

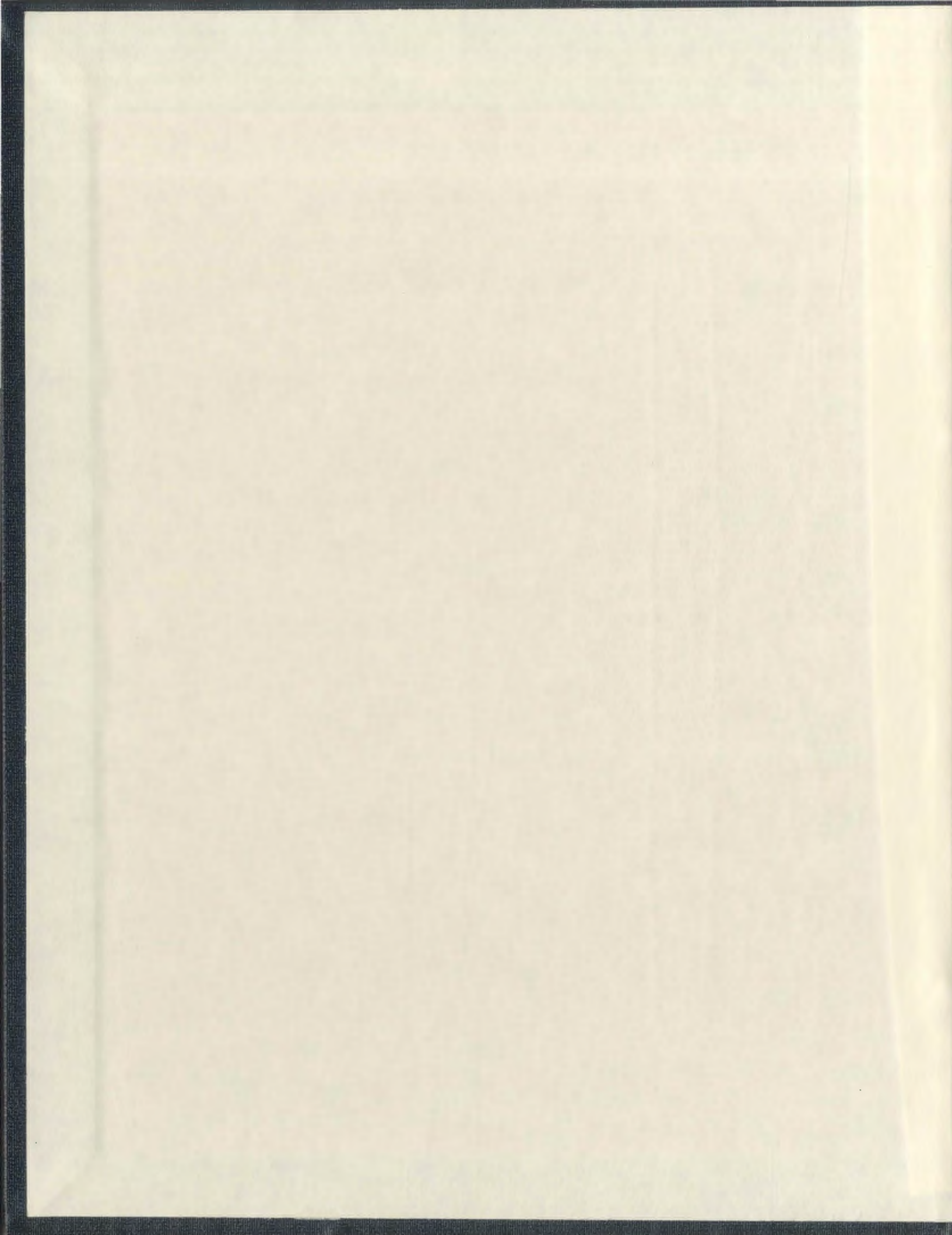
IMMIGRANT NATIONS, POSTIMMIGRANT
SUBJECTIVITIES: LOCATING THE IMMIGRANT
IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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BATIA BOE STOLAR



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILL.



A book published by the
University of Chicago Press
and the University of the
Southwestern States
at Chicago, Illinois

Department of English Language and Literature
Chicago, Illinois

Chicago, Ill.

1923

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IMMIGRANT NATIONS, POSTIMMIGRANT SUBJECTIVITIES:
LOCATING THE IMMIGRANT IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

by

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A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English Language & Literature
Memorial University of Newfoundland

September 2003

St. John's

Newfoundland

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Abstract

The term immigrant is persistently dismissed in contemporary immigrant narratives in Canada and the United States, as well as in the literary criticism about immigrant literature. As the immigrant gives way to the diasporic, the exile, the nomad or the border-crosser, we need to reconsider the meanings of the term itself in order to investigate why this dismissal occurs at a time when we are veering closer to a multicultural society that appears to erase national borders on the one hand and to maintain the borders of the local on the other. Why has the term immigrant become objectionable? Why does it no longer reflect the subjective pulls and tensions that contemporary literary and critical trends depict and interrogate? To answer these questions, we must turn back to what can be termed the “classic” or “heroic” immigrant narrative that has dominated most of the twentieth century. Doing so allows us to trace the development of the term immigrant, as it acquires multiple significations which rupture its already fragile meanings.

This dissertation examines the acquisition of multiple meanings and subcategorization that the term immigrant undergoes throughout the twentieth century. To explore this semiotic fragmentation, it is necessary to examine the complex relationship that exists between the immigrant and the nation s/he enters into. As the nation defines the immigrant, so too does the immigrant define the nation. By focusing on three key moments in the legislative history of Canada and the United States (the 1921 and 1924

national origins quota system of immigration and the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act in the United States, and the 1976 Immigration Act and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in Canada), we can explore how the meaning of the term immigrant ruptures to produce conflicting subcategories that problematize any coherent or authoritative meaning. In addition, we need to explore how the literature corresponding to each of these three historical moments responds to the legislation changes that redefine the meaning of the immigrant. This dissertation therefore focuses on Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers* and Frederick Philip Grove's *A Search for America* in the 1920s, Jack Finney's and Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and Adele Wiseman's *The Sacrifice* in the 1950s, and Austin Clarke's *Nine Men Who Laughed*, Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* and Bharati Mukerhjee's *Jasmine* in the 1980s and 1990s. Each of these literary or cinematic fictions responds to its contemporary immigrant issues, not only voicing the concerns but redefining the immigrant by literarily inscribing the immigrant into being.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation and my doctoral studies have been made possible by the Doctoral Fellowships I received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am grateful to the Department of English Language and Literature, the School of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Students' Union for their generous support throughout my doctoral studies.

A dissertation is in many ways a collective process and many people have contributed to the development of this project. I am thankful to all the members of the Department of English for their unflagging support, encouragement, interest, and input.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Noreen Golfman, for taking a chance to work on this project with me, as well as for her unfaltering support, encouragement, and inspiration throughout these past years. Her advice and tutelage have been invaluable, have helped to shape and direct this project, and have helped to form many of the critical questions I wish to explore beyond this dissertation. I cannot thank her enough.

Many people have read earlier versions or sections of this dissertation, and have offered sound advice which has been instrumental in the development of the project as a whole. I am especially grateful to Gregory S. Kealey, Bernice Schrank, and William Barker for their insightful comments. I am also thankful to my friend and colleague, Allyson Jackson, for her interest, comments, and help making some of the Canadian immigration policies and documents available to me. In addition, I would like to thank Lawrence Mathews, Denyse Lynde, Jerry Varsava, Elizabeth Miller, Stella Algoo-Baksh, Valerie Legge, and Linda Vecchi for asking questions and making suggestions that have influenced my work. Many thanks also to Gordon Jones, Donna Walsh, and Helene Staveley.

There are no words to thank my mother, Esther Merikanskas, for the financial, emotional, intellectual, and creative support she has unconditionally given me throughout my life and academic career. I am also grateful for the continued support and understanding of my family and friends; thanks to Suki and Rubin for their patience and love, to Oscar Daniel Parada Palafox for his encouragement and humour, and to Joyce and David Ivison for their interest and encouragement. Finally, Douglas Ivison has provided invaluable advice and insightful comments, has helped to gather research materials and collect news stories on immigration, and has supported and always encouraged me and my project. For his belief in me and my project, his encouragement, understanding, and patience, my gratitude and love.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents, Simon Merikanskas and Bassia Berkovsky, who began our immigrant journeys. To my mom, Esther, as always, and to Doug, with love.

Nadie es profeta en su propia tierra

— Proverbio Mexicano adaptado de:

“[...] ningun profeta es acepto en su tierra.”
(*Antigua Version de Cipriano de Valera*, Lucas 4.24)

Noone is a prophet in her/his own land

— Mexican proverb adapted from:

“[...] No prophet is accepted in his own country.”
(*King James Bible*, Luke 4.24)

Introduction

Current trends in the production and criticism of immigrant literature in the United States and Canada show a departure from the immigrant narrative that has dominated most of the earlier twentieth century. It might therefore seem odd to focus on the immigrant narrative of the twentieth century as a means of addressing issues raised by contemporary immigrant literatures. Yet, the foundation on which contemporary immigrant narratives are based, indeed the very tenets they challenge or reject, invite a reconsideration of their forerunners. Conversely, contemporary immigrant narratives and criticism are useful in shaping critical questions with which to reexamine this earlier literary field. This dissertation began as an exploration of contemporary immigrant narratives in lieu of an encroaching global consciousness, but it quickly became apparent that there was a need to reexamine the meaning of the term immigrant (and its related terms which are sometimes used synonymously) as well as its literary articulations. The exploration of earlier constructions of the literary immigrant further pointed to the complex relationship that exists between the immigrant and her/his host, surrogate, or adopted nation. As the nation defines the immigrant so too does the immigrant define the nation. For this reason, I am focusing on three key moments in American and Canadian legislative history that shape literary representations of the immigrant, namely the implementation of a national origins quota system of immigration in 1921 and 1924 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 in the United States, and the adoption of a

multicultural policy of immigration in Canada that led to the Immigration Act of 1976.

These three historical moments also point to three discernible defining characteristics of the relationship between the immigrant and the nation, resulting in the production of the immigrant nation in the 1920s, the alie(N)ation in the 1950s, and the multicultural nation in the 1980s.

As a starting point, we can begin mapping the evolution of the literary immigrant by considering what can be termed the classic or heroic North American immigrant narrative. The classic immigrant narrative, like Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), retells the story of an individual's or a family's immigration from the Old World where economic, social, religious and/or political hardships are endured to the breaking point. The journey across vast miles of land and/or ocean itself is a mixture of adventure and adversity, culminating in the first sight of America. What follows this climactic moment is the individual's or family's achieving a version of the American Dream—even if success materializes only in subsequent generations. The key elements of the classic immigrant narrative provide a reason for the immigrant's departure from her/his homeland (e.g., religious or racial persecution, extreme poverty or famine), and in doing so characterize the literary figure of the immigrant as a refugee whose humanitarian plight is further made explicit by her/his subjection to horrific travel conditions aboard steerage during the transatlantic passage. The immigrant-as-destitute-refugee also embodies tragic-heroic qualities, made explicit by her/his drive to survive and succeed. The classic immigrant's heroic aggrandizement, established from the outset by her/his

determination and hope, not certainty, of entering America, constructs a tangible figure who personalizes and humanizes the unnamed, faceless immigrant masses. The tragic-heroic immigrant synecdochically comes to represent these masses, and as such reveals a conflicting pull: the need to emphasize the immigrant's humanity (and individuality) on the one hand, and the inevitable mythologization of the immigrant on the other.

The tribulations of entry often result in comic anecdotes that become fundamental familial (if not cultural) stories, such as the changing of the immigrant's name, which become myths of the immigrant's genesis in the New World. In E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel*, for example, the section entitled "Bintel Brief" consists of the following Letter to the Editor:

My dear Mr. Editor, you who hear the troubles of so many, and share the common misery, permit me to say what I have to say if my heart is not to burst. [...] I knew I would never see [my parents] again because I was their life and with me to America, their only reason for enduring this suffering on earth, just to know I was safe, a little piece of themselves going to live in America before they would lay down and smile under the Cossack's horses; I kept their brown picture; across in the filth of steerage, a boat for cattle, and we were cattle, and then the terror of the Immigration Officers who would or would not let us be Americans—the woman right next to me with her trachomatous eyes not going in, staying on the island in seclusion, in America, and yet never to be in America, and to her I had to say

goodbye my own good fortune being my health and my youth and my strength. And a boy from the same town with me came on the boat behind the old man who couldn't remember the name his sons told him to say, one that the American inspectors could pronounce, and the poor old man so bewildered said piteously in Yiddish, I forget, *ich vergessin*, and named like a newborn babe, this old man, Ike Fergusson, oh I could tell you stories.... (64-65)

The immigrant, as testimonial eye-witness to the madness of immigration, offers her/his “stories,” or the promise thereof, in exchange for validation. The moment of entry and the tribulations that precede it can therefore be read as a rite of passage in the immigrant’s quest. Those allowed entry metamorphose, like the old man whose unwitting name change rejuvenates him. So too do the events when retold in oral or written stories.

The bulk of the classic or heroic immigrant narrative centres on the immigrant’s life in the New World, particularly her/his living conditions and survival in the urban immigrant ghetto, or else in the rural immigrant community. This new life contradicts the very foundations on which immigration is premised—an escape from poverty and oppression and a move toward attaining social, political, religious, and/or economic freedom. Facing the reality rather than the dream promised by the ideal of America, the narratives nevertheless demonstrate or imply that the immigrant will eventually assimilate, acculturate, and move away from the ghetto into more affluent mainstream neighbourhoods. In the case of rural narratives, the immigrant will attain visible success

when s/he becomes an important member of the community and her/his farm finally thrives. In both cases, upward mobility appears to mark the finality of the immigration journey. Having attained some degree of material and social betterment, the immigrant materializes as the poster-child for the ideals propagated by the American Dream. The classic or heroic immigrant narrative, although contesting immigrant life in America, ultimately celebrates both the immigrant and America by calling attention to the idyllic principles they share—freedom, survival, and success.

Because the immigrant journey converges with the immigrant's assimilation in America, much literary and critical attention is given to the assimilation process and to the politics of assimilation. A distinction needs to be made here between the classic immigrant narrative and the assimilation narrative that at best nods at a distant immigrant past. The assimilation narrative focuses on the ongoing assimilation process that characterizes not the immigrant but the "ethnic" in America. The literary figure of the ethnic seeking entry into the mainstream elite, like her/his immigrant predecessor seeking entry into America, embarks on a quest, adventure, or journey of symbolic arrival (not *to* but *in* America). Edith Wharton's Simon Rosedale, for example, is the blonde Jewish nouveau-riche whose Otherness is marked by his Jewishness and his newly acquired wealth. Despicably crude, he will marry Lily Bart only if she blackmails Bertha Dorset into allowing her back into the socialite A-list. Although aware that he is regarded as a disgusting and despicable parasite seeking to corrupt New York's high society, he persists with his ostentatious behaviour until he eventually becomes part of the much coveted

elite. What needs to be stressed in this example is the distancing of the ethnic from the immigrant; the Other in Wharton's *The House of Mirth* has come far from his presumed immigrant origin. Sim Rosedale is no "greenhorn," and his function in Wharton's fictional world marks a stage in ethnic assimilation that has transformed the Jew from an immigrant into an ethnic presence to be further "whitified" as he is absorbed by the seemingly homogeneous world of the Mayflower's *crème-de-la-crème*.

Ethnic, then, need not mean immigrant, although most often immigrant is used to mean ethnic. Clearly, immigrant narratives in the United States and Canada are essential to the construction and mythologizing of an ethnic minority within a national mainstream as these are the stories of a group's genesis in America. As such, immigrant narratives hold an important place within ethnic and national literatures. However, assimilation narratives, while coming out of an immigrant literary tradition, often have little to do with immigration issues and rarely focus or develop the figure of the immigrant. On the contrary, assimilation narratives often depend on marking an increasing distance between the assimilating ethnic and his/her immigrant past. The immigrant's metamorphosis into a non-immigrant ethnic is also (if not more) apparent in the transition of an immigrant group into an ethnic minority as the group assimilates over a period of time. Increasingly, the said group has less in common with the more recently arrived immigrant groups, even if these newer groups belong to the same region, nationality, race, ethnicity, or religion as the assimilating group. Obviously, the difference between the assimilating immigrant group and the newly arrived group is most explicit when these groups do not share similar

racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and/or national backgrounds. In such a case, the difference between the two groups is most often attributed simply to race or nationality, to those visible and/or aural markings of difference. While race, ethnicity, and nationality certainly play a significant role in the construction of ethnic and immigrant difference, it is my contention that some other kind of difference that is specific to the immigrant is at work here. Granted, as Daniel Coleman argues, “the immigrant does not represent ‘pure’ difference” (4). Still, because the immigrant comes to signify difference, however erroneous such signification may be, we need to understand how and why such difference works.

For the moment, it is sufficient to consider how difference is produced in the process of assimilation, and how it segregates the more established group (or individual) from the more recently arrived group at the same time that it separates the assimilated group from the apparent “native” population that makes up the mainstream. The more established group therefore occupies an ambiguous space that is not quite immigrant and not quite native. Eventually, the assimilated group can become part of the mainstream and cease to be “ethnic” when it loses all ethnic markings or else when its ethnic markings have been absorbed into the mainstream. Rather crudely, the ambiguous space of in-betweenness that characterizes the assimilating ethnic group can be termed a postimmigrant stage in the assimilation process if taken literally to mean a state of being *post* (after) immigration. Homi K. Bhabha insightfully observes that it “is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*,” which, he argues, “is

neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past...” (Introduction 1). We need to be cautious not to fall into the discursive trap of attaching “the prefix ‘post’: *postmodernism*, *postcolonialism*, *postfeminism*...” to all isms (or their equivalent in the case of the immigrant) simply because we lack a “proper name” (Introduction 1). Although terming two stages “immigrant” and “postimmigrant” makes sense linguistically insofar as these reflect the chronological effects of assimilation, it is somewhat limiting if not misleading to term the assimilation narrative postimmigrant since it preserves the centrality of immigration. Instead, we need to ask whether a postimmigrant stage in the assimilation process constitutes a postimmigrant condition. To begin theorizing the postimmigrant condition, we need to ask what it means to be an immigrant: Is there an immigrant condition? What constitutes or characterizes it? If assimilation alters, as it inevitably does, the immigrant’s identity, does the immigrant then organically evolve into and enter a postimmigrant stage?

To further accentuate the need to distance ethnicity from immigration, and the immigrant condition from the presumed postimmigrant one, we need to consider the effects that maintaining a close bond between immigration and ethnicity can have. Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, for example, contests what happens when an ethnic individual or group continues to be regarded as immigrant because of race and/or ethnicity. *Obasan* indignantly challenges the presumption that an East-Asian Canadian must be a recent immigrant since it presupposes that a Canadian of East-Asian descent cannot be a “Canadian.” Kogawa’s novel calls attention to the only two possibilities: one can be a

“Japanese” in Canada (in other words a recently arrived immigrant), or else a hyphenated Canadian (a Japanese-Canadian), which implies some degree of but never complete assimilation. To the “incessant and always so well-intentioned” questions—“How long have you been in this country? Do you like our country? You speak such good English. [...] Have you ever been back to Japan?”—Kogawa’s Naomi Nakane responds: “These are icebreaker questions that create an awareness of ice” (225). Undoubtedly making a pun on Canada’s proud image as the True North, Kogawa’s text challenges the iciness, not the nordicity, of Canadian identity. Implicitly, the metaphor of ice suggests a clear, congealed and impenetrable substance. Ice, however, can be broken, and Kogawa’s text strives to do just that—hers is not the task of “breaking the ice” to make polite conversation but “breaking the ice” that congeals racist assumptions about a seemingly pure, clear, transparent, or even cold national racial identity. By reinscribing the Japanese-Canadian or the Japanese in Canada simply as “Canadian,” Kogawa strives to distance the Japanese in Canada from their remote immigrant origin and offers assimilation as a useful vehicle in establishing national identity. Assimilation is not without its costs, and Kogawa offers a mutual cultural exchange in the process of assimilation. To suggest that Naomi Nakane illustrates a postimmigrant condition would be to reiterate the very oppressive conditions Kogawa’s text struggles against. If the term postimmigrant is used to characterize a condition of ethnicity, it maintains the relationship between ethnicity and immigration by locating ethnicity closer to its immigrant precedent, and the native homeland by extension, rather than to the assimilated

generations who have evolved and reconstructed in the non-native homeland (which for subsequent generations *is* a native land).

Perhaps the term postimmigrant is most suitable when used to characterize more contemporary immigrant narratives. As more recently arrived immigrant groups refuse to assimilate they also voice their objections at being forced to do so. One of the ways in which the more contemporary immigrant narrative marks its departure from the classic immigrant narrative is by its depiction not of the immigrant but of the diasporic nomad or exile in a host(ile) land. The emergent non-immigrant narrative thus challenges assimilation first by depicting the social coercion that demands that immigrants continue to follow the pattern already established by the classic immigration model, and second by rethinking the immigrant in non-immigrant terms. These narratives thus rupture the immigration-assimilation cycle.¹ Their rejection and refusal underscore the oppressive mechanisms of assimilation that force immigrant groups to lose their traditions, languages, and cultures when assimilation is viewed as a whitification process in which it is the ethnic who undergoes the transformation. Even the more benign form of assimilation as a kind of cultural exchange is regarded with distrust because of the inherent imbalance of power in the relationship between a visibly different immigrant and the nation. The stand against assimilation that forces us to rethink the immigrant in non-

¹Granted, such ruptures have been evident in the past when certain immigrant groups (the Chassidim or the Mennonites, for example) have refused to assimilate. These often fundamentalist religious groups are simply considered to be minorities within minorities.

immigrant terms provides critics, especially postcolonialists, with a familiar discourse of cultural oppression with which to revisit immigration issues and critical discourses on immigration. From a postcolonial perspective, the dominant national mainstream is turned into a cultural empire seeking to impose its rules and language(s) on the innocent, passive, and rightless immigrant whose entry into the host(ile) land marks her/his colonization.

