him, it is one more strategy by which the Canadian state attempted to manage the "Other".

Through use of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (the B & B Report, 1963-1967), Multiculturalism: Building the Canadian Mosaic (MCBCM, 1987), and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988, Day examines contemporary discourse on Canadian multiculturalism. [24] In his analysis of the Trudeau policies, Day proclaims that "a new means of differentiating the population was found [...] The state could now claim that multiculturalism was about 'equality' since the same category was used to describe *all* Canadians". [25] He cites government policies on multiculturalism as an example of the *constrained emergence theory of identity*, a continuing form of management of minority identities. [26] By dissociating language and culture, he argues, the Canadian state was able to uphold English and French as the two official Canadian languages, while not having to grant a superior position to the cultures associated with them. [27] He criticizes the Trudeau policies, moreover, "as a creative reproduction of the colonial method of strategic simulation of assimilation to the Other, and not as an overcoming or break with this past". [28] In his critique of Trudeau, Day asserts that his

multicultural policies actually reproduced a new form of state nationalism. Day's provocative analysis underscores the irony and inherent weakness of Trudeau's publicly professed intolerance of all forms of nationalism in his famous chapter "New Treason of the Intellectuals".

In his concluding chapter, "A Revaluation of Canadian Multiculturalism," Day critiques Will Kymlicka's contemporary liberal theory on minority rights. He argues that those who do not consider themselves to be English-Canadian will find that, "despite being 'recognized,' they are once again" placed by Kymlicka "in an inferior position in a hierarchy of human types differentiated by what is presumed to be their 'origin,' and the place assigned to them in a Eurocentric history of colonization and the play of power". [29] He laments, moreover, "that, rather than critically addressing the colonial remainder in the history of Canadian diversity, this brand of multiculturalism rather perversely finds pride in its reproduction" and "does not take us beyond 'actually existing' multiculturalism as state policy". [30] In his conclusion, Day reiterates his suggestions that Canadian multiculturalism must openly admit and orient to the impossibility of full identity, affirm the value of difference and the Other as such, and recognize the necessity of a negotiation of *all* universal horizons, including that of nation(s)-state. [31] His overall objective, he emphasizes, "is not to contribute to the expansion of the discourse on Canadian unity and diversity, but to help *dissipate* it". [32]

Day's book is important in that it boldly links the problems of diversity and unity to Canadian state policies. Its weakness, however, is that it does not offer any solutions to the existing situation. While the problems of diversity form the underlying assumption of his argument, Day never concretely explains what these problems are. He neither puts forward practical theories for the realization of an abandonment of the diversity discourse, nor addresses the implications of such a rejection for group rights. Furthermore, he does not acknowledge gender inequality in separations of race, class, and citizenship. This oversight becomes glaring in Day's contemporary theory on multiculturalism. By limiting his argument to the concept that Canadian unity itself requires abandonment in the face of diversity problems, Day contributes a somewhat limited and negative understanding of multicultural policies in .

Kenneth McRoberts also offers a critical reappraisal of government strategies in *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*. Through his analysis of three decades of Canadian politics devoted to Trudeau's conception of national unity, McRoberts outlines the policy failures which he claims have left the country "more deeply divided than ever before". [33] McRoberts links these failures to a rejection of the very central concept of dualism and the resulting alienation of through this breach.

According to McRoberts, the Quebec Act of 1775 "laid the basis for Canadian dualism". [34] Through it, the Church's legal privileges were restored, the seigneurial system was re-established, and civil law was adopted. [35] The Constitution Act of 1791, moreover, granted representative institutions to the British colony and divided it into Upper and . McRoberts asserts, "Although strictly speaking, the division was territorial, the rationale was to accommodate cultural dualism". [36] Unfortunately, he claims, the leaders of the movement for Confederation had no intention in applying the principle of dualism. In fact, there was little trace of it in the British North America Act of 1867. [37] To remedy the situation, Henri Bourassa presented the notion of a "double compact" in 1902. McRoberts emphasizes that the notion of a double contract in which an inter-provincial compact was coupled with a national compact between two founding peoples became firmly entrenched in . This dual compact theory would play a central role in future French-English relations. [38]

McRobertsexplains how the competing nationalisms of as "national government" and as the national government of French Canada following World War II threatened "to divide English Canadians and French Canadians more profoundly than ever before". [39] McRoberts applauds Lester B. Pearson's attempts at French Canadian accommodation by reinforcing dualism within the Canadian political order. Pearson not only appointed the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 to determine how could become an "equal partnership between two founding races", but also developed an "asymmetrical" view of Canadian federalism. [40] In using the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democratic Party as examples of support, McRoberts concludes that there was considerable "consensus among English-Canadian elites on the accommodation of nationalism". [41] McRoberts laments the fact that this consensus dissipated by the end of the 1960's with Pierre Elliott Trudeau's rejection of the underlying spirit of dualism and opposition to any enhanced recognition of . [42]

McRobertsanalyses official bilingualism as, "[t]he centre-piece of Pierre Trudeau's strategy for integrating francophones into a new Canadian identity". [43] For Trudeau, bilingualism primarily required language reform in federal government institutions. According to McRoberts, if Trudeau "was to have any hope of reaching his consuming goal of making Quebec francophones see the federal government as their *primary* government, Ottawa must become truly bilingual". [44] He observes that the Trudeau government greatly enhanced the role of francophones but failed to make the public service effectively bilingual. Aside from two provinces, and , the assimilation of francophones continued. [45] McRoberts attributes the failure of Trudeau's language policy to his commitment to a reform strategy that ignores the social context of language. [46] He condemns Trudeau for dismissing the B & B Commission's

concessions to territoriality in his pursuit of the unattainable goal of reinforcing a French presence throughout . [47] Moreover, he states that the promotion of official bilingualism at the provincial and federal level contradicted 's primary concerns over the French language. [48] The result, McRoberts argues, "was to make the federal order seem hostile to the primary linguistic concerns of francophones. To that extent, the Trudeau strategy of language reform became a source of conflict and division rather than the instrument of reconciliation it was intended to be". [49] McRoberts concludes that Trudeau's insistence on bilingualism impeded all chances for national unity. [50]

McRobertsalso takes issue with the Trudeau government's multicultural policies. He calls them a "reaction against [...] the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism". [51] While the Commission recognized the concept of Canadian dualism and recommended biculturalism as a partnership between political and economic equals, Trudeau substituted "multiculturalism for biculturalism as the basis of government policy". [52] McRoberts emphasizes the contradiction in linking multiculturalism with bilingualism. Only English and French were to be supported, yet the government claimed to support all cultures without also promoting their languages. [53] In addition, by attempting to reduce dualism to language alone, Trudeau's multicultural policies were an affront to the francophone conception of dualism. [54] McRoberts contends that Trudeau's policies on bilingualism, however, took precedence over multiculturalism. He notes the lack of resources which Trudeau dedicated to multiculturalism and argues that it illustrated the Prime Minister's personal indifference to it. Between 1971-1982, the Trudeau government only allocated two to seven per cent of the money that went to biculturalism for multicultural programs. [55] McRoberts concludes that, overall, multiculturalism undermined the status of French as an official language and worked to intensify the constitutional conflict between and the rest of . [56]

The Constitution Act of 1982, according to McRoberts, was the outcome of "Trudeau's long-standing priorities and views". [57] Not only did Trudeau insert a bill of rights to promote his national unity strategy through language rights, but he also rejected elements that did not fit into his agenda such as changes in the division of federal-provincial powers. [58] McRoberts argues that because it reduced the powers of the government and was patriated without the approval of the government or National Assembly, the Constitution Act was certain to divide French and English Canada. [59] He notes, moreover, that in violating the dualistic compact principles, Trudeau managed to alienate even his federalist supporters in . [60] McRoberts goes so far as to define Trudeau's quest for national unity as a new creation of pan-Canadian nationalism:

> nationalism was to be defeated by *Canadian* nationalism. [...] Rather than an 'ethnic nationalism' it was a 'civic nationalism', which rose above ethnicity and all other social divisions. None the less it *was* nationalism and, moreover, it was one in which the nation consists of individuals who first and foremost are Canadian. [61]

Like Day, McRoberts draws attention to this fact to emphasize the irony of Trudeau's famous chapter, "New Treason of the Intellectuals". While Trudeau publicly denounced all forms of nationalism, McRoberts illustrates that he essentially managed to construct a new, different form of nationalism in .

McRobertsblames the Trudeau legacy for 's unresolved constitutional problems. With Trudeau's departure from federal politics in 1984, efforts to bring into the constitution began. [62] Unfortunately, because English Canadians had become attached to the principle of equality as a legacy of the Trudeau era, McRoberts argues, they rejected the "distinct society" clause in the Meech Lake Accord of 1987. [63] The Charlottetown Accord of 1992, furthermore, was overwhelmingly rejected by federalists [64] Demonstrating that his influence was far from over, Trudeau intervened in both constitutional efforts. He condemned the Meech Lake Accord in a newspaper article and before the Senate and parliamentary committee. [65] In addition, he made a major public speech in opposition to the Charlottetown Accord. [66] McRoberts cites the 1993 election results as evidence of the failure of the and Charlottetown Accords. [67] He illustrates that the results reflected divisions the Trudeau strategy had created in : the election of a Liberal government dependent on English Canadian support, an Official Opposition (the Bloc Québeçois) committed to sovereignty, and a strong Reform Party built on direct opposition to accommodating in the Accords. [68]