However compelling this vision may be, a few problems with this model need to be taken into consideration. First, there is a marked difference between a colonizing empire that acquires territory beyond its boundaries and imposes its central government and culture on the people of the colonized territory, and a colonizing empire that implements and regulates its own government and culture within its own territorial boundaries, thereby imposing its rule and culture on its own subjects as well as those who choose to enter into the established society. Second, this postcolonial model fails to theorize substantially the complex relationship between the entering immigrant and the nation s/he enters. Often it is the immigrant, rather than the nation, that is typified as a colonizing threat. However misguided such assumptions may be, seeing the immigrant as a threat destabilizes the assumption that the immigrant is always the victim. Granting the immigrant the power to become a threat means granting the immigrant agency. A victim, in contrast, is powerless and often lacks a voice. Finally, a postcolonial model presupposes that there is a preexisting history of colonization between the immigrant and the host(ile) nation that informs their relationship. While this is true in some cases, it is

not true for all. For example, the experience of an immigrant leaving one Commonwealth country to enter another as a Subject of the Commonwealth draws on a set of preexisting relationships determined by a colonialist past. An Indian immigrant entering Canada, like a Mexican immigrant entering the United States, has a predetermined relationship that will affect her/his experience of immigration and naturalization. Conversely, no such relationship exists when a Peruvian immigrant seeks entry into Canada or when an Icelandic immigrant seeks entry into the United States. Hence, while postcolonial issues apply to some relationships between the immigrant and the host(ile) nation, they do not apply to or define all relationships. Therefore, a theoretical model applying solely to immigration that is applicable to all immigrants in North America needs to be reconsidered and developed.

Of course, we can draw on postcolonial theory to develop a critical discourse when dealing with immigration, especially when dealing more specifically with cases in which colonial history is central to the relationship between the immigrant and the entered nation. It would be an error to dismiss a postcolonial approach altogether. Complementary to a postcolonial critique of immigration, for example, is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's groundbreaking work on "schizoanalysis" and their rejection of "oedipalized territorialities (Family, Church, School, Nation, Party), and especially the territoriality of the individual" (Seem xvii). Deleuze and Guattari's discourse celebrates the nomad, the migrant, the border-crosser, the diasporic, and the exile as literary figures who embody cultural and geographic schizophrenia that results in deterritorialized

subjectivity. The schizoid embodies “anti-oedipal forces—the schizzes-flows—forces that escape coding, scramble the codes, and flee in all directions: *orphans* (no daddy-mommy-me), *atheists* (no beliefs), and *nomads* (no habits, no territories)” (Seem xxi). An immigrant who enters the immigration-assimilation machine is subjected to the oppressive and misleading oedipalized territory that suffuses her/his identity. Rather than focusing on the fragmentation (or psychosis) of the migrants’ subjectivity caused by the act of (im)migration and the negotiation between two (or multiple) cultures, the migrants’ fragmentation (or schizoid paranoia) comes to be regarded as a powerful tool with which to break free from the oppressing machine that regulates subjectivity as it regulates nationality and culture. Destabilizing the “classic” immigrant figure is therefore a means of destabilizing oedipalized constructions of personhood and nationhood.

Seeing the immigrant as a postimmigrant subject (a destabilized nomad) rather than as an immigrant to be assimilated coincides with a changing climate in which we are shifting from thinking of ourselves in terms of national constructions in favour of envisioning ourselves in local communities within a globalized world culture. As countries and continents unify to form the European Union (EU) and to a lesser extent the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, the emergence of a global consciousness becomes more evident. Most explicitly, the eradication of borders regulating workers marks an enormous difference in immigration issues. Historically, immigration policy in North America devotes considerable space to the regulation of seasonal and migrant workers, and both Canada

and the United States face the problematic influx of illegal workers. Deregulating the borders that restrict workers could mean a step in deregulating the sprouting institutions in illegal human trafficking. If globalization means the erasure of borders between nations, then the immigration process as we know it will undoubtedly change or become obsolete as people will be free to move without the bureaucratic procedure that regulates who can enter or leave a country, or how many people can immigrate or emigrate at any given time. Abandoning the immigration bureaucracy means eradicating the immigrant insofar as the immigrant is defined by the legal (or illegal) machinery that determines entry, naturalization, citizenship, exclusion, and deportment. However, as appealing as such a world may be, we continue to live within nations, and immigration in the United States and Canada continues to be a heated issue.

It is not an overstatement to say that newer immigrant writers have already crossed over into a deregulated mode that determines a postimmigrant subjectivity in North America, especially in Canada. The subjective shift poses an interesting question: why has a postimmigrant subjectivity been more receptive, or possible, in Canada than in the United States? Noting a few examples might point to some answers. Rohinton Mistry, for example, sets his novels in India although he resides in Canada, leaving many to question his Canadianness. Celebrated as a Canadian writer in Canada, he is nevertheless identified as an Indian writer by the British press. As Mistry's novels indicate, there is a growing need or desire to characterize contemporary Indian literature as diasporic. As such, the concept of home, real or imagined, and homeland—India—predetermines the

relationships of immigration. A similar anxiety is evident in the depiction of the poetics and politics of home and homeland in literatures of exile. Authors like Sri-Lankan-born Cyril Dabyedeen or Indian-born Salman Rushdie articulate the need to voice political opposition that speaks to the violence and/or oppression of their homelands. The seemingly less political alternative, offered by such texts as Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992), depicts the border-crosser who critiques the absurdity of national borders that all too randomly determine geographical territory as well as national identity. Count Almásy's story calls attention to the falseness of national borders as these encroach on the natural and psychic landscapes. The imposition of artificial boundaries may be a repressive mechanism to be contested, but it allows for the border-crosser figure to emerge. He who dares to challenge the said borders and participates in the dismantling of their falseness becomes a tragic heroic figure in an epic story of love and war. Rendering Almásy a faceless and nameless man, the novel presents the border-crosser as an enigmatic site that invites continual (re)inscription. As the characters interact with what they initially believe to be a victim of war now homeless and identityless, they must cross cultural and psychological boundaries as they are forced to negotiate their national and personal loyalties once the faceless figure acquires a name, a story, an identity, and a nationality. Like Almásy, however, they also cross and challenge the imposed borders that define them and their relationships with each other. Pitted against the backdrop love story between Almásy and Katharine in pre-war Cairo is the story of Hana, a Canadian

nurse, and Kip, a Sikh bomb detonator who fall in love in Tuscany.² The novel ends with Hana and Kip's physical separation, thereby suggesting that cultural and national borders are ultimately maintained. However, their psychic union at the end, in spite of the physical distance, suggests otherwise. Couched in the rhetoric of love, Ondaatje's novel celebrates the border-crosser, and indeed all border-crossings, as (a) romantic ideal(s).

Another example of postimmigrant subjectivity as represented by the border-crosser is Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), in which she examines and poeticizes the culture of the geographical borderland of the Texas-U.S. Southwest/Mexican border. Interweaving poetry with autobiographical essays and prose-poems, indicative of generic crossings, Anzaldúa's collection examines the impact that culture and territory have on the psyche of its inhabitants, particularly that of the Chicana, Latina, or *Mujer*. Her poetry requires the reader, like the writer, to continuously cross over between Chicana, Mexican, and American cultures and histories in order to understand the spiritual and psychological makeup of the Chicana lesbian feminist. The *Mestiza* in Anzaldúa's text evolves from its literal meaning (a person whose parents belong to different races), and becomes a conceptualization of being—*la conciencia de la mestiza* (*Mestiza* consciousness), not unlike the Canadian understanding of *métisage*. Within this consciousness are the constant linguistic, cultural, and historical border-crossings that characterize the daily existence of those who dwell in any kind of

²Intertextual crossings also occur here. Hanah is a character first introduced in Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*, as is the thief, Caravaggio.

borderland.

Greatly influenced by Anzaldúa, Guillermo Verdecchia contests cultural stereotypes of Latinos in the American cultural mainstream in *Fronteras Americanas/American Borders*. In his play, Verdecchia doubles as Verdecchia, the informed and educated playwright, and Wideload, the embodiment of every objectionable Latino stereotype. The play challenges the construction of linguistic, cultural and geographical borders by deconstructing what the border is. In Act I, as Verdecchia introduces himself as an American (meaning he is a citizen of the continent not the country), and announces: "I'm lost. Somewhere in my peregrinations on the continent, I lost my way.[...] Maps have been of no use because I always forget that they are metaphors and not the territory; the compass never made any sense—it always spins in crazy circles.[...] So I'm lost [...] and I suppose you must be lost too [...]. I suspect we got lost while crossing the border" (20). Verdecchia then muses:

Where and what exactly is the border? Is it this line in the dirt, stretching for 5,000 kilometres? Is the border more accurately described as a zone which includes the towns of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez? Or is the border—is the border the whole country, the continent? Where does the U.S. end and Canada begin? Does the U.S. end at the 49th parallel or does the U.S. only end at your living room when you switch on the CBC? After all, as Carlos Fuentes reminds us, a border is more than just the division between two countries; it is also the division between two cultures and two

memories. (21)

The play continues to re-map and investigate the cultural, geographical, linguistic, and psychical borders of the Argentinian-born Canadian (of Italian ancestry) who locates his writing in the Chicano/a tradition of the United States. The performance of *Fronteras Americanas/American Borders* deconstructs the border(s) visually with the use of witty overhead slides, as well as aurally in Verdecchia's monologues and in the dialogue between Verdecchia and Wideload. The play also calls attention to the linguistic and cultural border inherent in any audience that become evident as the play highlights invisible borders; sections of Latinos/as or Spanish-speaking members audibly congregate when laughing at the inside jokes that are then explained or translated to the Anglo members, thereby occasioning a delayed response. This strategy allows the audience to experience the everyday cultural and linguistic negotiations that any Latino/a in America faces. Moreover, by focusing on an amalgamated Latino/a language and culture, Verdecchia is able to reposition cultures and nations so that the border is (re)located between Argentina and Canada just as the border exists between the United States and Mexico. Doing so allows Verdecchia to re-map the Americas, destabilizing geographical, linguistic, and cultural borders in the process.

It makes sense to term these emerging immigrant narratives postimmigrant, especially since many of the authors (and their literary critics) consciously reject the immigrant label, even if they are still legally bound by the immigration process and experience. But why this rejection? Why have we culturally rejected the term immigrant

in favour of the nomad, the border-crosser, the diasporic, or the exile? Nomadic peoples, diasporas and exiles have long existed within the immigrant literary traditions. This rejection raises interesting and crucial questions: What does the term immigrant actually mean? How is it understood or interpreted? What or who defines this problematic and seemingly outdated term? What are the ramifications of Austin Clarke's rejection, for example, of the immigrant label for himself and his characters? Defining himself as a Barbadian writer in Canada, he defines his characters as West Indians in Toronto, and writes that, in the context of his short story collection, *Nine Men Who Laughed*, for his characters "to consider themselves 'immigrants,' to accept this as the paramount definition of their presence here [in Toronto], to consider themselves slaves [in the immigration system], would be to commit the unlaughable and mortal sin of suicide" (Introduction 7). Clarke's comments are not to be taken lightly. He has, after all, been an activist in refugee rights in Canada. Why has the term immigrant (or refugee) come to demean a person? Has the term always embodied such objectionable connotations? Has it acquired a negative meaning, and if so why? Or has it simply been replaced to fit new trends in critical and creative discourses?

To reconsider the meaning of the term immigrant, we must begin by recognizing that the relationship between the immigrant and the nation *a priori* determines and defines who and what an immigrant is. This relationship needs to be understood before even considering what the realities or ideals of a globalized free border zone or border-free migration could mean for the migrant. Certainly, border-crossing is a romanticized

ideal that ought to be commended if not implemented, and which renders the border-crosser a heroic figure in the tradition of the revolutionary or the pioneer. Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), for example, merges humanitarianism with elements of revolution as doctors and nurses attend to the needs of victims of war, natural and man-made disasters, epidemics, or those whose geographic or social isolation keeps them outside a local health-care system. The international non-profit organization has made its legacy by actively promoting that the (medical) needs of *all* people supersede respect for national borders. A similar argument could be made in favour of deregulated immigration since *all* people, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, or economic status, should have the right to migrate in their pursuit of a better or freer life. However, upon closer examination of the term immigrant, especially the relationship between the immigrant and the nation, it becomes apparent that romanticized border-free migration can actually be detrimental to the border-crosser migrant insofar as the deregulated of immigration also means that nations are absolved from providing for the immigrant and, more specifically, the refugee. Frederick Philip Grove's *A Search for America* raises the argument that the nation which greets, welcomes, lures, and invites the immigrant should provide for the immigrant. The elimination of the State or the Nation, and the elimination of the border, can therefore potentially nullify the social and economic responsibilities to the immigrant. Before we can even determine what provisions a global society or government should to make to the migrant we need to determine what the nation's responsibilities to the immigrant are. Hence the need, once

again, to reexamine the relationship between the nation and the immigrant.

This dissertation is an exploration of immigrant identity as defined by immigrant narratives but also by Canadian and American immigration legislation. I am not examining or analyzing here the immigration policies per se, but rather drawing on their definitions of certain terms (e.g., alien, immigrant, entry, national, citizen, etc.) to formulate a critical vocabulary with which to examine the social and political meaning of the changing term immigrant. Tracing the social and political changes that affect, alter, or inform the meaning of the term immigrant further illuminates the cultural meaning of this elusive term. As a starting point, I offer a semantic analysis of the term (and related terms) in Chapter 1, and begin theorizing what constitutes the immigrant's difference. Focusing on the relationship between the immigrant and the nation, I then explore the possibility of thinking of the United States and Canada as immigrant nations.

In Chapter 2, I provide a historical overview of the immigration legislation of the United States and Canada, which contextualizes my reading of Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers* and Frederick Philip Grove's *A Search for America*. This chapter also explores the politics of assimilation, and looks at the American model of the melting pot, based on Israel Zangwill's play. As the politics of assimilation of the 1920s reveal, the term immigrant is redefined by the emerging binary between the old immigration and the new immigration. The subcategorization of the term informs its ever-changing meaning as new categories manifest themselves in the immigration policies. Both Grove's and Yezierska's quasi-autobiographical novels endorse assimilation as a political strategy that

can benefit the immigrant in America and propose that, like the immigrant, America is also changing as it becomes an immigrant nation.

In Chapter 3, I examine the counterside of the immigrant nation, which can be termed the alien nation (or alie(N)ation). A study of the terms used in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952 in the United States illustrates the criminalization of the immigrant (or alien), symptomatic of Cold War paranoia over political subversives. The proliferation of alien invasion narratives in American 1950s science fiction suggests that the immigrant is displaced and abstracted into an Otherworldly being, as is the case with Don Siegel's film adaptation of Jack Finney's novel, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. A close reading of both the film and the novel reveals cultural anxieties not only over the political subversive aliens, but also over the amassing illegal workers south of the American border. In contrast, Canadian representations of the immigrant during the 1950s are less closeted, with Adele Wiseman's explicit portrayal in *The Sacrifice*. As Wiseman's novel suggests, another anxiety over immigration and the alie(N)ation is over the Displaced Persons made homeless by the war. Rhetorically, Wiseman locates her immigrant refugees in a pre-World War II setting, thereby humanizing the immigrants while seeking to restore the immigrant nation.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I examine the metamorphosis of Canada and the United States into multicultural nations, and explore the immigrant in the various discourses of multiculturalism. In particular, I focus on the multicultural city as represented in Austin Clarke's collection of short stories, *Nine Men Who Laughed*, and Michael Ondaatje's *In*

the Skin of a Lion, and propose that the multicultural city synechdochically represents the nation. This line of inquiry questions the ramifications of adopting multiculturalism as official national policy, which is further questioned by Bharati Mukherjee's objections to multiculturalism in Canada and her advocacy of assimilation in the United States. The return of the immigrant is evident in Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, thereby suggesting a reconsideration of the term in Canada. Interestingly, this dissertation is framed by two narratives of exploration, Grove's and Mukherjee's, which seek to find the "real America" that most closely matches the immigrant's ideal. That Grove celebrates Canada as the real America in the 1920s and Mukherjee celebrates the United States as such in the 1990s raises significant questions and invites a comparative analysis of both countries' defining of the immigrant and the immigrant narrative in the twentieth century.

1

Definitions

All Americans are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. We may not often think of ourselves this way, but the description is literally and absolutely true, because everyone who has ever lived in America came from some place else. Even the “Native” Americans who greeted the first European settlers during the late 16th and early 17th centuries were descended from people who had immigrated by foot from Asia many thousands of years earlier.

— L. Edward Purcell

1.1 Defining the Immigrant: Semantic Analysis

One of the aims of this dissertation is to define the literary immigrant during an era in which the term immigrant begins to lose currency, and to provide a theoretical vocabulary and framework with which to analyze immigrant literature in North America. In the following chapters, I will examine various mainstream literary representations of the immigrant in Canadian and American texts, and how these respond to their contemporary social perceptions or stereotypes of the immigrant (and to immigration more generally). I will also draw on the definition of certain key terms used in Canadian and American immigration policies as these legally define who and what an immigrant is or can be, thereby differentiating the immigrant from the refugee, displaced person, exile, or diasporic expatriate. To begin theorizing the immigrant, however, it is useful to consider the etymology of the term (and other related terms). Origins, as we will see, have much to do with definitions of the immigrant, and offer a unique perspective with which

to revisit its current meaning(s). Moreover, a semantic analysis illustrates the slipperiness inherent in the term, which becomes evident when considering the many connotations the term acquires as a result of bureaucratic (sub)categorization, cultural stereotyping, and political idyllic propagandizing. Yet, precisely because of its slipperiness, which produces a plurality of meanings, defining the immigrant is an elusive process—not unlike an exercise in deconstruction (following Derrida). Locating the various often contradictory meanings of the term, defining or mapping the immigrant theoretically as well as literarily calls for truly exciting academic work.

The suggestion that there may be a linguistic relationship between the migrant and the mutant may seem initially astounding, especially considering that the *OED* fails to make the same etymological connection, but that is what British lexicographer John Ayto proposes: “Semantically, *mutate* is probably the most direct English descendant of the Indo-European base **moi-*, **mei-* ‘change, exchange,’ which has also given English *mad*, *mean* ‘unworthy, ignoble,’ *municipal*, *mutual* [...] (from Latin *mūtūus* ‘exchanged, reciprocal’), the final syllable of *common*, and probably *migrate* [...]” (359). According to the *OED*, “migrate” simply descends from the Latin *migrāre*. Entertaining the possibility that Ayto’s presumption is valid, it is nevertheless perplexing to associate the verbs migrate and mutate; mutation, after all, especially the word mutant, is laden with scientific connotations dealing primarily with genetic changes resulting from Frankensteinian experiments, exposure to radiation, biochemical warfare, or accidental mishaps. Mutants are common in apocalyptic or dystopic science fiction narratives, not

immigrant ones.³ Migration, in contrast, signifies “the action of moving from one place to another” by which it is generally meant “the action of moving from one country [...] to settle in another” (*OED*). It is worth noting that the word migration does have some scientific connotations. In chemistry, for example, it indicates “the (non-random) movement from one place to another of an atom or group, e.g. within a molecule as part of a rearrangement of its structure, or towards an electrode during electrolysis” (*OED*). Similarly, in biology migration refers to the movement of a bodily organ, to its “alteration of position whether from normal or pathological causes” (*OED*).

We can therefore infer that the relationship between the verbs migrate and mutate is not all that far-fetched since both accentuate a kind of movement, exchange, transformation, or alteration. Whereas mutation denotes a biological transformation that marks the mutant’s difference from her/his genetic parents, migration indicates a geographic movement that results in the migrant’s differentiation from the inhabitants of the country s/he enters into. An argument can be made that the migrant-as-mutant is irrevocably transformed when s/he changes national residences, and even more so if s/he exchanges one nationality for another. Although the migrant’s transformation is not genetic but cultural, the perception of the migrant as a kind of cultural mutant is, as we

³Paralleling mutants with immigrants could nevertheless lead to innovative work, since science-fiction aliens can be interpreted as (un)welcome immigrants. While I am not suggesting that a mutant represents an immigrant, there is an analogous relationship between the two. For example, fictional mutants are often socially and economically marginalized, like J.F. Sebastian in Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*. In less sympathetic portrayals, as in Paul Verhoeven’s *Total Recall*, mutants are not to be trusted; they are members of a dangerous underworld, highly suggestive of the illegal trafficking of human cargo in a criminal underworld.

will see, often manifested in the treatment and/or representation of the unwelcome migrant as a threatening alien. More pointedly, anxieties over genetic transformations as a result of migration can be read in the fear of miscegenation; what *could* happen if the migrant, assuming s/he is racially different, interbreeds with the native population, thereby genetically altering the make-up of the population or producing mutant offspring who will, in turn, alter the population. As a mutable agent of change, the migrant-as-mutant comes to be regarded as a parasite powerful enough to alter the overall genetic and/or cultural makeup of the nation s/he enters.

It is in the migrant's choice and action, in her/his (ex)changing national residences (and nationalities), that the locus of her/his alteration is located. That alteration, independent of the migrant's race, class, cultural, or linguistic background, religion, gender, or sex—what French philosopher Michel Serres refers to as “belongings of identity” rather than identity itself (Henrietta)—is what marks the migrant's difference.⁴

⁴There have been numerous studies on “difference”—be it racial, postcolonial, ethnic, or gender/sexual. Consider, for example, Derrida's influential address, “Différance,” on the production of difference in language and writing, which in turn produces a constantly deferred system of signification. In his study, Derrida calls attention not to the differences in and of themselves, for these cannot be defined, but to their relationship with the semantic economy of meaning(s). Difference, then, produces multiple meanings in an existing semantic economy. Like Derrida, Hélène Cixous explores difference in writing in “The Laugh of the Medusa.” Her study focuses not on the production of deferred meaning but on the production of a feminine writing that “writes back” and against (masculine) writing (which appropriates writing by donning the *pen-is*). Cixous calls for the production and recognition of *l'écriture féminine* which is closely associated with (indeed, comes out of) woman's body (her breasts' milk). Also dealing with sexual difference and the body, Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble*, explores sexual difference in terms of gender performativity. Her analysis of the drag queen in *Bodies That Matter*, moreover, is especially useful when considering sexual (gender and queer) difference. Like Cixous, Julia Kristeva's *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* and Luce Irigaray's “This Sex Which Isn't One” and *Speculum of the Other Woman* explore sexual difference in terms of writing as

Granted, because a migrant is a person whose identity is informed by her/his race, gender, sex, religion, language, culture, class, ethnicity, and history, part of the migrant's difference will inevitably be constructed by the difference allotted to each of these other elements (and their various intertwinings). However, it is my contention that something else, something separate from these other types of differences, uniquely constitutes the migrant's difference. The difficulty in identifying how that difference manifests itself, or isolating that difference from the others, stems from the perception that the migrant is differentiated by or because of her/his race, culture, religion, class, language, gender or sex. As a starting point, we can begin to understand the migrant's difference in relation to these other differences by considering the impact or social consequences that changing national domiciles can have. For example, in changing countries of residence, the migrant may or may not be required to make a political commitment to the country of entry, and may or may not be required to pledge allegiance to the entered country. When s/he exchanges nationalities, however, s/he is required to pledge allegiance to the country of residence and its government. The migrant, having exchanged nationalities, is required to become a loyal citizen. But can the migrant be truly loyal? The migrant, after all, has already left one country for another, and has exchanged her/his nationality for another. Having made these changes once, the expectation or assumption is that the migrant will

well as French psychoanalysis. Numerous studies on racial, ethnic and postcolonial difference(s) in writing also abound. Among the most influential are Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s *The Signifying Monkey* and 'Race,' *Writing, and Difference* (an edited collection of essays). Like Gates, Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* and *Nation and Narration* (an edited collection of essays) explore difference in relation to postcolonialism, nationalism, and writing.

or could change national residences and allegiances again, thereby raising doubt and mistrust about where the migrant's loyalty is concerned.

The legal terms of entry often qualify the migrant's propensity for loyalty. For example, if the migrant is granted entry with the belief or understanding that s/he is to become a permanent resident and eventually a naturalized citizen, then the migrant's change is qualified by her/his entering into permanence: her/his (ex)change is believed to be a one-time deal. The migrant trades one state of permanence for another. Yet, the migrant's propensity for change still challenges her/his capability of permanence; having made the (ex)change once, what is to stop the migrant from (ex)changing again, and again? The stock placed on permanence leads to the erroneous assumption that political and national allegiance is (or should be) a static, god-given, natural credence. It is this belief that questions whether the migrant can ever become a truly loyal citizen or whether s/he will naturally stay "true" to her/his political allegiances prior to her/his entry. The migrant who (ex)changes countries and nationalities and truly becomes a loyal citizen is, paradoxically, often regarded as being mutable rather than fixed, as being "liable to change" or even "fickle" instead of constant (*OED*)—even in cases where the migrant becomes an ardent patriot and publicly privileges the entered nation over the departed one. Such is the case of Lourdes Puente in Cristina Garcia's *Dreaming in Cuban*. Lourdes becomes an ardent American patriot (more "American" than a native-born American) who denounces Castro's Cuba and participates in the American mainstream by becoming a law-enforcement officer. Her patriotism, however, is undermined by the other

characters, like her daughter Pilar, who see her trying too hard to become what she is not. In Lourdes' case, a choice between countries is necessarily made. In less controversial cases, must the migrant choose one over the other? Can the migrant be loyal to more than one country at the same time? Determining the migrant's loyalty, even in a system that allows for multiple nationalities (or loyalties), remains a nagging concern; in the unlikely event that both countries go to war, to which country will the migrant remain loyal or constant?

Distrust of the migrant is stressed by the migrant's mutability, but also by the use of the word alien in North American immigration policies. An alien, by the *OED*'s definition, is a person "belonging to another person or place," a person "of a foreign nation and allegiance," or a person who is "strange, foreign, not of one's own." Unlike the migrant, whose changing residences suggests a free agent, the alien's agency is marked by a possessive case; the alien who "belongs to" a foreign world has already determined that her/his allegiance is pledged to that Other world. As an agent of the foreign world, moreover, the alien is susceptible to that world's demands. The alien, therefore, is not simply a foreign being in the country s/he enters but a foreign being *of* an Other world. Being possessed by that Other world and subjugated by its demands, the alien cannot be possessed by or belong to the entered one; s/he is "not *of* one's own" kin (family, race, community, nation or tribe). The relationship between the migrant-as-alien and the entered nation is therefore dependent on and determined by the relationship between the nation and the migrant's world. This becomes evident when migrants

belonging to specific national groups are termed “enemy aliens,” regardless of their (social and/or political) assimilation or even naturalization, a term used to define the migrants and citizens of migrant origin whose native country is at war with the nation of residence.⁵

Another world, then, need not mean an Other world, but if it does (as is most often the case) the migrant-as-alien is truly conceived of as an Other-worldly being. As such, not only is there a greater emphasis on her/his foreignness as difference, but when said foreignness (or difference) is characterized as a negative trait (as in the case of enemy aliens), the Other-worldly alien is typified as a threatening or destructive being to be feared and controlled. The threat of the Other-worldly alien is twofold; on the one hand it suggests an external invasion to be prevented, and on the other it suggests that an invasion has already taken place and is unfurling from within. The consequences of this twofold threat are not only to guard against incoming invasions by restricting entry, but to guard against invasions already in place by policing the aliens within. Politically, the migrant-as-alien is regarded as an agent for that Other world, seeking to transform the body politic if allowed to mutate. Though not a mutant per se, the migrant-as-alien is nevertheless regarded as an agent of mutation who can—and seeks to—irrevocably alter the political, cultural, and/or racial body of the world s/he enters. Unlike the migrant-as-

⁵I am referring to the Germans and Japanese in Canada and the United States during WWI and WWII. More recently, The United States’ war on terrorism has targeted Arab immigrants, and although they have not been interned nor treated as the enemy aliens of the twenty-first century, they have been subjected to surveillance and interrogation in both the United States and Canada.

mutant, who can be regarded as a benign or neutral agent of mutation, the migrant-as-alien is generally typified as a perpetrator who intentionally occasions a destructive change. The migrant-as-mutant's agency is therefore transposed from her/his choice to change residences (and possibly nationalities) to her/his choice to destroy *by* changing residences (and even nationalities).

At this point, the subtle differences between the migrant, the migrant-as-mutant, and the migrant-as-alien demand reconsideration of the emigrant and the immigrant, two apparently neutral and possibly even synonymous terms. Although to emigrate and to immigrate fundamentally mean the same thing, "to leave one country and go to settle in another," or "one who removes from his own land to settle (permanently) in another" (*OED*), each term respectively highlights either the migrant's leaving one country or her/his entering another. Emphasizing departure or entry has political overtones if not ramifications; by locating the migrant's relationship (or loyalty) to either the country of departure or that of entry, one relationship is inevitably privileged over the other. In the definition of the alien, for example, the relationship between the alien and the Other world privileges the country of departure over that of entry. As such, the alien can be understood as an emigrant rather than an immigrant insofar as her/his difference is largely determined by the relationship between her/his Other world and the one s/he enters. In contrast, the immigrant privileges the migrant's relationship with the world s/he enters over the one with the world s/he leaves. The suggestion here is that since the immigrant's relationship with the entered world supercedes that of her/his departed world, the

immigrant has the possibility of becoming a free agent independent of political allegiance and affiliation who will, of course, *choose* to pledge her/his loyalty to the country of entry. Only as a free agent can the immigrant choose to belong to the entered world, although as a free agent the immigrant is free to choose otherwise. Mistrust for the immigrant is raised by the following question: why would a subject of one world seek disenfranchisement from that world in favour of becoming a non-subject in a foreign world that alienates her/him? More importantly, however, the immigrant's privileging and choosing the country of entry raise important questions not about the immigrant but about the nation of entry: What rights should an immigrant, as an independent free agent, have in the country of entry? Why should a country bestow the same privileges and rights on an immigrant (still regarded as an alien insofar as the immigrant is not regarded as a subject) as it does on its subjects? Can the immigrant attain value and personhood that will render her/him not an alien but a subject? Simply put, can the term immigrant transform the alien into a person (if not a subject)?

1.2 The Immigrant versus the Native

Semantic definitions of the term immigrant invite a comparison with other terms used synonymously, like alien, or bearing some etymological connection, like mutant, and provide insight into the term's slippery meanings. An exploration of its binary, though not necessarily its antonym, also proves most illuminating. Resistance to envisioning the immigrant as a subject of the world s/he enters stems from the belief in myths of national

origin which pit the immigrant against the native. Myths of national origin authenticate and privilege the native whose relationship with the land, not unlike that of the alien with her/his Other world, is charged with overtones of ownership. A native is defined as "one born in a place; one connected with a place by birth, whether subsequently resident there or not" (*OED*). Not unlike a biblical, mythological, or spiritual birthright, the symbiotic sentiment expressed here is that the native is of the land as the land is of the native. By definition, every person is a native of some land; an immigrant is always a native of her/his Other world though never a native of the country s/he enters. Unlike nationality, native status cannot be exchanged. The immigrant-as-native therefore maintains her/his alienness not only as a being of an Other world but as a native of that world.⁶ The immigrant is of that Other world as that Other world is of the immigrant. Hence, when native origins are privileged, the immigrant is believed or assumed to have a stronger (or even natural) connection or bond with that Other world than with any other s/he may choose to live in. The native's relationship with her/his native land is therefore privileged over the immigrant's relationship with her/his non-native land of residence (and possibly allegiance).

Although the term native is "applied disparagingly to local residents belonging to a place" (*OED*), suggesting that it is loosely interpreted, nativist arguments against

⁶The assumption is generally made that an immigrant is a native of the country of which s/he is a citizen. This, however, is not always the case, and is complicated by immigrants holding two or multiple citizenships, or immigrants who have been born in one place but previously immigrated to another. When considering diasporic peoples, moreover, the homeland (real or metaphorical) is often considered to be the "true" native place.

immigration in North America imply otherwise. In immigration policies and historical debates, the term native is often used to legitimize exclusionary racist policies. Implicit in the concept of a native people who are of a land is a racist assumption that said people of said land are racially homogenous, and that their race directly corresponds to their geographical location—blacks belong to Africa as whites belong to Northern Europe. For example, in their historical study of Canadian immigration policy, Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock note that between 1896 and 1911 African-Americans seeking to immigrate to Canada were ignored or their applications were put on file indefinitely. When their applications were denied, they were denied on the racist assumption that African-Americans, as natural natives of a warm continent even if born in the Northern United States, could not survive the coldness of Canada as could the natives of Nordic European countries (154). Specifically, in 1911 “an order-in-council was drafted that prohibited the landing in Canada of ‘any immigrant belonging to the Negro race, which race is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada’” (155).

Paradoxically, however, survival of the Canadian wild and of the Canadian winter is one of the main components in the figure of the emergent native; to become truly Canadian the Nordic immigrant or settler had to be initiated into or by the Canadian winter, which took some adapting. It is that adaptation, rather than a Nordic gene that withstands the cold, that marks the native Canadian character as inherently Nordic. Whether or not it is actually easier for an immigrant from a colder country to adapt to the Canadian winter than it is for an immigrant from a warmer climate, it is the perception rather than the

evidence that is used to legitimize racist exclusions.

The native versus alien binary cannot be stressed enough, but one need not leave one's country to enter another in order to become an alien; as John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* attests, the act of migration within one's own native country can be sufficient to render the migrant a foreigner. In Steinbeck's fictionalization of the Dust Bowl migration, Oklahoma and California are effectively rendered two distinct nations—which nods to a chapter in early American immigration history when the individual State was given the power to regulate immigration when this dossier had not yet become a federal jurisdiction. Steinbeck's novel of social protest is not unlike the classic immigrant narrative. The Joads' saga begins in their farm in Oklahoma, as they face the impending famine and economic hardship brought on by the droughts and the Depression. Once the bank repossesses their "native" land, forcing them to depart, they embark toward an Edenic "foreign" land of plenty, California, which lures them with flyers promising well-paid work for much needed fruit-pickers. The luring of the unsuspecting migrant points to early immigration history when advertisements for the New World attracted unsuspecting immigrants who believed they could strike it rich quick in America, but who, upon arrival, quickly learned otherwise. Once the land is repossessed by the capitalist machine, there is no other option than to leave in search of work in order to survive. Politically, the "Okies" can be characterized as a diasporic people, unwilling but forced to leave their native homeland. But their migration to California positions their conflict specifically in relation to the entered land rather than to

their displacement from their native homeland.

In the novel, the family's physical journey along the famed Route 66 is riddled with hardship, not unlike that experienced by the passengers in steerage class during the transatlantic voyage. Forced to load their entire belongings and family into a Hudson Super Six, starving, dirty from travel, destitute and driven by hope, the drive to survive, and the promise of an illusory Californian Dream, the "Okies" are dehumanized and their survival is regarded by the Californians as evidence of their subhumanness. For example, while stopping at a service station, the service-station boy, wearing a white uniform, tells his helper:

"Jesus, what a hard-looking outfit!"

"Them Okies? They're all hard-lookin'."

"Jesus, I'd hate to start out in a jalopy like that."

"Well, you and me got sense. Them goddamn Okies got no sense and no feeling. They ain't human. A human being wouldn't live like they do. A human being couldn't stand it to be so dirty and miserable. They ain't a hell of a lot better than gorillas.... They're so goddamn dumb.... And, Christ Almighty, they don't know any better than what they got...."

(301)

Didactically, Steinbeck's novel shifts the blame from the subhumanness of the migrants to the lack of social programs and external circumstances (the droughts and the Depression). Moreover, it is the "Okies'" drive to survive in spite of these circumstances

that the novel celebrates as evidence of their essential humanity. The “Okies” are not immigrants, but they are migrant workers who are treated as rightless aliens once they cross over the State lines, and as such offer an interesting parallel to other imported seasonal (im)migrant workers like the Mexican agricultural workers brought in during World War II or the Chinese “coolie” labourers who were brought in to build the railroad. Although the “Okies” are American by generational (if not mythologized) birth, the act of migration, leaving their native farmland in one State to settle in another, renders them foreigners within their own native country. Their dire poverty further alienates them and marks (or makes evident) their outward difference.

The (im)migrant-as-foreigner implies that the native’s identity is just as unstable as the immigrant’s and can only avoid alienation by remaining in her/his land of birth. But even the native appeal in the novel is not without controversy as it points back to a colonialist strategy in which the pioneers who settled the American West, like their colonialist predecessors in the East, displaced the indigenous natives in order to claim their land. Consider, for example, the following passage:

Grampa took up the land, and he had to kill the Indians and drive them away. And Pa was born here, and he killed weeds and snakes. Then a bad year came and he had to borrow a little money. An’ we was born here. There in the door—our children born here. And Pa had to borrow money. The bank owned the land then, but we stayed and we got a little bit of what we raised.

We know that—all that. It's not us, it's the bank. A bank isn't like a man. Or an owner with fifty thousand acres, he isn't like a man either. That's the monster. (45)

[...]

The tenants cried, Grampa killed the Indians, Pa killed snakes for the land. Maybe we can kill banks—they're worse than Indians and snakes. Maybe we got to fight to keep our land, like Pa and Grampa did. (45-46)

Here, the native's ownership of the land is based on the imperialist understanding that s/he who claims the land, clears the land of unwanted residents (Indians or snakes), and works (or civilizes) the land deserves (and becomes of) the land. The pioneers who ventured into the western wild lands and tamed them in order to pave the way for the westward expansion of American civilization *deserve* the native-claim. It is precisely this kind of understanding of native-Americanness that leads the migrants to identify with the *original* founders of the native-Americans, the pilgrims and settler-invaders.⁷ In locating the migrant in relation to these American historical figures (the pilgrims and pioneers), the migrant not only demands that America reconsider its own migrant (or more rightly

⁷In late twentieth-century Canadian narratives dealing with immigration, there is an opposite movement that identifies the immigrant with the indigenous natives rather than with the founding natives of the nation. Texts like Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* and Jane Urquhart's *Away* explicitly parallel the displaced aboriginals with the displaced immigrants (or descendants thereof). Although the displacement of the aboriginals is not the same kind of self-imposed displacement of the immigrants, both peoples are brought together by their common histories of oppression at the hands of the Canadian (or British-Canadian) nation.

settler-invader) origins, but that the validity of any apparently native claim be understood as an operating national myth of self-making.

Ironically, although nativism is used to establish the land claims of one group believed to be indigenous to that land over those of the invading Other, colonialism supercedes the rights of the natives of the conquered lands.⁸ In colonialist discourses, the term native has often been used to describe “one of the original or unusual inhabitants of a country, as distinguished from strangers or foreigners” (*OED*). The indigenous inhabitants are often described as unusual beings (because of their “primitive cultures”) who are certainly different from the strangers or foreigners who come to conquer, civilize, and/or settle the wild lands. Most explicitly, the term native has often been used to describe “one belonging to a non-European race in a country in which Europeans hold political power” (*OED*). Thus, the adoption of the term native to describe not the dehumanized aboriginals but the descendants of British colonials in the New World (Hail the Mayflower) does more than reveal a paradox. As Terry Goldie argues, in “their need to become ‘native,’ to belong here, whites in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia have adopted a process which [he has] termed ‘indigenization.’ A peculiar word, it suggests the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous” (234). The indigenization of the colonial displaces the indigenous aboriginal from the land and her/his claims of origin by superimposing an imperial claim on both origin and land. Interestingly, as Goldie

⁸Of course, even among aboriginal groups some groups, displaced others, or else as nomads eventually settled in a different location from where they originated.

contends, indigenization occurs, in part, because of migration. According to him, “the first felt need for indigenization came when a person moved to a new place and recognized an Other as having greater roots in that place” (235). Is indigenization, then, symptomatic of (im)migration? Since the colonial is a migrant, her/his indigenization raises material questions in relation to immigrant identity: as a migrant, is the colonial settler an immigrant? If so, can any immigrant claim native status by the process of indigenization? If that is the case, is the process of indigenization the same as assimilation and eventual naturalization?

It is necessary to distinguish here between the colonial settler and the immigrant. Certainly, settlers, invaders, settler-invaders, and colonizers are, to a certain extent, migrants insofar as they leave one country to settle in another. However, the new country of residence is most often a colony of the migrants’ native land and not an autonomous nation. Since the colony is merely newly acquired territory belonging to (or claimed by) the settler’s native land, it is believed to be an extension of that land. From the colonial’s perspective, however, the geographical and psychical distance of the colony questions the extent to which the colony truly operates as an extension of the imperial centre. Colonial narratives of arrival or survival guides in the wild colonies, like Susanna Moodie’s *Roughing It in the Bush*, call attention to the fallacy of colonialism by emphasizing the increasing distance between the peripheral colonies and the imperial centre. The colonies begin to evolve separately and eventually become distinct and autonomous nations with the power to grant citizenship and subjecthood to their residents. It is precisely at the

moment when a colony begins to assert its difference from the imperial centre, and begins emerging as an independent nation, that nativism offers a useful and necessary mechanism in the construction of a national identity and mythology. Nativism stresses the origin of the nation and its people not only as being separate from the imperial parent but as being native to the colonized land. Yet, the question remains: is the migrant who leaves the imperial centre to settle in its colony an immigrant? Surely there must be a difference between the colonialist migrant who settles in the newly acquired territory and the independent immigrant who immigrates into an autonomous nation.

In her historical study of American immigration policies, Marion T. Bennett rightly differentiates between the colonialist settler and the immigrant when she states that colonization “is ordinarily a state-sponsored enterprise, while immigration [...] is the result of the decision of the individual without any particular official state support” (2). A colonial settler, not unlike the alien, is an agent of her/his native land acting (settling foreign land) *for* and in the name of her/his native land. An immigrant, in contrast, is an independent agent acting for her/himself. At worst, the immigrant-as-alien is perceived to be acting for her/his native land, but this is often beyond actual proof. The colonial settler can therefore claim to be and become a native since the imperial government has claimed that territory as an extension of its own, but the immigrant who may not be a subject of the imperial centre (or its peripheries), or who enters after the colony’s independence, cannot make such claims. Colonialism rather than immigration is the vehicle that offers the settler, not the immigrant, the possibility of indigenization by first laying claim to the

land as it displaces the indigenous resident off the land. Given the history of colonization in North America, it is therefore not surprising that the immigrant is understood in quasi-imperialist terms; the immigrant-as-alien (a native of some Other world) is perceived as the invading Other seeking entry with the intent to colonize, settle the land, and displace the native from the land.