In his final analysis of the 1995 referendum, McRoberts contends that the Trudeau vision required primary attachment to and that the only option left for those who identified primarily with was sovereignty. [69] The close referendum results, he argues, were "the ultimate proof that the Trudeau national unity strategy had failed". [70] McRoberts attributes the No victory to last-minute measures taken by Jean Chrétien contradicting the Trudeau vision. He claims that in the wake of the referendum, Liberal policies focusing only on the unattractiveness of sovereignty provide further "evidence [...] of the inadequacies of the national unity strategy". [71]

In his conclusion, McRoberts looks to earlier alternatives for Canadian unity such as those proposed by André Laurendeau's Royal Commission on

Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the Pearson government's accommodation strategies. [72] He clearly supports federalism as the path to unity, but proposes a re-organized, assymetrical federalism based on duality. [73] In addition, he suggests an application of the territorial principle to any new language programs. [74] Despite placing his hope in these measures, McRoberts is skeptical of any possible change within the existing Trudeau legacy. He laments, furthermore, that no Canadian government appears willing to give up the "Trudeau vision of "[75] McRoberts, after all, believes that will achieve unity only through an abandonment of the Trudeau vision.

*Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*offers a fresh analysis of the much-revered Trudeau unity strategy. It helps to explain 's animosity to the former prime minister and the motives of Quebeckers during the resultant constitutional failures. After reading this book, English Canadians will have a much better grasp of how Trudeau was never really representative of French Canada. To these ends, McRoberts offers a unique perspective of Canadian federal politics. Whether or not English Canadians will accept his proposal of assymetrical remedies, however, is another matter. McRoberts himself outlines how the Trudeau legacy prevents English Canadians from accepting the very solutions he lays out. As such, it is unclear exactly how Canadians are to abandon such influential policies. In addition, McRoberts does not thoroughly develop the multicultural side of his argument. He leaves the implications of territorial principles for language policies in unresolved and turns a blind eye to the increasing English-speaking and ethnic minorities in this province. His greatest injustice, however, lies in ignoring the central role aboriginal people must play in any future discussion of Canadian unity.

The two texts *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* and *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* bring the complexities of multiculturalism and the Canadian state to the forefront. Both Kenneth McRoberts and Richard Day provide clear historical analyses in developing their oppositional theories of multiculturalism. Day's broad, international analysis of the history of multiculturalism in includes a wide range of ethnic groups as well as French Canadians in and Aboriginal people. McRoberts' text, on the other hand, offers a more limited analysis of the relations between French and English Canada and the resulting constitutional debates. Both texts, moreover, provide significant criticism of the Trudeau government strategies, but for very different purposes. While McRoberts attributes the failure of three decades of unity strategies to Trudeau's "misconception of "[76], Day disputes the very goal of Canadian unity itself. He accuses the Canadian state of reproducing "an already achieved ideal" through multicultural policies which reproduce and proliferate the problem of diversity, rather than resolving it. [77] Taken together, the two texts provide very informative and diverse accounts of multicultural theories. As such, they provide valuable contributions to our

understanding of contemporary Canadian multiculturalism.

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[5] Ibid, 3.
[6] Ibid., 3.
[7] Ibid., 44.
[8] Ibid., 33.
[9] Ibid., 33.
[10] Ibid., 34.
[11] Ibid., 34.
[12] Ibid., 7.
[13] Ibid., 70.
[14] Ibid., 71; 7.
[15] Ibid., 99; 8.
[16] Ibid., 108; 107.
[17] Ibid., 113.
[18] Ibid., 113.
[19] Ibid., 113.
[20] Ibid., 134; 122.
[21] Ibid., 144.
[22] Ibid., 146.

[23] Ibid., 146.
[24] Ibid., 18.
[25] Ibid., 184-185.
[26] Ibid., 196.
[27] Ibid., 196.
[28] Ibid., 197.
[29] Ibid., 216.
[30] Ibid., 216.
[31] Ibid., 224.
[32] Ibid., 15.
[33] Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving : The Struggle for National Unity* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 245.
[34] Ibid., 4
[35] Ibid., 4.
[36] Ibid., 5.
[37] Ibid., 9.
[38] Ibid., 22.
[39] Ibid., 25-27; 30.
[40] Ibid., xiv.
[41] Ibid., xiv.
[42] Ibid., 64.
[43] Ibid., 78.
[44] Ibid., 79.
[45] Ibid., 109.
[46] Ibid., 103.
[47] Ibid., 115.
[48] Ibid., xv.
[49] Ibid., 111.
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[51] Ibid., 117.
[52] Ibid., 120.
[53] Ibid., 133.
[54] Ibid., xv;130.
[55] Ibid., 128.
[56] Ibid., 135.
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[58] Ibid., 174; xvi.
[59] Ibid., 162.
[60] Ibid., 164, xvi.
[61] Ibid., 172.
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[65] Ibid., 200-201.
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[70] Ibid., 244.
[71] Ibid., xvii.
[72] Ibid., 249.
[73] Ibid., 249-250; 260-262.
[74] Ibid.,
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[75] Ibid., 276; 267.
[76] Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), vii.
[77] Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (: Press, 2000), 6; 3.