The immigrant-as-alien therefore poses a threat to the indigenized settler; if that Other world can lay claim to the land, the immigrant-as-alien can adopt the process of indigenization and replace the native. The threat of the incoming invader, moreover, is most overtly stated when immigration occurs *en masse*. For example, in his *Observations on the Increase of Mankind and the Peopling of Countries*, Benjamin Franklin states: “Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us, instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our language or customs?” (in Bennett 4). The threat of the German emigration into Pennsylvania is understood in terms of social, cultural, and linguistic conquest determined by the increase of one group (Germans) over another (native Americans of British descent).

As Franklin’s statement rhetorically indicates, an immigrant must assimilate the language and customs of the land s/he enters in order to dissipate the threat s/he poses as an alien. Yet, the fear of the invading emigrant or alien plays a significant role in the making of a nation, particularly as it becomes increasingly necessary to mythologize its separate origin in order to distinguish between the new nation and the old colonial power.

Thus, it is in the indigenized native's best interest to alienate rather than assimilate the immigrant as doing so allows the indigenized native to naturalize her/his indigenosity. As the indigenized native seeks to differentiate her/himself from the colonial parent, the incoming immigrant allows the indigenized native to mark her/his difference by capitalizing on the immigrant's foreignness. Conversely, just as myths of national origin work to authenticate the native, so too does the native authenticate the alien. The alien exists in opposition to the native and as such is demarcated as a different being; the alien must be something Other than a native (of the land s/he enters into, but is a native of the land s/he came from). The appearance of an authentic American and/or Canadian people(s) is crucial to the constructing of these independent nations, since natives are believed to be the products "grown or originating in a specified place" (*OED*). As native peoples originating in the new lands, or, rather, native peoples originating in the emerging nation, the settler-invaders and their offspring are naturalized as natives; the natives are of the lands as the lands are of the natives. This apparently natural social contract, to paraphrase Serres,⁹ leaves little if any room for anyone else who is not a native; one who is not produced by the lands is not *of* the lands and does not, therefore, have *natural* claim to the lands. Yet, because the immigrant is allowed entry *into* the lands, and because the immigrant can eventually become a naturalized citizen, though never a native, the role of the immigrant, who remains a native from some Other land, is brought into question. Can

⁹See Serres's *The Natural Contract* (*Le Contrat Naturel*).

the native and the immigrant ever have the same rights or even claims to the same land? Should there be a political distinction between the two? To answer these questions, the immigrant must define, as the nation must define for the immigrant, what her/his place as a non-native in her/his non-native homeland is or ought to be.¹⁰

1.3 Redefining the Nation: the Immigrant Nation

Prior to locating the immigrant's place within the nation, it is fruitful to recall some definitions of nation that can help map the extent of the immigrant's exclusion from or inclusion into her/his non-native homeland and its nation-making process. As a starting point, it is useful to situate both Canada and the United States in the context of D.E.S. Maxwell's postcolonial term, "settler colonies" (or in the more current understanding of "settler-invader colonies"), which emphasizes that the "land was occupied by European

¹⁰One possibility here is to understand both the native and the immigrant in terms of homeland, which is not synonymous with one's native land. Home, real or imagined, is central to studies of diasporic literature, exile and expatriate literature, as well as postcolonial critical and literary inquiries. For the purposes of this dissertation, it is imperative to consider that non-native land can be seen as a homeland, and that in claiming the non-native land as a homeland the immigrant can establish roots and rights in her/his country of residence. Claiming a homeland is not claiming native status of said homeland. Allowing the immigrant to live in a non-native homeland also envisions the immigrant not as an invader but as a fellow citizen of different origin whose interest in her/his homeland is as valid as that of the native's. Consider, for example, *Oh Canada*'s opening lyrics: "Oh Canada, Our home and *native* land." In this national anthem, "home" appears to be equated with "native land." It therefore follows that only natives to Canada are at home in Canada, or that Canada can only be the home of its natives. But does the meaning of the anthem change when it is sung by a group of immigrants during their citizenship ceremony? Certainly new Canadian citizens can feel at home in Canada, even though Canada is not their native land. In this scenario, do the new Canadian citizens become natives by virtue of becoming Canadians or being at home in Canada? Do new Canadian citizens redefine the term native in Canada?

colonists who dispossessed and overwhelmed the Indigenous populations. They established a transplanted civilization which eventually secured political independence [...]” (Ashcroft 25).¹¹ As settler(-invader) colonies, each colony was granted by the Crown

¹¹Given the emphasis on origins, are Canada and the United States, which began as British settler-invader colonies, to be regarded as postcolonial nations? Theoretically, resistance to seeing settler-invader colonies as postcolonial nations has gained currency. Complicating the question is the general consensus that the United States has become a cultural empire and as such exerts much control over its Northern (and Southern) neighbour(s). If the United States has been regarded as a postcolonial nation, it has exceeded that characteristic as it has developed its own identity as a cultural and economic imperial power. The question, therefore, is most often debated in terms of Canada (and often Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the other “white” British colonies).

Keeping in mind that Canada operated as part of the British Commonwealth until Confederation in 1867, Canada appears to be a postcolonial nation. Examining the role that the immigrant plays in Canada’s colonialist vision of itself, however, suggests otherwise. For example, during the period of Commonwealth rule, British subjects were free to move within British territory, which included the Commonwealth colonies. Postcolonial critiques call attention to what happens when a colonial subject leaves the colony to enter Britain. In the case of Canada, would a Canadian colonial be welcomed in Britain the same way as an Indian colonial would? What happens when British subjects of one colony seek to enter another? The most noted example is the devastating *Komagata Maru* incident. In 1914, 376 Sikhs arrived in Vancouver from Hong Kong aboard the *Komagata Maru*. Donald Galloway explains:

As British subjects, many Indians believed they had a right of residence in all parts of the British Empire. The arrival of such a large number was seen by many people in Canada as “a direct challenge to the policy of East Indian exclusion” and it significantly increased racial tension in Vancouver. The ship remained for two months in the harbour with the passengers on board while the exclusion law was unsuccessfully challenged in court. During this time, officials took steps to prevent the ship from getting supplies. Eventually, the ship was forced to return to Hong Kong, and it sailed on to India with all but twenty of its complement of passengers, the exceptions being Indians who had previously been admitted to Canada and who were, therefore, returning residents. In India, a riot broke out when the ship arrived, and police killed twenty-three of the passengers. This incident has become etched in Canadian history and has influenced many current debates about the treatment of immigrants and refugees. (14)

As this incident indicates, Canada saw itself as being closer to the British centre (if not being the centre) than those Other British colonies, thereby questioning its postcolonial identity. Support for this position questions Canada’s historical treatment of the First Nation Peoples, and more recently its treatment of ethnic and racial minorities. Considering this question in regional terms leads to domestic discontent whereby one group, namely the French, protest against the federal

the responsibility of regulating and implementing immigration laws and practices, although the underlying sentiments are clearly imperial. For example, the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763, calls for immigration as a means of building and maintaining the empire, and in doing so can also defend the marked British territory against French and/or aboriginal invasions. The ambivalence toward immigration, from the colonial's perspective, however, becomes evident as the colonies become autonomous nations—with the United States' Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1789, and with Confederation in Canada in 1867. A shift from colony to independent nation is evident, for example, in General Washington's letter to Patrick Henry concerning emigration: "I want an *American* character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for *ourselves* and not for others. This, in my judgement, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home" (in Bennett 7). Stressing that it is a prerogative of the independent nation to choose its immigrants, Washington's

dominance which is understood in quasi-imperialist terms. Newfoundlanders, like the Québécois, also see themselves as constituting a separate people who are and have been done wrong by federalist interests.

In the context of immigration, considering whether or not Canada is a postcolonial nation becomes imperative when examining its relationship with immigrants from other Commonwealth countries in a multicultural era. Do immigrants from the Caribbean, India or Pakistan, for example, see themselves as entering another outpost of the British empire, or do they see themselves entering Britain when they enter Canada? Does the fact that Canada has been predominantly a Caucasian settler-invader colony alter its position in the British Commonwealth hierarchy? How have immigrants from the former British Commonwealth been (mis)treated by Canadian policy? Are they still? Does Canada now see immigrants from the former British Commonwealth as fellow former-British subjects, or does Canada see them as Britain did—not truly British but rather British mimics? As we will see in the last chapter of this dissertation, that relationship is central to understanding Austin Clarke's and Bharati Mukherjee's works, constructions and representations of the postcolonial immigrant in Canada and in the United States.

statement undermines mass immigration to rapidly settle the land since it embodies little discrimination and selection of immigrants.

In contrast, when a nation is building itself and is in a position to choose its immigrants, immigration can be used to authenticate a national character that will ensure its separation from the colonial parent. Choosing immigrants rather than accommodating the immigrants imposed by the colonial power, moreover, is a means of ascertaining respect (or recognition) from the European “abroad.” Implicit here is the perception that the New World is seen as Europe’s dumping ground and is used to deflect its overpopulation. The perception of the New World from the settler’s perspective, however, envisions an emerging great nation that deserves not the waste but the best from Europe. For example, in a letter to Peter Collinson dated May 9, 1753, regarding the German immigrants who were settling Pennsylvania and participating in the Assembly, Franklin laments that those “who come hither are generally the most stupid of their own nation” (in Bennett 4). Regulating immigration therefore offers the emerging nation a vehicle with which to naturalize its idyllic vision of itself; the nation becomes a great nation when it can afford to *choose* its immigrants and restrict its boundaries to the unwanted.

Origin, in the New World nation, is inscribed by newness; its founders and inhabitants originally come not from the lands but from somewhere else. As Canadian political scientist Reg Whitaker notes, “Canada, it has often been said, is a country of immigrants. All Canadians, except for the native peoples, are either themselves

immigrants or trace their ancestry back to migrants” (*Canadian* 3). Kelley and Trebilcock argue: “It is trite to observe that Canada is a country of immigrants, as is indeed the case for most of the countries of the so-called New World” (3). Is the nation of immigrants the same as an “immigrant nation”? What is, constitutes, or defines an immigrant nation?

This line of inquiry demands that we reexamine each component separately; after all, just as the term immigrant is problematic so too is the term nation, as extensive critical studies of nation and nationhood attest. For example, in his seminal work on nation, Benedict Anderson defines a nation as “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (44). Anderson’s use of the term “imagined” is in part a response to Ernest Gellner’s understanding that nationalism “invents nations where they do not exist” (Anderson 44). According to Anderson, “Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretenses that he assimilates ‘invention’ to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity’ rather than to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’. In this way he implies that ‘true’ communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (44). Gellner’s work is crucial to deconstructing national identity and nationalism, to understanding how a nation invents itself.

Anderson’s work, in contrast, lends itself to a study of what an immigrant nation, if it in fact exists, can be.

An immigrant nation can be understood as an imagined political community, particularly when drawing on Ernest Renan’s definition of a nation as “une âme” that is

constituted not by race, language, religion, or territorial boundaries but by “un principe spirituel”: “Deux choses qui, à vrai dire, n’en font qu’une, constituent cette âme, ce principe spirituel. L’une est dans le passé, l’autre dans le présent” (194). A history of cultural memories needed to constitute a national people exists only in relation to said people’s present—people have to agree to be part of the nation. Hence, the nation is in a constant state of flux, in perpetual plebiscite in which the past is constantly mediated by the present. In this sense, the nation is informed as much by the desires and needs of its present members as it is by the legacy of its past membership. Mediating between the past and the present, a nation is constantly evolving rather than rooted in its (mis)conception of ‘origin’:

L’homme n’est esclave ni de sa race, ni de sa langue, ni de sa religion, ni du cours des fleuves, ni de la direction des chaînes de montagnes. Une grande agrégation d’hommes, saine d’esprit et chaude de cœur, crée une conscience morale qui s’appelle une nation. Tant que cette conscience morale prouve sa force par les sacrifices qu’exige l’abdication de l’individu au profit d’une communauté, elle est légitime, elle a le droit d’exister. (197-98)

If people are, as Renan suggests, free to transcend their socio-cultural and geographical boundaries, and if indeed a nation is constructed by a communal spirit and moral conscience, then a nation can be an immigrant nation—a nation or people whose spiritual unity is a bond that is neither socio-cultural nor geographical but political. The immigrant

nation challenges the assumption of a *native* nation or people. An argument can be made that the people become “a people” (*une âme*) because they share a common legacy or history of immigration. Such an argument would posit that the unifying belief of an immigrant nation lies in the desire to immigrate and the experience of immigration.

In an immigrant nation, it is the immigrant’s imagined community that defines the nation. Paradoxically, however, it is the nation’s imagined image of itself that defines the immigrant and, in doing so, fortifies its own imagined community, which is often that of a native nation. Moreover, an ensuing problem becomes evident when an immigrant nation calls for a homogeneity of thought and belief, albeit implicitly, calling for the assimilation of the individual into the body of the community—whatever that community’s beliefs and practices happen to be. While the American nation, for example, emphasizes the assimilation of the incoming aliens by regulating the assimilation of language and culture, more importantly, the assimilation is a means of ensuring that what are believed to be native American political values (e.g., democracy) are propagated instead of the threatening foreign ones (e.g., communism and Islam), lest these foreign ideas are organized and mobilized in foreign domestic movements seeking to destroy the nation from within (e.g., the Jewish Conspiracy, the Yellow Peril, or 9/11). The threat that these alien ideas exist within the nation and must be quenched, however, can be said to prove, on the one hand, that the nation is indeed imagined as a heterogeneous (therefore immigrant) nation and, on the other, that the nation is imagining itself as a homogeneous (therefore native rather than immigrant) nation.

1.4 The Immigrant and the Immigrant Nation

Understanding the role and place of the immigrant in the nation s/he enters is primarily dependent on three key elements: how the nation defines itself, how the nation defines the immigrant, and how the immigrant is used or serves to construct, define, or authenticate the nation. Just as the immigrant's definition shifts when the words alien, emigrant, or immigrant are used, so too does the relationship between the nation and the immigrant alter when the entered nation is defined as the immigrant's host, surrogate, or adopted nation. Drawing on the *OED*'s definition of "host," a host nation can be said to simply be inhabited by "a large number of people or things," which has no meaningful bearing on the immigrant. However, when as a host the nation "receives and entertains" the immigrant as its "guest," it implicitly stresses the immigrant's temporal status as a perpetual guest rather than as a permanent resident. A tourist can be regarded as a guest, as can diplomats and visitors, but should the immigrant be seen thus? Another possibility is offered by the definition of a host as "an organism on which another organism lives as a parasite," which is in accord with the immigrant-as-alien who settles within the host nation to live (or feed) off the host, thereby depleting it of its natural resources and resistance. A weakened host nation is more susceptible to infection (political or cultural), and is eventually rendered defenceless against invasive attacks. Notwithstanding, benign parasites often inhabit a host body, thereby suggesting that even if such a derogatory metaphor is used it need not mean that an immigrant (an organism) who is not natural (or native) to the body poses a threat to its host body.

Similarly, since “surrogate” means a “deputy” or “substitute for another” (*OED*), the surrogate nation is laden with connotations that differentiate between a “real” (or native) land and its “surrogate” (or substitute). This semantic choice emphasizes that the immigrant’s native land remains more real than the nation entered, thereby characterizing the immigrant as an emigrant or, more likely, as an expatriate, diasporic, or exile who still looks back to “home” as the “real” native land (whether or not the immigrant is even born in that homeland or whether or not that homeland even exists). In this sense, the surrogate nation becomes a transitory place in which the immigrant settles not because it is the immigrant’s ideal but because s/he cannot settle in her/his “real” homeland. Demeaned as a secondary rather than primary choice of residence, the nation entered is reduced to a kind of projection or false representation of the real as it becomes a substitute for the real. This is not to be confused with the hyperreal (following Jean Baudrillard), since the surrogate or substitute nation is not a simulation of the real nation. However, a case can be made that the immigrant and/or ethnic communities or ghettos that develop within a surrogate nation exemplify the hyperreal insofar as they simulate the real homeland, or, more pointedly, simulate an interpretive (most often nostalgic) version of the real homeland (as it once was or as it ought to be) that differs from the actual real.

The term “adoptive” nation appears to be the least offensive when compared to the host and surrogate terms, especially when considering the various meanings of the verb adopt: “1. to take into one’s family as a relation, especially as one’s child with legal guardianship. 2. to take (a person) as one’s heir or representative [...]. 3. to take and use

as one's own, *adopted this name or custom*. 4. to accept responsibility for maintenance of (a road etc.). 5. to approve or accept (a report or financial accounts)" (*OED*). Upon further consideration, however, it becomes evident that even this comparatively less offensive term can be detrimental because it makes assumptions about the immigrant. For example, the immigrant can be seen as the adopted child who is taken into the nation (or family) as "one's own." Although this implies inclusion and acceptance of the immigrant rather than exclusion, the immigrant is nevertheless positioned as a child in need of legal guardianship. This role need not necessarily be a negative; the immigrant is often in need of legal rights upon entering her/his adopted nation. Moreover, the figure of the child immigrant is often used in immigrant narratives as a strategy with which to contest negative stereotypes of the immigrant.¹² The immigrant child is an innocent victim, discovering the cruel new world as s/he grows up in it. As such, the immigrant child challenges the characterization of the immigrant as a conniving or manipulative invader. However, the politics of reading the immigrant as child-like demand that the immigrant be conceptualized as an innocent victim who must be protected, suggesting a kind of refugee. The child-like immigrant is not only indebted to the kindness and generosity of her/his adoptive parentland, but the adoptive parentland does not have the same so-called natural responsibility to care for her/his adopted immigrant-child as it does her/his native offspring. The child-like immigrant, destined to remain child-like (at worst given to

¹²See, for example, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers*, and Wayson Choy's *The Jade Peony*.

tantrums and not taken seriously), can be said to be powerless in the child-parent dynamic s/he enters into. Symbolically, however, the child may be powerless though not necessarily without rights.

In the second definition, an argument can be made that the adoptive nation adopts or takes in the immigrant as a representative of itself. In this case, the nation that envisions itself as an immigrant nation, or else envisions the immigrant as an embodiment of its own beliefs, can use the immigrant-as-adoptee to represent its social and political values. In the third definition, it is the immigrant who primarily uses the adopted nation as her/his own, although implicit here is the notion of substitution or exchange. While using the adopted nation underscores the immigrant's agency and choice, it nevertheless recalls the immigrant's capability of self-transformation—which can imply the immigrant be seen as a kind of mutant. In the fourth definition, adoption highlights responsibility for maintaining the nation. Here, that responsibility falls both on the nation, as it accepts responsibility for maintaining its immigrants, as well as on the immigrant, who accepts responsibility for maintaining the structure (the road) of the nation s/he enters into. Finally, while the fifth definition does not seem to apply, it nevertheless points to the bureaucracy that defines the immigration process of acceptance and denial. Not to be undermined, policy-making on immigration greatly affects the way in which the nation sees its immigrants and how the immigrants come to see and represent not only themselves but the nation as well. In closing, whichever term is used—host, surrogate or adopted/adoptive nation—the same conclusion is reached:

ambiguous and elusive meanings characterize the relationship between the nation and the immigrant, thereby problematizing any clear or definite understanding of the immigrant nation.

2

Immigrant Nations

Poor immigrant. If only, if only, if only, this land were not rosedust where the first fathers sleep, he would be mayor or county warden or even premier now. Instead, he spreads crisp newspapers like maps and plots politics, discovering archipelagos of *bon mots* amid the black-and-white seascape of scandals and crises. He [...], born without a memory [...], believes everyone is an alien, a refugee, *un émigré*. Everyone emigrates to the world from his or her mother. Heaven is everyone's true home.

— George Elliott Clarke's "The Argument," *Whylah Falls*

So far, I have drawn on semantic definitions of the term immigrant (and related terms) to accentuate its inherent ambiguity. Its elusiveness, moreover, determines how the immigrant is understood, constructed and redefined at various historical moments not only by the immigration policies that legally regulate who and what an immigrant is, but, more significantly, by the literature that inscribes the immigrant. By introducing the problematic relationship between the immigrant and the nation s/he enters into, I have also suggested that Canada and the United States define the immigrant as they are simultaneously defined by the immigrant. This complex relationship further raises the possibility of reading the United States and Canada as immigrant nations. Although theoretically an immigrant nation is conceivable, what exactly it is remains to be seen. More specifically, how the United States and Canada develop into and operate as immigrant nations—if in fact they do—needs further exploration. To do so, it is

imperative to historically contextualize American and Canadian immigration policies and the effect that these have had on the development of each nation's immigrant consciousness. Revisiting these earlier chapters in American and Canadian immigration histories also pinpoints moments when American and Canadian visions of immigration converge and diverge, dictating the development of two distinct though not overly dissimilar models of immigrant nations—namely the American melting pot and the Canadian multicultural mosaic.

In this chapter, I will begin exploring the development of the United States and Canada as immigrant nations by focusing on the prevailing politics of assimilation that dominated the 1920s. In Part I, a discussion of the subcategorization of the immigrant, drawing on the national origins quota system of immigration as stipulated in the American Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924, will contextualize my analysis of Anzia Yeziarska's *Bread Givers*. Yeziarska's endorsement of assimilation can be read as a response to the debates over the (un)assimilability of the new immigration. To the "American" reader, Yeziarska's narrative illustrates that the Jewish immigrant can and will assimilate; and, to the Jewish reader, her narrative offers the means of attaining not only social betterment but an increase in the quotas for Jewish immigration. The politics of assimilation thus need to be addressed, and I will do so by examining the idealized model of assimilation offered by Israel Zangwill's play *The Melting Pot*.

In the second part of this chapter, I will examine the Canadian response to assimilation as Canada also faces the challenge of dealing effectively with an influx of

unwanted immigration. Unlike the United States, however, Canada's problem, especially in its early immigration history, is with keeping the desirable immigrant from migrating southward. Frederick Philip Grove effectively addresses this fluid movement across the border in *A Search for America*, but symbolically christens Canada, not the United States, as *the* idyllic America. *A Search for America* can be read as a novel of social protest in which Grove philosophizes on the immigrant condition in America, and challenges both nations to take responsibility for the immigrant. In doing so, he pinpoints an odd paradox: although the United States was more inclusive in its immigration policies in spite of its quotas and exclusions, Canada was more beneficial to the immigrant *provided* that the immigrant belonged to an admissible (in other words desirable) class. This subtle distinction between the Canadian and the American immigration policies and practices is exacerbated by the American adoption of the melting-pot analogy.

PART I

2.1 American Immigration: A Historical Overview

From the outset, a differentiation has been made between natives and aliens (who bring with them their own native traditions, languages, and politics) in the United States. In 1775, for example, George Washington advised John Adams that, in his opinion with regard to immigration, “except of useful mechanics and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement[;...] they retain the language, habits, and principles (good or bad) which they bring with them” (in Bennett 7). The binary pitting of an us (native) versus them (alien) reiterates the break between the colonies and the empire, further naturalizing the idea of an authentically native American people (nation). Somewhat paradoxically, however, the idea of an authentically native American people and culture requires the perceived threat (real or imagined) of the “importation of foreigners,” as Thomas Jefferson’s 1782 *Notes on Virginia* indicate:

we are to expect the greatest number of immigrants. They will bring with them the principles of governments they leave, or if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as usual, from one extreme to the other. It would be a miracle were they to stop precisely at the point of temperate liberty. These principles, with their language, they will transmit to their children. In proportion to their numbers they will share legislation with us. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp or bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent,

distracted mass. (in Bennett 8)

The idea of a native American population destabilizes the immigrant nation insofar as it differentiates between those who are born in America and those who are not. Crucial to the conception of an autonomous nation are the ideas of homogeneity and birthright; one is only *really* of one place if one is born *in* that place.¹³ Those who are born in the same place share certain commonalities that render them alike, thereby suggesting that the relationship between the natives and the land is as important as the relationship between natives. Yet, as Jefferson's notes make clear, the children of the "foreigners," of the immigrants, while born *in* America remain *not of* America; the generations of immigrants remain alien. Implicit in the threat of heterogeneity are the remnants of English colonization; colonial White Anglo-Saxon Protestant America becomes *the* native America. Hence, the threat of an immigrant nation is based on the initial racist prejudice against foreigners who threaten to "dilut[e] the English-Protestant character of the population" (Bennett 11).

While Benjamin Franklin and Washington, among others, voiced their concerns over the incoming aliens who threatened to destroy their vision of an Anglicized (WASP) native American nation, the Democratic Party Line from 1840 until 1856 proposed a different vision of America: "That the liberal principles ... which make ours the land of

¹³Of course, the inherent racism in this statement implies that one must qualify as a "person" to be considered to be a "native." Children of African slaves who were born in America would not be considered to be natives simply because they were not yet considered to be persons.

liberty, and the asylum of the oppressed of every nation, have ever been cardinal principles in the democratic faith; and every attempt to abridge the present privilege of becoming citizens, and the owners of soil amongst us, ought to be resisted..." (in Bennett 13). The Democratic belief expressed here calls for inclusion rather than exclusion of the immigrant as a means of distinguishing not the native from the alien but the American nation from other oppressive nations. In taking in not the worst but the "oppressed," America projects itself as a parental (or imperial) humane democracy actively advocating human rights. Paradoxically, however, even this democratic line maintains the native versus alien dichotomy by emphasizing the split between "them" and "us": "they" who have the privilege rather than the right to be amongst "us." Yet, the Democratic qualification marks a shift in the emigrant's difference; s/he is no longer just another native from an Other world, but a *destitute* alien *in need* of a homeland that provides the fundamental necessities for survival if not personhood. The immigrant, in this sense, serves the function of authenticating and naturalizing a democratic principle of the American nation, or one self-created vision of America, as it helps to differentiate America from other nations.

Initially, during the Free Period between 1820 and 1880, "when there were no federal immigration laws other than those passed with the intent of assisting immigration" (Bennett 15), the majority of immigrants came from Northern and Western Europe: mostly from Germany, Ireland, England, Norway, Sweden, but also from Asia (namely China), Canada and Newfoundland (14). Although America was perceived to be free of

prejudice, especially for Northern European immigrants, existing tension and racism, undoubtedly transplanted from Europe, discriminated primarily against Irish and German immigrants for fear of religious (namely Catholic) and/or cultural contamination. The Asian immigrants, on the other hand, were allowed in when mine owners and railroad builders in the western states imported "cheap and docile labor [... mainly] Chinese coolie labor" (15), which fueled racism against Asians in general and the Chinese in particular as the "Chinese were regarded as unassimilable. They kept to themselves, maintained their own culture, and even through their 'tongs' operated private courts of justice with judgments enforced through murder on occasion" (15). Unlike the Europeans, even those discriminated against, the Chinese (and all Asians) were eventually excluded altogether. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 specifically restricts entry to Chinese labourers and establishes the grounds for expulsion or deportment of those Chinese labourers brought in to work. Since the Chinese could only enter as labourers prior to their exclusion, barring Chinese labour effectively barred all Chinese entry.

It is during the Selective Period between 1880 and 1920 that immigration law begins to take shape since, for the first time, Congress had "to consider basic legislation to restrict immigration, [as] the mass migration to the United States had become a national problem not capable of resolution on the state and local level" (Bennett 15). Most notably, the head tax imposed on immigrants, particularly on the Chinese prior to their exclusion in 1882, marks the extent to which Federal rather than State intervention regulates immigration. Also notable is the Act of August 3, 1882, or the first general

immigration law, which begins to define what an immigrant is by identifying who is to be restricted. The Act excludes “any convict, lunatic, idiot or any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge” (22 Stat. 214). As these vacuous categories indicate, exclusions could be made by discretionary opinion. As immigration legislation begins to be amended, however, the lists of exclusions become more detailed and add more types to the class of inadmissible aliens. In the Act of March 3, 1891, for example, “persons suffering from a loathsome or a dangerous contagious disease” and people convicted of crimes “involving moral turpitude, and polygamists” are added to the classes of excludable aliens (26 Stat. 1084).¹⁴ By March 3, 1903, the following classes of aliens, in addition to those already mentioned, are further restricted: “epileptics, [...] anarchists, or persons who believe in or advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of all government or of all forms of law, or the assassination of public officials; [...] prostitutes” (32 Stat. 1213).¹⁵ With each new Act, the class of aliens to be excluded expands, either by adding new categories to the list or else by detailing, specifying, or qualifying existing restrictions, like lunatics, paupers or the feeble-minded.

In this early period, the most influential legislation is the Act of February 5, 1917, which remains a basic law until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. In the Act

¹⁴For a more comprehensive list of the classes of aliens to be excluded, and to see the amendment in the language used to define criminals and beggars, see Appendix A.1.

¹⁵For a more comprehensive list see Appendix A.2.

of February 5, 1917, aliens who fail to show proficiency in reading and writing in one language are to be excluded, and, in addition to the previous restrictions, chronic alcoholics, psychopaths, the tubercular, procurers and pimps, skilled or unskilled contract labourers are also to be restricted entry (39 Stat. 874). More tellingly, a “so-called ‘barred-zone’ was created by degrees of latitude and longitude in order to eliminate most of China, all of India, Burma, Siam, the Malay States, a part of Russia, Arabia, Afghanistan, most of the Polynesian Islands, and the East Indian Islands” (Bennett 27). Somewhat paradoxically, while these exclusions denote racism, a humanitarian provision is made for political refugees and “those escaping religious persecution [as these] were exempt from the [literacy] test” (27). For the first time, a legal difference between the immigrant and the refugee becomes apparent. Given the colloquial and rhetorical characterization often used to define the immigrant as a refugee, the term refugee needs to be considered briefly here. Although defined as “one who, owing to religious persecution or political troubles, seeks refuge in a foreign country” or refers to a “displaced person” uprooted by war (*OED*), by the 1951 Geneva Convention the problem of the voluminous persons displaced by the war, the victims of racial or religious genocide (e.g., the Jews in the Holocaust), and those fleeing racial, religious, and/or political persecution who had been denied refuge prior to and during the Second World War, demanded international recognition and attention. The term refugee acquires more significance when it comes to specify an international class of persons to be aided under the United Nations’ provisions as stipulated in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. In Article 1,

paragraph A.2, the refugee is defined as follows:

(2) [As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and] owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence [as a result of such events], is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (Brownlie and Goodwin-Gill 113)¹⁶

The legal difference between an immigrant and a refugee becomes more obvious after the Geneva Convention, at which point the United States and Canada, among others, begin to develop a separate policy that deals specifically with refugees. The Act of February 5, 1917, in contrast, simply acknowledges political and/or racial persecution as only one of the many conditions that can grant an alien admission.

Given the extensive exclusions and classifications of aliens who are not eligible to enter as immigrants, it is possible to begin theorizing what an immigrant is by defining what the immigrant is not. An immigrant, we can infer, is physically and mentally healthy, self-sufficient, literate, and must have capital to invest or means of establishing her/himself in order to succeed economically; s/he must be willing and eager to work so

¹⁶For a full definition in Article 1 see Appendix A.3

as not to become a public charge. The immigrant must not become the responsibility of the nation, or a drain of the nation's resources, thereby presuming that the immigrant must be independent. Politically, s/he must be democratic or democratically inclined, culturally and linguistically assimilable, and must have a moral (if not puritanical) disposition. The immigrant, by these definitions or inferences, can be classified as a quasi-Übermensch. America, envisioning itself as an immigrant nation, demands only the best as *it* is the best; only the best can have the privilege of entering America. America's Democratic vision of itself as a sanctuary for the oppressed, which accepts not the best but those in need, conforms to its self-characterized moral superiority. America thus protects itself from becoming what Franklin may have termed a "nation of idiots" and, instead, posits itself as a leading immigrant nation insofar as it receives the best immigrants from the most desirable locations (Northern Europe) at the same time that it receives the oppressed in need of sanctuary. By differentiating between the desired immigrant and the refugee, which eventually leads to a separate legislative class, America can effectively fulfil both visions of itself as a humanist haven for the oppressed *and* a superior and economically competitive leading power. The immigrant-as-refugee fulfills America's humanitarian plight, while the immigrant-as-Übermensch represents an economic investment which, added to the requisite moral, healthy, and hard-working (whether skilled or unskilled) characteristics, makes the immigrant a most desirable commodity. Pragmatically, by deeming immigration a privilege rather than a right, the coveted immigrant is expected to remain perpetually thankful for the opportunity of living

in America, thereby ensuring not only her/his allegiance and loyalty but her/his eternal gratitude and subservience. As the immigrant authenticates the nation's visions of itself, s/he nevertheless maintains the native versus alien dichotomy that effectively creates at the very least the appearance of a dual caste-like citizenship (or permanent residency) which privileges the native as first-class citizen over its necessary but contentious second-class citizen, the immigrant.

2.2 The "Old Immigration" versus the "New Immigration"

The tenuous relationship between the immigrant and the nation is complicated further as the term immigrant fragments legally into multiple subcategories or classes—admissible, non-admissible, quota and non-quota—and splits into two overriding categories, the "old immigration" and the "new immigration." The new immigrant cannot have the same kind of access to or relationship with the nation as the old immigrant would have, since the new immigrant must mediate her/his relationship with the nation as s/he mediates her/his relationship with the existing immigrants who arrived before her/him. This multiple mediation inevitably defers the new immigrant's signification of the "real" America as access to that America becomes increasingly difficult. This deferral in meaning, moreover, feeds the signification of a "real" mythological America that exists somewhere beyond the new immigrant's reach, beyond the immigrant world now inhabited by two distinctly overarching groups. Conversely, from the nation's perspective, ascribing meaning to the new immigrant allows the nation

to maintain its own ideal, the desired immigrant-as-Übermensch (only the *best* from the *best* countries), against which the actual new immigrant is measured. As new waves of immigrants enter, the new immigrant is contrasted not only with the nation's ideal immigrant, which may or may not exist, but with the existing immigrants who have already been granted entry. As the earlier-arrived (or old) immigrant assimilates, her/his difference becomes less apparent, especially when contrasted with that of the newly arrived immigrant. It would appear, then, that assimilation is the necessary means of becoming native-like insofar as it emphasizes a difference between the assimilated immigrant and the more recent import rather than between the assimilated immigrant and the native. For this reason, the new immigrant is necessary for the assimilation process of the old immigrant, especially as the old immigrant strives to differentiate her/himself from the new arrival. However, in emphasizing or creating difference(s) between the different classes of immigrants, the nation effectively maintains if not increases the distance between the native and the immigrant, thereby allocating the native to the realm of idyllic myth (the "real" Americans must inhabit the "real" America beyond the immigrant realm), while displacing the immigrant's meaning, signification, and space within the nation.

To understand the fragmentation of the immigrant, it is necessary to revisit some of the legal tenets that made this rupture possible. Leading up to the "restrictive period" of immigration, for example, are what Bennett identifies as "two broad theories of immigration control" (30). According to her, one theory proposes

that there should be no alien admissions unless there is specific provision for their admission. The other theory is that admission of aliens should be permitted unless there is a specific prohibition against it. From the very beginning of this country and until 1921 its immigration policies were within the framework of the second theory. The thrust of "restrictions" has since been toward making immigration a privilege instead of an alien right. (30)

If immigration is not an alien's right but a privilege, then the nation is not obliged to provide for the immigrant—legally, economically, culturally, or morally. The immigrant cannot expect or demand the same rights enjoyed by native citizens, which demarcates two distinct classes of citizens (first-class and second-class). Even naturalization (the only vehicle available to the immigrant for possibly obtaining first-class citizenry status) becomes a privilege. The immigrant is placed not only at a perpetual disadvantage of being in an indefinite subservient position to those born into citizenship, but also in a perpetual transitory mode: having exchanged the security of a national identity for a more ambiguous identity in America, the immigrant, even if eventually assimilated and naturalized, is *in* but not *of* America. It is the immigrant's being *in* the nation that raises concern—initially among the natives but eventually among the previously arrived immigrant groups. This necessary rupture in the immigrant body, from the nation's perspective, is a useful mechanism for ensuring that the immigrant groups do not unite and by outnumbering the native population take over the nation. From the immigrant's

perspective, however, the rupture within the immigrant body is a double-edged sword. For the already assimilated or assimilating immigrant, the new arrival can represent a threat insofar as her/his difference becomes all too visible. On the one hand, the new immigrant's visibility can emphasize the old immigrant's assimilation by effacing her/his difference; on the other, visible (or aural) difference constitutes a tangible or audible reminder of the old immigrant's diminishing or hidden difference. Theoretically, other questions arise: if the new immigrant comes to signify "immigrant" in the nation, what does (or can) the assimilated immigrant signify? Does the new immigrant simply replace the old immigrant? Can the old immigrant become a native when a new immigrant takes her/his place as "immigrant" within the nation?

The inception of the old immigration versus the new immigration binary highlights the national-origins quota system, which sheds some light on the relationship between the two groups and, consequently, on their relationship with the nation and the native. The Act of 1920, for example, restricted immigration to three percent of the foreign-born population in 1910, and because nationality "was to be determined by country of birth" regardless of naturalization, and not "more than 20 percent of the admissible aliens of any nationality could arrive monthly," the national census, and the emphasis on national records, became increasingly important (Bennett 41). To promote nationalism and patriotism, which incite assimilation, "[p]references were established for aliens who had served honorably in [the American] Armed Forces during the war and for relatives of [American] citizens or of aliens who were already [in America] and had

applied for citizenship” (41). However, discrimination of the new immigration unofficially excluded members of undesirable ethnic, national, or racial groups, thereby questioning their patriotic duty and loyalty, which was needed to prove that the new immigrant could and wanted to assimilate and become fully part of the American nation.¹⁷ By 1924, there were loud objections to the new immigration and proposals made that the three percent quota be restricted to two percent and that the cut off year be 1890 rather than 1910, which, according to the census, showed a considerably smaller number of new immigrants. From 1924 until 1929, the two percent quota based on the 1890 census was in effect.

These attempts to restrict the new immigration point back to two overriding principles: how the nation defines the immigrant and how it defines assimilation. In the Act of 1924, the term “immigrant” is used synonymously with the term “alien,” and is broadly defined in Section 3 to mean someone who comes to settle in the United States permanently.¹⁸ While the broadness of the definition provides that *anyone* (who does not fit into the stated exceptions) can become an immigrant, the admissible immigrant is further defined by a number of subcategories that once again define the immigrant by what the immigrant is not. Unlike the more generalized classes of exclusions in the Act of 1917, the quota system restricts immigration on a national basis, thereby suggesting that nationality (or origin) is a reason for exclusion. Hence, the differentiation between

¹⁷For examples see Appendix A.4.

¹⁸See Appendix A.5 for the definition.

“nonquota immigrants” and “quota immigrants” becomes a crucial distinction that determined not only an immigrant’s (in)admissability but her/his differentiation predominantly in terms of race.

Bennet notes that, during the 1920s,

[i]mmigrants are defined in the negative. They are all aliens coming here who are not nonimmigrants and the latter are defined. [...] Immigrants are, in turn, classified as quota or non-quota immigrants, depending upon whether they come in under the quota or outside it. Again there is a negative definition. Quota immigrants are those who are not nonquota immigrants, and it is the latter who are identified as were the nonimmigrants. Under the quota law only a maximum number of immigrants could enter each year from European countries and from certain African and Asiatic countries. Generally speaking, there was no quota for independent countries of the Western Hemisphere. (57-58)

As Bennett suggests, the value-laden negative built into the term is two-fold: the immigrant is defined by negation but also by nationality (meaning race). In effect, the immigrant is defined by an absence of signification that makes inscribing meaning possible only in relation to another term (or legal status). Since it is the nonimmigrant and the nonquota immigrant which are defined, we can infer what an immigrant and a quota immigrant are by determining what they are not, but only in relation to these other

terms.¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, the nonquota immigrant is preferable because s/he is *already* American native (or belongs by law to an American native). In contrast, the undesirable quota immigrant is defined in Section 5 as follows:

When used in this Act the term “quota immigrant” means any immigrant who is not a non-quota immigrant. An alien who is not particularly specified in this Act as a non-quota immigrant or a non-immigrant shall not be admitted as a non-quota immigrant or a non-immigrant by reason of relationship to any individual who is so specified or by reason of being excepted from the operation of any other law regulating or forbidding immigration. (43 Stat.153)

The quota immigrant is thus already marginalized within the class of admissible immigrants because of her/his national (racial) foreignness. Even the “Preferences Within Quotas” in Section 6 privilege those who are related or married to aliens already in the United States.²⁰ As these policy changes indicate, in dividing the immigrant into various (sub)categories, and further ranking the immigrants within each category, there ceases to be (if there ever was) a singular functioning definition of the immigrant, posing one question: what effect do the multiple legal definitions of the immigrant have on the individual immigrant’s experience and psyche, as well as on the cultural products that the

¹⁹For a definition of “nonquota immigrants” in the Immigration Act of 1924, see Appendix A.6.

²⁰For a summary of Section 6, see Appendix A.7.

immigrant produces in the nation?

2.3 Multiplicity in Anzia Yeziarska's *Bread Givers*

To enter into Yeziarska's fictional immigrant world is to enter into the now mythologized Lower East Side of Manhattan, described by Delia Caparoso Konzett as "a site traditionally perceived as [...] a temporary way station for foreigners on their way to becoming Americans" (597), which between 1914 and 1918 "was coming into its own, having gained a voice in the economic, political, and social affairs of New York City" (603). It is in this setting that Yeziarska represents and redefines the immigrant and the immigrant experience from the inside of an insular Eastern-European (mainly Russian-/Polish-Jewish) immigrant community in the overly-crowded urban landscape that construes an urban immigrant ghetto. In *Bread Givers* (1925), her best-known novel, Yeziarska offers various definitions of the immigrant. In her representation of the immigrant world, the immigrant experience is defined by the individual's position within the immigrant family and the immigrant community—positions which are largely informed by the individual's age and sex when there appears to be ethnic and/or racial homogeneity. As Martin Japtok notes, "the novel can [thus] be understood as a constant battle between individualism and communalism" (18), not an uncommon all-American theme. As this classic American battle is enacted from within the immigrant ranks, Yeziarska effectively establishes a philosophical parallel between the immigrant and the native; the immigrant is *like* the native insofar as s/he is an individual fighting to ascertain

her/his individual identity. Such subtlety is uncharacteristic of the novel as a whole and of Yeziarska's unreserved style, but its presence further marks *Bread Givers* as an assimilation narrative as much as it is an immigrant one. Yet, unlike other assimilation narratives, Yeziarska, Konzett argues, "explores the cultural markers that work to construct the complex identity of the immigrant rather than the contradictory psychological dynamics of social ascent" (604).

Details about Yeziarska's life are at best sketchy. According to Alice Kessler Harris, Yeziarska "was born in a small town—probably a *shtetl* called Plinsk—in Russian Poland about 1885" (v). Thomas J. Ferraro contends that Yeziarska "emigrated as a young child with her family to the neighbourhood of Hester Street... [and] left the East Side at age twenty" (549), but Diane Levenberg, emphasizing that "the facts of Yeziarska's life are a bit murky...", argues that "she did not grow up on the Lower East Side—she emigrated to America in 1901 when she was sixteen" and spent only two years in the Lower East Side (238). Harris, however, maintains that Yeziarska left her father's home when she was seventeen, and worked in sweatshops and laundries, "living in dark and smelly hall rooms until she had learned enough English to begin writing" (ix). Putting herself through night school and attending classes at Columbia, Yeziarska published "six books [...] between 1920 and 1923" which are generally regarded to be "in some sense autobiographical" (v).²¹ Yeziarska, an "immigrant, desperately poor and often hungry"

²¹Harris reads *Bread Givers* essentially as an autobiographical novel, and maintains that "Anzia Yeziarska and Sara Smolinsky, the novel's narrator, are emotionally interchangeable"

(v), achieved (at least temporarily) the American Dream by her pen: her short stories “paved the way to success and adulation” and “she became the American dream come true” (v).

Yeziarska as the immigrant poster child in the United States became the subject of many magazine articles that featured her as the “Rags to Riches” girl (x) and “sweatshop Cinderella” (Ferraro 549); the “unassimilated ‘Russian Jewess,’ fairy-godmothered into professional authorship, as if she hadn’t left the East Side at all. The [...] most crucial contribution to the mythologizing of Yeziarska was her pretense—tirelessly reiterated—that the transition from the East Side to Washington Square involved nothing more than a short afternoon stroll” (549). As Konzett further notes, it “was not so much Yeziarska’s work as Yeziarska herself that became the focus of attention. More precisely, it was the image of an ‘authentic’ ethnicity projecting American ideals of self-determination, hard work, and success that captured the hearts of the public, an image that Yeziarska helped to create and that Hollywood refined and exploited to its fullest” (598). The relationship between the immigrant author and her work is nevertheless symbiotic. Her image as an immigrant was largely constructed from her fictional representation of female Jewish immigrantness, which, in turn, was constructed from her lived experiences as a Jewish immigrant woman. If, as Harris notes, she “was not typical of immigrant women, neither was she unique” (xii). The authenticity of her story or experience lends

(xvii).

verisimilitude to her realist texts, offering a kind of testimonial melodrama bordering on a naturalist sensitivity, which ensures her public appeal and ensuing recognition. Winning the Edward J. O'Brien Best Short Story of the Year award in 1919 led to the publication of *Hungry Hearts*, a collection of her previously individually published short stories which, in turn, 'won' a Hollywood contract when Sam Goldwyn and the studio purchased her book and contracted her to write the script (Harris x).²² Her public fame also 'won' her the position of "writer-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin" for a year (Ferraro 547).

Yeziarska achieved literary and social recognition in her lifetime because she came to be regarded as a synecdochical immigrant literary voice in the American mainstream, which carved a space for the authentic (or token) immigrant voice(s). Although her reputation was that of "the recognized mouthpiece of New York's Jewish East Side" (Ferraro 547), Yeziarska was not a prolific writer, and with "the onset of the Depression, her stories and novels depicting immigrant life were no longer in demand, and [she] and her work were soon forgotten" (Konzett 596). Relegated to the ethnic literary market, the

sales of her books were disappointingly low, and critical reception became increasingly antagonistic—especially among those with competing claims to ethnic authority. From the beginning, it had been easy to assume that

²²While Harris argues that Yeziarska, within a year, "gave up the wealth of Hollywood to return to the East" (xi), Ferraro states that *two* of her books were made into films (547).

her fiction served primarily the tasks of minority protest and self-congratulation, soon to be outdated. In 1925, a coterie of Jewish-American men—Alter Brody, Samson Raphaelson, Yosef Gaer, and Johan Smertenko—lambasted Yeziarska's *Bread Givers* as yet another up-from-the-ghetto tract, cartoonish in plot and characterization, assimilationist in drive, anti-Semitic in effect if not intent. (Ferraro 547-48)

Given the literary success by other such Jewish-American immigrant narratives as Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* (1934), Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), and Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant* (1957), it is apparent that Yeziarska's diminishing literary fame and importance has more to do with her being a female writer whose prose style "reads as if it were translated from Yiddish" (Oates 17). The fight for claiming the limited space allotted to *the* mainstream's synecdochical immigrant voice was therefore relegated to the immigrant community from which that voice emerged, and, unfortunately for Yeziarska, her community privileged more literary patriarchal (or male-centric) representations.

Somewhat ironically, it is precisely because of her exclusion and dismissal on the basis of her femaleness and oral style that Yeziarska and her work have been recovered. As Konzett notes, the "renewed interest in Yeziarska" since the 1970s has largely been "because of her documentation of women's experience of immigration" (596); she "continues to be regarded as a patriotic assimilationist who wrote sincere but technically deficient short stories and novels in a poor and broken English" (596). If she was

celebrated in the 1920s for her use of “immigrant realism” that promoted “an insider’s guide to ‘how the *Other* half lives” (Ferraro 547; emphasis mine), allowing outsiders licence and safe distance with which to enter voyeuristically that *Other* world, she is now celebrated for continuing to provide a now historical testimonial account—an authentic insider’s view into the less visible Jewish American female immigrant world that contributed to the making of this “revolutionary” (Harris ix) writer. As such, Yeziarska challenges the pigeon-holing of her femaleness and her Jewish-immigrantness, the two identifiable identity markers that construct her persona and her fictional characters. This tension in her fiction points to her adherence to the *possibility* of becoming or remaking one’s identity to fit a desirable mold of one’s choosing. Even when these attempts fail (and they often do), Yeziarska’s fiction promotes actively pursuing other possibilities rather than passively accepting an undesirable and nationally and/or ethnically prescribed gender-specific mold. Hence, although she has become somewhat pigeon-holed as the “Jewish-American Immigrant Female Writer” of the 1920s Lower East Side, her fiction, and the complexity of her immigrant constructs, demand reconsideration.

There is nothing simple about Yeziarska’s *Bread Givers*. Deceptively, it seems to operate on such apparent binaries as Old World-New World, Native-Surrogate Nation, male-female, and (Jewish) immigrant-(WASP and Jewish) native. If the novel calls attention to these binaries, it is to illustrate the complex intertwining between them as these continuously invert and revert, thereby problematizing any understanding of clearly delineated power relationships. Selling the novel as an immigrant story about a “struggle

between a father of the Old World and a daughter of the New,” the book’s jacket and title page call attention to some of the novel’s apparent polarities: the generational drift or gulf between father and daughter; the immigrants’ generational assimilation from Old World into New World which threatens to destroy the traditional family; and, finally, the power imbalance that exists in a micro-community with prescribed masculine-feminine spheres that imprison its members into gender constructs. Divided into three books, “Hester Street,” “Between Two Worlds,” and “The New World,” *Bread Givers* further seems to establish an immigrant narrative as an assimilation story in which the Old World is equated with Hester Street, which produces its immigrant heroine who continuously mediates between two cultures before she can fully enter the New World. As Melanie Levinson points out, however, despite the three titles, the protagonist/narrator “never reaches the New World entirely” (6); in fact “there is never a sense of final reconciliation between the Old World and the New” (5). The three book titles point to the immigrant’s psychological rather than geographical experience in a circular, rather than linear, journey. The protagonist/narrator, Sara Smolinsky, begins and ends in “Hester Street,” first as the youngest child of an immigrant family living in poverty and then as the middle-class adult “*teacherin*” (Yezierska 249). Throughout the novel she continues to be caught “Between Two Worlds,” as she mediates between her competing desires—to remain a member of her family and community and to achieve financial independence to pursue an education, the means she identifies as necessary in her quest to “make [herself] for a person and come among people” (66). Finally, having made herself into a “person”

(or individual) after achieving a version of the (Jewish-) American dream, she comes back to “Hester Street” to forge ahead into her constructed “New World,” which, however reluctantly, must create a space within for the Old World symbolized in the novel by her inviting her father to move into her new home. Notwithstanding, “the problem of Father” (296) represents for her the feeling of his shadow “still there, over [her]. It wasn’t just [her] father, but the generations who made [her] father whose weight was still upon [her]” (297).

The novel’s focus is on the Jewish ghetto in America and the need to assimilate in order to get out of the ghetto. Sara is an individual yearning for the America that must exist beyond the ghetto; she lives in search of the idealized “real America(ns)” as well as her desired place within the American nation. But her search and experiences are largely informed by her femaleness and mitigated by her competing desires to establish and maintain her place within her immigrant family and community and to depart and escape that world altogether. As Veronica C. Wang observes, without “the support of her traditional family, [Sara] is isolated from both the Old World and the New World and accepted by neither.... She must come to terms with the cultural conflicts of the Old and New World[s] and thus forge a flexible identity from both her Jewish culture and American life” (24). Such flexibility, however, depends on factors beyond the individual immigrant’s control. As Levinson notes, “Sara is empty because it is psychologically necessary for her to function in both the modern American world and her birth culture—the Old World Jewish community of Hester Street. She finds that neither

community is willing to allow this sort of dual citizenship, that she has become ‘a stranger among her own people’” (7). In the ghetto, Sara is one of many Jewish immigrant voices competing to be heard. Rather than representing or speaking *for* the immigrants, Sara’s use of her voice is to speak for *herself* and make herself be heard as “a person” (66). Symbolically, her first act toward “becoming a person” and ensuring her survival (and her family’s) is using her voice, loud “like dynamite,” to sell herring on the street (21). The emphasis on Sara’s voice in a public space suggests that the immigrant is voiceless or unheard because s/he is not yet a person; only people have voices that can be heard. Paradoxically, although Sara does not see herself as a person yet, her using her voice marks her as one; the passers-by comment that “the little skinny bones” or “saleslady” is “a person [...] also fighting already for the bite in the mouth” (21). The immigrant girl who has a voice and access to the public sphere, then, has the possibility of becoming a person in America.

The position of the Jewish female immigrant, as Yeziarska’s text affirms, is doubly marginalized because she occupies subordinate positions as an immigrant and a woman in mainstream America and in her patriarchal immigrant community. Throughout the novel, for example, Sara hears the repetitive incantation of her father’s religious mantra: “It says in the Torah, only through a man has a woman an existence. Only through a man can a woman enter Heaven” (137); it “says in the Torah: What’s a woman without a man? Less than nothing—a blotted-out existence. No life on earth and no hope of Heaven” (205). Although she resists his obviously sexist beliefs, she is not immune to

their debilitating effect. After achieving her American dream, she cannot understand why she feels so “empty” (269) and, in a weak and solitary moment, wonders if “after all [her] puffing [herself] up that [she] was smarter, more self-sufficient than the rest of the world—wasn’t Father right? He always preached, a woman alone couldn’t enter Heaven. ‘It says in the Torah: *A woman without a man is less than nothing*. No life on earth, no hope of Heaven’” (270). At this point in the novel, Sara’s understanding of her need of a man in her life is based on her desire for both sexual and spiritual fulfillment—she longs “for the close, human touch of life again” (270). Moreover, her maternal desires, expressed in relation to her work (“[m]y job was to teach—to feed hungry children. How could I give them milk when my own breasts were empty?” [270]), challenge her earlier vision of marriage: she would “want an American-born man who was his own boss. And would let [her] be [her] boss” (66).

The invisibility, the “blotted out existence,” of the Jewish female immigrant is partially due to her femaleness and partially because of her Jewishness. As the youngest daughter in her immigrant family, for example, Sara witnesses her father’s tyranny and manipulation of her older sisters and, more importantly, that it is *his* “blotting out” of their happiness and existence when he does not allow them to marry the men they love. In each instance, it is a young Sara who stands up to her father, Reb Smolinsky, participating in exegesis by often quoting back to him his own Talmudic examples to point out the obvious contradiction in his logic as a means of unmasking his true motives. As Evelyn Avery notes, “from Yezierska’s viewpoint, Reb Smolinsky’s piety is shallow, a cloak for

his selfishness, and a justification for his tyranny” (47). When, for example, Sara’s sister Fania falls in love with Morris Lipkin, a poor poet, Reb Smolinsky objects: “A Writer, a poet you want for a husband? [...] Do you want starvation and beggary for the rest of your days? Who’ll pay your rent? Who’ll buy you your bread? Who’ll put shoes on the feet of your children, with a husband who wastes his time writing poems of poverty instead of working for a living?” (68-69). Aware that it is her mother, her sisters, and herself who pay the rent, buy bread, and put shoes on their feet, Sara, having listened to all of her father’s biblical examples, retorts: “Father! [... D]idn’t you yourself say yesterday that poverty is an ornament on a good Jew, like a red ribbon on a white horse? [... D]idn’t you say that the poorest beggars are happier and freer than the rich? [...] You said that a poor man never has to be afraid of thieves or robbers. He can walk alone in the middle of the night and fear nobody. Poor people don’t need locks on their houses. They can leave their doors wide open, because nobody will come to steal poverty...” (70). Her father’s response, however, is to silence her by ignoring her: “Blood-and-iron! Hold your mouth! [...] You’re always saying things I don’t ask you” (70). Whenever Sara talks back to her father, he always tells her: “Hold your mouth!” and treats her “as if [she] was nothing” (85). Even when she leaves home to pursue an education, which she knows he recognizes as something of value, she sees in him “a tyrant from the Old World where only men were people. To him [she] was nothing but his last unmarried daughter to be bought and sold” (205).

The Jewish female immigrant’s invisibility is equally apparent outside the family

and the ghetto. Working for herself as an ironer in a laundry, Sara eats at the Grand Street Cafeteria which “[k]ind, rich ladies had opened [...] for working girls, to have their meals in beautiful surroundings and cheap” (161). Hungry and exhausted after the demanding physical labour, she begs for stew “with a lot of meat in it” (168). Conscious that her fare depends on the server’s mood, she begs: “Please, won’t you put in one real piece of meat?” But is ignored; she “might as well have talked to the wall” (168). In contrast, the man behind her in line receives a “heaping” portion “with thick chunks of meat” (168). Furious and hungry, she complains: “But you didn’t give me as much as you gave him. Isn’t my money as good as his?” (168), to which another customer replies: “Don’t you know they always give men more?” (169). Convinced that the inequality of the sexes is absent from her idealized vision of America, Sara soon finds out that in the American college, where her dream of being recognized as a person should (according to her premise) materialize, her difference as a female immigrant is anything but absent. Although she dreams of finding “inspired companionship of teachers who are friends! The high places above the earth, where minds are fired by minds” (224), she is ostracized and forced to watch college life “from the outside” (218), thereby maintaining the insider/outsider position available to the educated immigrant. She admires all the young college students who “didn’t even know [she] was there” (213). At a social dance, she feels transparent, “like a lost ghost. [She] was nothing and nobody. It was worse than being ignored. Worse than being an outcast. [She] simply didn’t belong. [She] had no existence in their young eyes” (219).

Although a child, the younger Sara in the beginning of the novel understands that her invisibility begins with her father's patriarchal beliefs which, she further understands, are unreasonable. Sara knows that, for her father,

[t]he prayers of his daughters didn't count because God didn't listen to women. Heaven and the next world were only for men. Women could get into Heaven because they were wives and daughters of men. Women had no brains for the study of God's Torah, but they could be the servants of men who studied the Torah. Only if they cooked for the men, and washed for the men, and didn't nag or curse the men out of their homes; only if they let the men study the Torah in peace, then, maybe, they could push themselves into Heaven with the men, to wait on them there. (9-10)

Critical of the subordinate role that women play in the Jewish ghetto, Yeziarska, through Sara, resents the double standard that keeps the means to achieving personhood—access to valued goods like education—from the girls' reach. As Harris notes, unlike "their brothers who spent their days in religious instruction, most girls went to school only long enough to learn the rudiments of Hebrew letters and to become literate in Yiddish. After that they learned by following their mother's examples. Too much learning, even for the well off, was frowned upon, for a girl who developed a 'man's head' would not make a good wife" (vi). Somewhat paradoxically, however, if education was denied to women the business world was not since they were to become literally "bread givers" in order to support their Torah-learning husbands and/or fathers. Harris explains: "unrestricted by the

fetters that bound their husbands, [women] frequently developed greater familiarity with the worldly ways of the marketplace than did their husbands. Paradoxically, though intended to produce submissive and retreating women in the domestic sphere, exclusion from most religious activity placed major economic burdens on many women and encouraged them to develop aggressive and articulate roles in the larger world” (vii). Although cut off from the masculine world of learning, Jewish immigrant women were catapulted into the masculine economic public sphere of business within and beyond the ghetto limits. Within a paradigm of American conceptions of femininity, the Jewish immigrant woman is transformed into a masculine woman—though not necessarily butch, certainly overly aggressive—and consequently transforms the Jewish immigrant man by emasculating him.²³ Within this context, the male rejection of Yeziarska and her fiction in favour of male literary examples can be read not only as a fight to assume the mainstream synechdochical Jewish voice, but as a way of re-inscribing masculine power back into the pen.

In her novel, Yeziarska unleashes the hungry golem-like Jewish woman on the genteel landscape of the American mainstream, in which her visible immigrant female Otherness typecasts her in hyper-sexualized exotic terms.²⁴ The female immigrant Other

²³Although absent from Yeziarska’s text, Jewish-American male stereotyping of Jewish femaleness includes this masculine figure of the Jewish-American woman as the ball-breaking Jewish wife, memorably typified in Philip Roth’s *Portnoy’s Complaint*.

²⁴By “golem-like” Jewish femaleness I am alluding to Cynthia Ozick’s Xanthippe, Puttermesser’s female golem whose sexual voraciousness proves utterly destructive to all of Manhattan as well as to her maker’s (Puttermesser) grandiose dreams.

is as desirable as she is threatening, simultaneously seductive and repulsive, particularly if she is an overly aggressive individual seeking independence from her family and community. When, for example, Sara leaves her parents' home at seventeen, her father is horrified: "A young girl, alone, among strangers? Do you know what's going on in the world? No girl can live without a father or a husband to look out for her" (136-37). Although it is the woman who looks after her father or husband, and who provides the "bread" for the household, a single woman out in the world without a male chaperon (or owner) is deemed "crazy." As her father tells her, she "ought to [be] put [...] in a madhouse till [she's] cured of [her] crazy nonsense!" (137). As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (and others) have noted, madness has often been associated with female sexuality and can thus be understood as a misogynist fear of female hyper-sexuality that threatens to consume, devour, and destroy the ordered (in Freudian terms neurotic and repressed) masculine domain that seeks to regulate femininity into something docile to be easily dominated. It is that hyper-sexuality-as-madness that is associated with the exotic in terms of race, as *Jane Eyre*'s Bertha Rochester, the original "madwoman in the attic," attests. For an immigrant woman in the United States at the turn of the century, the threat of being perceived as "mad" or "immoral" has greater consequences as these are two classes of excludable immigrants who, if already in the country, could possibly be deported. If there is no space within the immigrant community for a "mad woman," neither is there space for one in America.

In Yeziarska's novel, the intertwining of Jewishness and femaleness that produces

an alluring exotic Other also links madness with aggressive hyper-sexuality. For example, if Sara had been living in “olden times,” her father tells her, then “the whole city would have stoned [her]!” (137), a ‘fitting’ punishment for a woman worth stoning, a whore. Suspicious of any young girl who leaves her parents’ home, the girls who work at the laundry also treat her as a prostitute. Symbolically, she is ostracized, “shut out like a ‘greenhorn’ who didn’t talk their language” (180), thereby equating her perceived sexual Otherness as object of equal contempt to that of the naive and blundering immigrant. To the Jewish Americanized male, however, like Max Goldstein, she looks “just like those home girls with all their innocence from Europe yet” (188). Although he seems to understand her, Sara nevertheless understands that for Max Goldstein “a wife would only be another piece of property” (199) and refuses to marry him. Similarly, after aggressively pursuing (in other words stalking) her psychology professor, Mr. Edman, she realizes “why the young men didn’t like [her]. [She] knew more of life as a ten-year-old *girl*, running the streets, than these psychology instructors did with all their *heads swelled from too much knowing*” (231; emphasis mine). Unlike the assimilated Jewish male who has a knowledge of life, the American WASP’s knowledge is derived from the masculine domain of books. Hence, although aroused by her, he cannot ejaculate. However tempting her exotic Otherness may at first be, it is nevertheless threatening to a naive and “young” Edman. Disappointed, Sara finds that she is able to communicate with the “older [WASP] men. [...] To them, [her] Hester Street world was a new world. [...] What could such *raw* youth as Mr. Edman know of that ripened understanding that older men could give!”

(231; emphasis mine). In her understanding of knowledge in a sexual economy, Sara thus inverts the “greenhorn” depiction and (re)places it on the WASP young, “raw,” male. Of course, her relationship with the older men is a wishful fulfillment of the kind of relationship she desires with her father, which can suggest an Elektra complex or else an asexual yet intimate relationship. Hence, while she can enter the economy of knowledge, she is left outside the libidinal economy altogether until she returns to her own “kind.” Though politically assimilationist, Yezierska’s novel shies away from endorsing—indeed, making possible—interracial assimilation.

Yezierska’s immigrant narrative, as a coming-of-age in America narrative, follows Sara’s development from a child into a fully grown woman. While the figure of the child seems to be a fitting metaphor or image for the immigrant, especially the “greenhorn,” since it signifies the immigrant’s innocence, Yezierska’s text posits, instead, that the immigrant child is intellectually and spiritually more developed than a native-born of the same age. Nevertheless, the immigrant is perceived to be child-like—innocent, in need of education and socialization, overly emotional and irrational, which are derogatory qualities when associated with femaleness. But, as Joann Pavletich argues, Yezierska “manipulates the figure of the emotionally intense Jewish female immigrant in order to establish the immigrant woman as an especially important figure in United States culture precisely because of her effusive emotions” (81). As a child in *Bread Givers*, Sara cannot fully articulate her desires nor understand her own identity. While in night school, she states that she wants “the knowledge that is the living life...”

(181). It is only after her experiences in college that she eventually comes to appreciate her “real education” which, echoing Max Goldstein’s immigrant narrative, has already taken place outside the college’s walls. She sees “the students around [her] as so many pink-faced children who never had had to live yet. [She] realize[s] that the time when [she] sold herring in Hester Street, [she] was learning life more than if [she] had gone to school [...]. What countless riches lay buried under the ground of those early years that [she] had thought so black, so barren, so thwarted with want” (223). It is only when she contrasts her American experience with that of the native-born, the “real Americans” (210), that she comes to value her own existence and appreciate it as being something of value—a different, therefore rare, knowledge that is available only to the immigrant.

Compared to Hester Street, college seems to be “like a dream mounting on a dream [...], this New America of culture and education” (210). Seeing the “real Americans,” she sees “by the lean, straight bearing [... that t]hey had none of that terrible fight for bread and rent that [she] always saw in New York’s people’s eyes. [...] There was in them that sure, settled look of those who belong to the world in which they were born. [...] If [she] could only lose [herself] body and soul in the serenity of this new world, the hunger and the turmoil of [her] ghetto years would drop away from [her], and [she], too, would know the beauty of stillness and peace” (210-11). But, as the WASP male authority figure, the Dean, attests, hers is as much a new world to the “real Americans” that holds, like America does for her, value of knowledge that is desirable and to be consumed. As Pavletich further notes,

Yeziarska's texts manipulate contemporary racist tropes based in notions of the "exotic primitive" to show the ignorance and the price of that racism and to carve out an alternative space for an impassioned, emotionally expressive intellectual. At the same time, however, that the texts offer a critique of early twentieth-century class and gender relations as they informed the immigrant experience of that era, that critique remains invested in a vision of America where sympathetic affective bonds serve as the primary solution to oppressive and marginalizing political and economic forces. (81-82)

By placing Sara in a position of (limited or illusive) power, the value of her world and experience are nevertheless naturalized within American paradigms. The reader, paralleled at times with the child-like immigrant narrator and at times with the WASP authority figures, can safely enter and consume this (literary) "new world" as it has been approved, as it were, for American consumption.

Bread Givers further inverts the positions of the native-born and the immigrant by calling attention to Sara's journey into the "real America," which is when she figuratively allows the older WASP males to enter, through her, the world from which she came. When she sets out for college, for example, she "felt like Columbus starting out for the other end of the earth. [She] felt like the pilgrim fathers who had left their homeland and all their kin behind them and trailed out in search of the New World" (209). Rhetorically, Sara positions herself not as an immigrant but as the discoverer of America and later as

the settling (male) pilgrims, thereby naturalizing her entry into the “real America” not as a foreign immigrant but as an ancestor of the American-born. Moreover, the WASP male authority figure recognizes her as such and further legitimizes her identity when he calls her a “pioneer”: “All pioneers have to get hard to survive [...]. My grandmother came to the wilderness in an ox cart with a gun on her lap. She had to chop down trees to build a shelter for herself and her children. I’m more than a little ashamed to realize if I had to contend with the wilderness I’d perish with the unfit. But you, *child* — your place is with the pioneers. And you’re going to survive” (232; emphasis mine). Paternally, if not condescendingly, the Dean characterizes Sara as a historical *female* American figure rather than as an immigrant. The image of the grandmother in the wild west further depicts the child-like Sara as “primitive,” particularly when contrasted to the “serene stillness” of the college’s setting, but because such primitiveness is also an American staple of the mythologizing of the nation (the grandmother as a female version of Davy Crockett), Sara’s “spirit” for survival is rendered “American.” Inversely, however, it is a “wild” Sara who is the pioneer in the genteel setting. Rather than taming her surroundings and making them fit for living, it is her “wild” spirit that she brings into the stillness; she brings visibility or colour to the otherwise “pink” cleanliness.

Sara’s identity veers from visibility to invisibility. When she is all too visible at the college, she feels how a girl sizes her up, and her glance “said more plainly than words, ‘From where do you come? How did you get in here?’” (214). Similarly, she becomes all too visible when she (symbolically) cannot jump over the hurdles during the

(mindless) physical education class she is forced to take. Sara notices how the other girls “were holding their sides with laughter. [She] was their clown, and this was their circus” (217). It is that realization that pushes her to seize “the hurdle and right before their eyes [...] smash [...] it to pieces” (217), which leaves the “whole gymnasium [...] still as death” (217) and the girls terrified of her overly aggressive Otherness. Thus, continually shifting between invisibility and visibility, the figure of the Jewish female immigrant outside the immigrant family and community must, however primitively depicted, “smash” the hurdles that she is forced to jump over if she wants to redefine her self. Rather than playing a prescribed role within a prescribed arena—the clown in their circus—the Jewish female immigrant opts for establishing and following her ideals, even if the cost is community (real or ideal).

By the time Sara completes her “American education” and obtains her degree and American recognition (or legitimation that her female immigrant identity/experience is of value in and to America) as a “person” no longer “in/visible,” Sara has been “changed.” She concedes that she learned from Mr. Edman “to think logically” (226), which changes her approach to life: “Till now, I lived only by blind instinct and feeling. I might have remained for ever an over-emotional lunatic” (226). In her Americanization, or assimilation, Sara becomes a balanced product: she is both male (thinks logically) and female (is sufficiently emotional), and she is American (has a college degree and social position) and an Other who returns “HOME! Back to New York!” (237) although she yearns for the “real Americans” still: “Where I was going now, will I be able to find these

real American people again—that draw me so?” (233). If Sara has been appropriately “changed,” it follows that she has also left her “mark” on the “real America,” as symbolized by her prize-winning essay about her experience and her conversations with the “older men” who entered her Hester Street world. In this sense, the assimilation of the female immigrant points to an exchange between the immigrant and the native-born, which further points to Yezierska’s politics. These coincide with those of progressive liberals like “Lillian Wald, Jane Addams, and John Dewey [who] focused on America as a country of immigrants.... Based on varieties of melting pot ideology, cultural pluralism, and cosmopolitan nationalism, these liberal institutions viewed America as a harmonious whole composed of diverse immigrant cultures and therefore encouraged a limited amount of ethnic pride (‘immigrant gifts’) and cultural cross-fertilization” (Konzett 600). But the power imbalance on the “cultural cross-fertilization” is evident as Sara visibly changes whereas the “real America” does not; Sara is only a temporary resident (or citizen) who goes “back home.” Sara’s assimilation also points to an inherent problematic; without “real American” contact she is left a “madwoman.” Maintaining a kind of segregation between the “real America” and the immigrant world problematizes Sara’s budding identity as it is only through assimilation that her “real” identity can emerge; only through a fusion of both worlds within the immigrant (not America) can assimilation change the immigrant into a person.

Interestingly enough, Yezierska’s text varies from using such capitalized terms as “Father,” “Woman,” “Mother,” “Old World,” and “New World” to signify fetishized

territorialities. From a psychoanalytical perspective, Sara identifies with the phallus, with the Father, represented by Reb Smolinsky, and her “lack” or envy is understood by her desire to attain an education, which she knows is what her father values and what she, because of her sex (or phallic lack), is denied. Identifying with her father, a young Sara wants to be like him, “a person among people” (75). She wants, in a sense, to be her father’s son: “Of course, we all knew that if God had given Mother a son, Father would have permitted a man child to share with him his best room in the house. A boy could say prayers after his father’s death—that kept the father’s soul alive for ever. Always Father was throwing up to Mother that she had borne him no son to be an honour to his days and to say prayers for him when he died” (9). From early childhood, Sara is indoctrinated into the cult of the fetish which is split along gender lines. For example, her father’s books are holy relics to be respected and forbidden to be touched just as her sister’s Mashah’s “things” (dresses, beauty products) are to be respected and left untouched. Sara states that Mashah “lived in the pleasure she got from her beautiful face, as Father lived in his Holy Torah” (4), and that it “was like a law in the house that nobody dared touch Mashah’s things, no more than they dared touch Father’s Hebrew books” (5). Sara, then, desires the fetishized objects which simultaneously indoctrinate her into the masculine cult of (Jewish) learning (her father’s Hebrew books) and the (American) feminine cult of material consumption (Mashah’s feminine things). Rhetorically, Yeziarska’s text inverts the masculine-feminine by emphasizing that the masculine cult of learning is identified with the Old World culture, which is feminized, whereas the feminine cult of material

consumption is identified with the New World. The hyper-feminine Mashah, for example, Americanizes the family when she is in love with her Americanized piano player, Jacob Novak, who likes “American cooking, like salad and spinach and other vegetables” (55). Mashah learned “the American way of cooking vegetables and fixing salads. And soon [they] all had American salad and American-cooked vegetables instead of fried potato *lotkes* and the greasy *lokshen kugel* that Mother used to make” (56).

Sara, again rhetorically, who identifies herself as “the New World,” identifies more with the masculine cult of learning rather than with the feminine cult of material consumption of beauty products and, in doing so, she recognizes that she is like her father. Even his name for her, “*Blut-und-Eisen*” or “Blood-and-Iron,” identifies her as being *of* him. As Hugo Seelig tells her, “it’s from him that [she] got the iron for the fight [she] had to make to be what [she is] now” (279). Confused with mixed feelings toward her father, Sara wonders in phallogentric imagery: “How could I have hated him and tried to blot him out of my life? [...] Can a tree hate the roots from which it sprang? Deeper than love, deeper than pity, is that oneness of the flesh that’s in him and in me. Who gave me the fire, the passion, to push myself up from the dirt? If I grow, if I rise, if I ever amount to something, is it not his spirit burning in me? [...]” (286). Although she sees “that Father, in his innocent craziness to hold up the Light of the Law to his children, was a tyrant more terrible than the Tsar from Russia” (64-65), her desire to get educated points to her search for his approval. In pursuit of her education, Sara becomes as self-involved as her father and Mashah are in the beginning of the novel; when her sisters

Bessie and Fania come to visit her and she refuses to go out with them because she needs to study, Fania says: "Let's leave her to her mad education. She's worse than Father with his Holy Torah" (178). Cut off from the warmth of human touch," Sara "seized [her] books and hugged them to [her] breast as though they were living things" (201). Even Sara's ideal vision of America points to her ideal hope of being in her Father's world: "I had always before my eyes a vision of myself in college, mingling every day with the inspired minds of great professors and educated higher-ups" (184). Ironically, her Americanization, which gives her the necessary freedom to study, marks her return to rather than departure from her origins. Through Americanization she can gain access to the world she has been partially denied, her home culture. Hence, it is the masculine Jewish world that Sara is equally seeking when she sets out to search for her ideal, or "real," America, for it is only in America that the masculine Jewish Old World is accessible to her.

As aforementioned, Yeziarska's text depicts multiple immigrant voices and narratives. There are, in fact, four different immigrant narratives in *Bread Givers*: Sara's, which is the main narrative, and three minor narratives—her mother's, Max Goldstein's and Hugo Seelig's. Each of these three minor narratives functions either to fill in the blanks of Sara's own narrative or else to provide a rhetorical contrast. For example, when Sara's narrative is paralleled with Max Goldstein's, Yeziarska's text questions the American Dream. That Sara's and Max's experiences are paralleled is evident, as he tells her: "You and I are so much alike, because I, too, wanted to make my own way in the

world. And you remind me of my own beginning” (188). Like Sara in the laundry, he describes himself as a “poor little greenhorn” who is pitiful (188) but strong-willed and eager to earn his living. When he is paid his first dollar, he, like a younger Sara selling herring for the first time, “felt the riches of all America in [his] hand...” (189). Achieving a version of the American Dream, economic independence and opulence, Max nevertheless asserts that he “never yet went inside a school or a college in America [...]”. And [he has] American-born college men working for [him] as book-keepers and salesmen. [He] can hire them and fire them, as it wills itself in [him]. Because with all their college education they haven’t got the heads to make the money that [he has]” (191).

Sara’s refusal to marry Max stems from his devaluing what she values most, an education. And, it is her realization that, again, leads her to understand how similar she is to her father. She

felt that [her] refusal to marry Max Goldstein was something [her father] could understand. He had given up worldly success to drink the wisdom of the Torah. He would tell [her] that, after all, [she] was the only daughter of his faith. [She] had lived the old, old story which he had drilled into [their] childhood ears—the story of Jacob and Esau. [She] had it from Father, this ingrained something in [her] that would not let [her] take the mess of pottage. [...] Now, [she] could love and understand him from afar as [she] had once hated him and could not bear him when near. [She] had broken away from him as a child only to be drawn to him now, in [her] great

spiritual need, as a person is drawn to a person. [...] How rich with the sap of centuries were his words of wisdom! [She] never knew the meaning of his sayings when [she] had to listen to him at home. But now it came over [her] like half-remembered, far-off songs, like music and poetry. (202-03)

For Sara, the ability to recognize herself as a person and as such have equal access to the masculine domain of learning is not a problem partially because she sees in Talmudic and biblical study secular rather than religious knowledge and wisdom. She sees in her father's fundamentalist words "music and poetry" rather than religious dogma. For her father, however, her gender-bending secularism is evidence of her becoming not a person but an "*Americanerin*" (144); he tells her: "Pfui on your education! [...] Woe to America where women are left free like men. All that's false in politics, prohibition, and all the evils of the world come from them" (205). If, in the American college, an immigrant woman is not a person, in her father's Old World an *American* is not a person.

Sara's romantic union with Hugo Seelig at the end of the novel allows for her becoming a complete person who is no longer ostracized from her community or from 'normal' life. Through him she gains access to her desired Father's world; while she cannot become her Father's son, she can provide him with an eager son-in-law who wants to learn from him. If Sara does attain the kind of equal relationship she envisions with an Americanized Jewish male who understands her, respects her, and treats her as his equal, then through him she can gain access to her Father's teachings as he, no doubt, would pass on his knowledge to her. From a psychoanalytical perspective, however, Sara's

position within the family is reinforced when she replaces and becomes the Mother figure, which calls attention to another inversion within the novel. From the outset, Sara sees herself as follows: “from always it was heavy on my heart the worries for the house as if I was mother” (1). When Sara returns home, “changed into a person!” (237), she finds her mother dying and reluctantly promises to keep her mother’s dying wish: “Be good to Father [...]. I’m leaving him in his old age when he needs me most. Helpless as a child he is. No one understands his holiness as I. Only promise me that you’ll take good care of him, and I can close my eyes in peace” (245). Inverting the Old World Tyrant into a helpless child, Sara is positioned, once again, as the bread-giving adult who, eventually, does come to see her father through her mother’s eyes: “I saw in him only the child who needed mothering—who must be protected from the hard cruelties of the world” (285). Symbolically, it is the male immigrant who maintains the child-like label and the female immigrant who is able to outgrow it by becoming the maternal figure, the “bread giver” of financial sustenance and of culture.

That Sara, as child/mother or assimilated immigrant individual, is to become the primary provider of culture (as teacher of English to the ghetto children and mother to her father) is worth noting as it questions which or whose culture, or hybrid thereof, she will pass on to her family and community. The politics of Sara’s social position as teacher within her community point to Yezierska’s socio-political drive. According to Japtok, for example, Sara’s “job as a teacher, teaching Jewish children to speak ‘correct’ English... may be seen as an attempt to make them less ‘old world ethnic’” (26). Konzett, however,

points out that “English language instruction took on a new importance in public schools, and some states passed laws and statutes decreeing English the sole language of instruction and/or requiring non-English speakers to attend Americanization classes. As the belief grew that a monolingual America created a stronger nation, English became the prime symbol of cultural and national unity and caused Americans to forget or deny their rich and varied polyglot history” (602). Moreover, “[p]roperly spoken English became the touchstone of modern American identity, creating a rift between assimilated immigrants and unassimilable or un-American immigrants” (603). Hence, in Sara’s becoming an English teacher, “Yeziarska’s Jewish ethnicity was used to render cultural and ethnic differences harmless, projecting a uniform image of assimilation among America’s newest immigrants, a group that nativists had labeled as unassimilable. Yeziarska’s depiction of a hybrid Lower East Side thus placed her in a compromising position and led to her being misunderstood by groups on both sides of the assimilation debate” (599). One of the main problems of ascertaining what Yeziarska’s position on assimilation was, at least as represented in her text, lies in her problematic representation of home or origin.

Central to the immigrant’s identity, and to the nation’s understanding of the immigrant, is the immigrant’s ‘origin’ (which is often and erroneously equated with ‘home’). Joyce Carol Oates, for example, argues that “Yeziarska is rarely sentimental about the past, and she certainly does not look back over her shoulder at Europe” (18). Yeziarska and Sara may be interchangeable insofar as Sara recalls “nothing at all” about Poland; “[b]ack of me, it’s like black night” (278). Most critics refer to Sara as a second-

generation immigrant, largely because her father clearly represents the unassimilable Old World first-generation immigrant. Sara, as a child, is also a first-generation immigrant although her readiness to assimilate and her yearning to discover the New World beyond Hester Street but that nevertheless seeps into Hester Street easily confuse her with a second-generation immigrant who, although born in America, is not yet of America. In *Bread Givers*, Sara continually differentiates between those who are “American-born” and those who are “Americanized,” as well as those seen as “greenhorns” and those who are “the real Americans.” Although she never states that she is American-born, the seventeen year-old Sara rebelliously asserts that she is “not from the old country. [She’s] American!” (138). Her self-identifying as an American has less to do with geography and more to do with the psychological struggle to reconstruct her emerging identity as being different from her father’s Old World vision of what her identity should be. It is at this point that Sara sees her father as “the Old World” and herself as “the New” (207), by which she means that he represents the Old World mentality whereas she represents American thought.

Furthermore, when the adult Sara meets Hugo Seelig and they talk about “the Old World from which [they] came,” they discover that they “came from the same government in Poland, from villages only a few miles apart. [Their] families had uprooted themselves from the same land and adventured out to the New World” (277). While Sara does not state that she was born in Poland, and, unlike Hugo does not remember Poland, she and Hugo nevertheless recognize each other as “*Landsleute*—countrymen!” (277),

and she asserts that they “talked one language. [They] had sprung from one soil” (278). As Hugo reiterates, they “are of one blood” (278). That this recognition comes almost at the end of Sara’s narrative is crucial in that it redirects Sara’s authentic origins back to the Old World source—the eastern European *shtetl*.

If Sara does not remember Europe, the text, however, utilizes the three minor immigrant narratives to provide the necessary backdrop of the Old World, or home-origin, to Sara’s conspicuous absence. Emphasizing the importance of ‘origin’ soil, Hugo presses Sara to “remember more about Poland” (279) after he tells her what he remembers. He states: “I remember a little [...]. The mud hut where we lived, the cows, the chickens, and all of us living in one room. I remember the dark, rainy morning we started on our journey, how the whole village, old and young, turned out to say good-bye. When we came to the seaport, I couldn’t eat their bread, because it had no salt. We thought we should starve going to America. But as soon as we got on the ship, they gave us so much that first meal that we couldn’t touch another bite for days” (278). The text also offers a more romanticized vision of the home-origin when Sara’s mother recalls her youth in Russian Poland and her “eyes looked far away like in a dream” (30):

“Who’d believe me, here in America, where I have to bargain by the pushcarts over a penny that I once had it so plenty in my father’s house? Pots full of fat, barrels full of meat, and boilers full of jelly we had packed away in our cellar. I used to make cake for the Sabbath with cream so thick you could cut it with a knife.[...] I was a hundred times healthier. In my

face was all the sunshine and fresh air of the open fields.”

[Sara] looked on Mother’s faded eyes, her shape like a squashed barrel of yeast, and her face black and yellow with all the worries from the world.

[...]

The kitchen walls melted away to the far-off times in Russia, as Mother went on and on with her fairy tales till late hours of the night.

[...]

She was like drunk [*sic.*] with the memories of old times. (30-31)

Sara’s mother privileges the Old World culture in which she was prosperous, healthy, and had access to beautiful things. She recalls picking out the bedding for her wedding in Warsaw, and that all the “sheets had [her] name embroidered with a beautiful wreath of flowers over it. All [her] towels were half covered with red and blue embroidery and on each was some beautiful words embroidered such as, ‘Happy sunshine,’ ‘Good morning!’ or ‘Good-night!’” (32). For her, “[t]here ain’t in America such beautiful things like we had home” (33). When the Americanized Mashah offers that beautiful things are consumable on Fifth Avenue if only they have money, the mother replies that in “America, rich people can only buy, and buy things made by machines. Even Rockefeller’s daughter got only store-bought, ready-made things for her dowry. There was a feeling in my tablecloth—” (33).

Equating humanness with the Old World and robotic machinery with the New

World, Sara's mother's narrative offers the much asked question to the immigrant who fondly remembers and privileges her/his home, which is further evidence of their unassimilability and/or disloyalty; rhetorically, Sara asks "why did you leave that rainbow tablecloth and come to America?" (33). Interestingly enough, the mother's reply points to two competing mythologies of America. She states that they had to leave because of

the Tsar of Russia! Worms should eat him! He wanted for himself free soldiers to make pogroms. He wanted to tear [their] father away from his learning and make him a common soldier—to drink vodka with the drunken *mouzhiks*, eat pig, and shoot the people....

There was only one thing to do, go to the brass-buttoned butchers and buy him out of the army. The *pogromshchiks*, the minute they smelled money, they were like wild wolves on the smell of blood. The more we gave them, the more they wanted. We had to sell out everything, and give them all we had, to the last cent, to shut them up. (33)

Implicit in her answer, America is depicted as a humanist safe haven for the oppressed. America thus offers the freedom to pursue peaceful learning. But her mother's answer also points to another mythologizing of America when she tells Sara that when her father dies, her husband, Reb Smolinsky, loses what was left of the money and business because "he was singing himself the Songs of Solomon. Maybe Solomon got himself rich first and then sang his Songs, but [Sara's] father wanted to sing first and then attend to business. [...] And when everything was gone [...], then [their] only hope was to come to America,

where Father thought things cost nothing at all” (33-34). Hence, because of the tsarist pogroms, the family loses their money and sees in America “hope” as it is the “land of (financial and economic) opportunity” as well as of peace and freedom.

Interestingly enough, Sara’s main narrative locates its home-origin in Hester Street, which is neither the Old nor the New World but a hybrid of the two. As Harris points out, Jewish immigrants who lived in the Lower East Side “tried to reconstruct the old world in the landscape of the new” (vii), with “varying degrees of success and failure” (Oates 15-16). The Lower East Side, as Konzett notes, “thus functioned not simply as a transitional space, allowing the immigrant to assimilate gradually to America, but as a cultural vortex in which the habits of the Old World could be recast to suit the cultural topography of contemporary America” (601). It is the new immigrant’s “vision of America as seen from the Lower East Side, with its collision of cultures and its radically democratic negotiations of nationhood and identity” (615), that bears examining, particularly when the new immigrant defines the Lower East Side as ‘home’ or the point of origin. When, for example, Konzett describes the “resettlement” of “approximately three million East European Jews” who immigrated to escape “discrimination and persecution as well as poverty” and settled in New York City, “their port of entry,” she describes the organized pattern in which the “[f]ive major varieties of Jews, clustered in their separate Jewries... were set side by side in a pattern suggesting the cultural, if not the physical, geography of the Old World” (600). Functioning as a simulacrum of the Old World, Hester Street is solidified into a seemingly fixed ‘sign.’ But Hester Street, a

simulation of the Old World, is *in* America; it *is* America, thereby calling into question the actual integration or assimilation of the apparently unassimilable immigrant into the equally apparent melting pot. For Sara, the “real America” lies somewhere outside New York City (not just Hester Street) and her imagined Los Angeles (where Fania lives). What, then, is New York City, and, more specifically, Hester Street?

As Konzett notes, Yeziarska

radically re-imagines an alternative America through the Lower East Side, a site traditionally perceived as either a temporary way station for foreigners on their way to becoming Americans or a cultural sanctuary that preserves Yiddish language and culture. Through her use of ghetto idiom, a hybrid of English and Yiddish, Yeziarska magnifies the ghetto’s impoverished, transitory, and contradictory elements. Her aesthetics of displacement transforms a site marked by lack or enclosure into one of desire, difference, and disjunction where conflicting cultural norms and questions of citizenship are contested and constantly renegotiated. (597)

The assimilated immigrant’s “doubleness” is thus transposed into the American designated “immigrant space” labeling it, rather than the immigrant, as truly cross-fertilized and assimilated. Because the urban space is enclosed, the “real America” is freed from apparent contagion, leaving an American space ‘free’ to ‘mutate’ into a series of desirable simulations. “Home,” for Yeziarska’s Sara, is therefore neither the Old World nor the New, neither Europe nor America, but the already hybridized space of the

Old World culture *in* American soil. Hence, it is evident that Yeziarska's work, as Konzett further notes, "attempts to look deeply into what W. E. B. DuBois has called double-consciousness: a 'two-ness' in which 'two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals' remain in an uneasy relationship. Homi Bhabha speaks similarly of the 'double-time' of the nation, 'a double narrative movement' or splitting that reveals the contradictions and ambivalences in the production of a national and ethnic culture" (597). Thus, if the immigrant identity is one of doubleness, so too is America's identity, thereby suggesting that America, or at least part of America, is indeed "immigrant."

2.4 The Politics of Assimilation

Central to the distinction between the old and the new immigrations is the question of assimilation: should the immigrant assimilate? Is the immigrant assimilable, or, rather, how assimilable is the immigrant? And, finally, given the increasing numbers of immigrants, does immigration mean the unwarranted and unwanted assimilation not of the immigrant but of the native? If assimilation of the old immigrant defines the new immigration, so too does it affect the operating binary between native-born and foreigner (or alien); as the assimilation of the old immigrant redefines the immigrant in multiple terms, the differentiation is no longer a simple us versus them (if it ever was that simple) but a more complex system of differentiation which classifies difference and promotes hierarchical classification within the foreign corpus. At the top of this hierarchy of difference are those who are assimilated, but these are nevertheless still foreign when pitted directly against the native-born. The hierarchical pyramid of difference thus posits the alien's difference as being both of kind (measured against the native) and of degree (measured against the assimilated immigrant), and is mitigated by the alien groups' assimilation and becoming *like* (but not *becoming*) the native-born.

In becoming *like* the American native-born but never really *becoming* American, the assimilated immigrant participates in something akin to what Homi K. Bhabha has described as colonial mimicry. Bhabha's theory of colonial mimicry examines power relations as well as postcolonial strategies. According to him, "[a]lmost the same but not white" means that "the visibility of mimicry is always produced at the site of interdiction"

(“Mimicry” 89). However, in spite of there being at the time a racial distinction made between the old and new immigrations, both groups are already “white” insofar as they are Caucasian. Assimilation can thus be understood as a “whitifying” process of the already “white” immigrant, which differs from the bleaching effects that cultural erasure unmasks in African-American studies.²⁵ The “*ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*),” according to Bhabha,

does not merely “rupture” the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a “partial” presence. By “partial” [Bhabha] mean[s] both “incomplete” and “virtual”. It is as if the very emergence of the “colonial” is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition *within* the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace. (86)

Understood in the context of immigrant identity politics, the assimilated immigrant—whose assimilation is often marked by the immigrant’s becoming a “naturalized alien”—operates as a “partial” presence that has “that form of difference that is mimicry—*almost the same but not quite*” (89); the assimilated immigrant is almost the

²⁵“Whiteness” needs reconsideration here. During the 1920s, immigrant groups that are now considered to be white, especially when compared to non-white groups, were nevertheless considered to be foreign, alien, and racially *different* from “white” (or WASP) America. Jews and Southern Italians, for example, were not considered to be “white.” See Werner Sollors’ work on ethnicity, like *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*.

same as the American native-born but not quite American.

In the absence of such visible Otherness as race, it is often a linguistic slippage that identifies the mimic from the native. During the debates over the implementation and maintenance of the quota system in the United States, for example, the House Committee stated that, because the “processes of assimilation and amalgamation are slow and difficult,” there was “a limit to [their] power of assimilation. A speaking and reading knowledge of English [was] the key to assimilation” (Bennett 42). As Yeziarska’s narrative further attests, it is not simply a matter of learning to speak, read, and write English that determines the alien’s assimilation but an ability to *speak like a native* without the encumbrance of an accent that immediately locates the alien as *foreign* (meaning *not from here* or *not native*). Moreover, Yeziarska’s narrative points to the difficulty in maintaining the correct pronunciation when Sara, who has learned the right way of speaking English in the “real America,” slips back into her ghetto tongue and is re-taught by Hugo Seelig. Hence, the assimilated immigrant has the ability to speak in a kind of dual or double English that marks her/his assimilated identity as a hybrid that is both American and (culturally specific) foreign. The survival of the assimilated immigrant who wants to hold on to her/his native culture and gain access to the “real” America is dependent on her or his mastery of this kind of double language or mimicry, although such mastery reinforces the split within the immigrant who inhabits two (or multiple) separate worlds and languages.

When considering any kind of linguistic slippage it is necessary first to distinguish

between the colonized's and the immigrant's linguistic mimicry. Consider, for example, Shakespeare's Caliban, the displaced native who is taught "language" by the invading colonials who take over his island and label him a savage. Unlike Shakespeare's Caliban, the immigrant is positioned as the incoming foreigner rather than as the conquered native, but, Caliban-like, the immigrant is nevertheless regarded as an uncivilized savage. Hence, a reversal occurs in which the civilized natives demand that the incoming savage foreigner learn *their* language instead of asserting hers/his as s/he takes over their land. The immigrant, although victimized and placed in a subordinate position to the native and the assimilated immigrant before her/him, is nevertheless perceived as a quasi-imperialist threat, thereby momentarily destabilizing the native's power over the immigrant. In fact, the native's power is made manifest indirectly by the old immigration's antagonism towards the new immigration, and its repressive apparatus (following Louis Althusser) that ensures that the new immigrant(s) also assimilate into the native's mainstream.

Yet, the effect that imposing language has on the colonized native or the immigrant foreigner is the same. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, for example, Caliban tells Miranda: "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (1.2. 363-5). Caliban not only curses Miranda but *uses* the imposed language to tell Prospero:

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,

Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,

Thou strok'st me, and made much of me, wouldst give

me

Water with berries in't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee,
And showed thee all the qualities o'th'isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! *All the charms*
Of Sycorax—toads, beetles, bats light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o'th'island. (1.2 332-44 emphasis mine)
[....]
Thou didst prevent me. I had peopled else
This isle with Calibans. (1.2. 351-2)

Caliban-like, the assimilated immigrant who learns English and who further writes in English has access to the cultural machine that allows her/him to use her/his voice to tell the unassimilated and assimilated immigrants as well as the natives the “truth” about the immigrant experience, and the immigrant’s vision of America and American ideals, values and culture. In doing so, the immigrant has the ability to “populate” American

culture with Caliban-like immigrant products.²⁶ Moreover, because the “ambivalence of mimicry” produces “excess or slippage” (Bhabha 86), mimicry lends the assimilated immigrant transgressive power and offers strategies with which to usurp the nativist’s naturalization of a native people, nation, and culture.²⁷ In writing in the natives’ language and publishing for the natives’ consumption, the immigrant, however commodified as the safe exotic Other within through which the native has access to the Other’s foreign world and can safely and voyeuristically see that world, thus participates in the construction of the natives’ culture by operating from within that culture, within that language.

In producing immigrant narratives that *imitate* American ideals and/or literary

²⁶Much work has been devoted to the postcolonial study of Shakespeare, especially to *The Tempest*. As Peter Hulme rightly notes, in “English-speaking colonies Shakespeare was the embodiment of such ‘civilization,’ and, as is now widely acknowledged, *The Tempest* was seen by many colonial and postcolonial writers as the key play in the canon, the one that came closest to articulating at least some of the questions about colonialism which were at the forefront of intellectual debate in the 1950s and 1960s” (121). According to Hulme, the flurry of colonial and postcolonial interest in *The Tempest* begins with Octave Mannoni’s Lacanian reading of Prospero and Caliban in the 1950s, which was “severely criticized” in Frantz Fanon’s seminal work on anticolonialism, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967). Fanon’s “analysis of the character of Prospero remains a landmark in the study of the colonial situation” (121). Since Fanon’s influential reading, many critical works devoted to the study of *The Tempest*, Prospero, and Caliban have appeared, especially in the last few decades. Much of the criticism centres on postcolonial rewritings and/or stagings of *The Tempest*, as well as on psychoanalytical and postcolonial readings of the characters. See, for example, Francis Barker and Peter Hulme’s “Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish: The Discursive Con-Texts of *The Tempest*,” Diana Brydon’s “Sister Letters: Miranda’s *Tempest* in Canada,” Aimé Césaire’s *Une Tempête: D’après ‘la Tempête’ de Shakespeare—Adaptation pour un théâtre nègre* and *Discourse on Colonialism*, Meredith Anne Skura’s “Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*,” Roberto Fernández Retamar’s collected essays, *Caliban and Other Essays*, Rob Nixon’s “Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*,” and James E. Robinson’s “Caribbean Caliban: Shifting the ‘I’ of the Storm.”

²⁷Notwithstanding, however, the assimilated immigrant also requires the authoritative legislation to define and authenticate itself and its social status in America as something other than a mimic.

aesthetics, such as Yeziarska's *Bread Givers*, the assimilated immigrant as mimic disrupts America's vision of the immigrant and of itself. Bhabha's understanding that "the observer becomes the observed and 'partial' representation rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence" (89) can be rewritten as follows: the voyeuristic native-American becomes observed by the assimilated immigrant, and the mimic's representation of an American's America rearticulates the whole notion of American identity and alienates it from essence. In doing so, "[m]imicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask: it is not what [Aimé] Césaire describes as 'colonization-thingification' behind which there stands the essence of the *présence Africaine*. The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (88). In distancing identity from essence, the immigrant-as-mimic's discourse problematizes "the very notion of 'origins'" (89). Because mimicry "*repeats* rather than *re-presents*" (88), the immigrant-as-mimic's narrative repeats America's vision of itself and that of the immigrant, thereby calling attention to the lack of a singular, authentic representation. But, as Bhabha further notes, in "mimicry, the representation of identity and meaning is rearticulated along the axis of metonymy" (90). What, then, is the metonymic function of the immigrant and the immigrant narrative? For what does the immigrant, or the immigrant-as-mimic, substitute?

The metonymic function of the immigrant can be understood, in part, by examining the threat posed by the real or perceived unassimilable masses, as "little Italys

or little Polands and little ghettos” began to sprout (Bennett 34). Echoing colonialist fears of emigration, the immigrant masses threaten to over-power native-Americans by over-populating America, as one of the objections to the new immigration in the United States explicitly states: the new immigration had “the effect of replacing native with foreign stock by depressing the birthrate of natives. This is because the native is reluctant to bring children into the world to compete with the low kind of labor competition afforded by the new immigration” (in Bennett 32). Similarly, during the discussions over the implementation of the quota system, Senator Reed of Pennsylvania stated that the established quotas “made up on the basis of the foreign-born residents of the United States [...] disregard entirely the 80 percent of us who were born in this country. Nobody considers the American-born in determining what the quota should be, and that is where the trouble comes in” (47). This nativist sentiment posits the threat of America becoming an “immigrant nation” insofar as it is the foreign-born rather than the native-born who determine policy. The democratic American principle of a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” from a nativist perspective, demands that the American government be “of Americans, by Americans, and for Americans.” The immigrant, in this construct, is always a foreigner who must be kept outside the body politic. In “1924, however, the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were well represented in Congress. Their desire was that the 1920 census figures should be used so that quotas would reflect the increased numbers of foreign-born from their native areas” (47). Somewhat contradictorily, while the objections stereotyped the new immigrants as

unassimilable and as holding on to views of government that were in opposition to American democracy, their active participation *within* the existing American political system suggests otherwise; what is brought into question is therefore not the immigrant's assimilability into American culture and government but how assimilation is defined.

The idea of an immigrant nation based on an understanding of growing immigrant ghetto communities is problematized when considering the hierarchical distinctions made between immigrant groups, which destabilizes the immigrant into a more amorphous body rather than congealing its identities into the appearance of a more organic and definable material type, class, or even race. Immigrant cities, comparatively, which Yeziarska's narrative suggests exist, are always considered in relation to the "real America" (or non-immigrant America) which lies someplace outside the over-crowded urban centres that the bulk of the new immigrants visibly occupy. The model of the immigrant city requires that the "real America" exist outside its boundaries as it necessitates that idealized nativist space to be measured against and eventually, if successfully assimilated and naturalized, entered. America is therefore always out of reach for the immigrant, but the immigrant city within America, and which is informed *by* American language, culture and values, is available to immigrants and native-Americans alike. The threat of this space and the native's disgust or fear of this space thus renegotiates the immigrant city as a hybrid if not foreign space that threatens to expand and consume the rest of the nation. This is manifested by the movement out of the immigrant ghettos as older, more upwardly mobile immigrant groups assimilate and

move to more affluent neighborhoods. This shift, moreover, ensures a more substantial distance between the “real Americans” and what effectively become the “real” (or newer) immigrants. Thus, because the native (or “real”) Americans live outside the immigrant spaces in the “real America,” then the immigrant foreign worlds and the “real” America never actually meet. Yet, the immigrant’s foreign worlds already occupy a space in America that is no longer recognizable as the “real America” by immigrants and natives alike, thereby positing a paradoxical if not contradictory situation in which an “immigrant America” is rendered different from the “real America.”

Undoubtedly, the mass migration of the new immigrants increased the visibility of the immigrant and functioned to solidify such stereotypes as the alien being a threat to and a drain on the State and nation. The objection to many individuals of the new immigration stemmed from the fact that many were poor, “quite ignorant and illiterate. They were easily manipulated by corrupt political machines. [...] The objections were many and from diverse sources against what Woodrow Wilson in his *History of the American People* called ‘this *coarse* crew that came *crowding* in every year at the eastern ports’” (Bennett 31; emphasis mine). Again, echoing colonialist fears of emigration, America saw itself receiving not the best but the refuse of countries it considered already to be inferior. Rather than making a stronger nation by bringing in outside talent and strength, many feared that America was self-destructing by allowing entry to these inferior types. According to the *Immigration Into the United States* report “made in November 1906 and presented to both houses of Parliament by Command of His

Britannic Majesty [...] prepared by the Honourable R.C. Lindsay, Second Secretary to His Majesty's embassy in Washington, D.C." (Bennett 34), the "new immigration" had "high incidence of disease, illiteracy, crime, insanity, and pauperism [...]" (35), all of which were categories of inadmissible aliens. The same report emphasized that in "pauperism, crime and insanity the Irish immigrants outranked all the rest" (35). Because of Britain's racist sentiments toward the Irish, the contents of the report are thus brought into question and point back to the racist prejudice against the new immigration. Nevertheless, the British reading of the "new" America undoubtedly affected how America saw itself, particularly when such reports stated that there "is no such thing as an American type" since it "must take many generations before Americans are physiologically differentiated from Europeans as much as, say, the French are from the Germans" (35). American tourists in Europe, however, were recognizably American—if we trust Henry James's representations of the innocent American woman who is victimized by a waning European aristocracy, which needs the American dowry to maintain its extravagant estates and lifestyle.²⁸

Assimilation, moreover, while deemed necessary and desirable, was further grounds for fueling existing doubts and antagonism toward the perceived foreign Others. The same report, for example, states that

assimilation of a simpler and more superficial nature has been in progress

²⁸See, for example, James's *Portrait of a Lady* and *Wings of the Dove*, or *The American* and *The Ambassadors* featuring an American male victim. See also complementary representations of American-European relationships in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*.

ever since the country was colonized and it is not easy to discern any force sufficiently strong to stop it now. By heredity, doubtless, many traits of European characters may be perpetuated here but the force of environment is overpoweringly at work to maintain at a high level the habits of life and social aims of the newcomers. Granting, however, promising features in the way of assimilation, it is not to be denied that the price paid by America for her new citizens is heavy. (35)

If there were in-house doubts about the racial character of an American people, and about the authenticity of an existing prototypical American identity, then the incoming visible foreignness threatened to destroy any such vision that largely depends on homogeneity and coherence. Another of the objections to the new immigration makes this point explicitly clear, expressing in no uncertain terms that the new immigrant ought to be kept outside America altogether:

It is the duty of the state to secure ethnic or racial homogeneity in its population. Other countries do so and especially is this true of the countries most loudly protesting any effort on our part to do so. They wish to dump their surplus populations on us. They do not permanently solve their problems in this way but do profit financially from remittances made by immigrants to their relatives in the old country. American immigration policy should be framed for the benefit of America and Americans rather than for Europe and Europeans. (in Bennett 33)

Of course, as the old immigration assimilated, who is an American becomes a point of contention. Precisely whose America and which Americans should immigration policy benefit?

It is therefore not surprising that protests against the “new” immigration “from the old immigration were loud and clear” (Bennett 31). In contrast, the “economic background, social and political ideals of the old immigration led to its rapid assimilation into the prototype accepted as ‘American’” (30). The vehement opposition from the old immigrants is interesting, particularly if they were truly assimilated and had indeed become prototypical Americans. This objection points to two main possibilities: in their attempt at becoming fully assimilated prototypical Americans, the old immigration must object to new immigrants because that is their reading of what native-born Americans desire. In their efforts to become (like) the native-born, the old immigrants need to resort to mimicry, particularly since the native-born objected to *their* immigration prior to their becoming if not desirable then certainly preferable. Of course, the old immigrant’s disdain for the new immigrant points to an Old World prejudicial conflict transplanted to America, but this mimicry also points to the old immigrants’ desire to be accepted and recognized as Americans and differentiated from the “greenhorns.” It is in this differentiation that the second possibility is grounded: the old immigrant fears that the native-born’s perceptions of the new immigrants have negative connotations for *all* immigrants. Having assimilated, what does the old immigration signify? Has it been absorbed into the native ranks? Is it recognizably “American”? Or is the old immigration

still unequal to the native? If the native discriminates against the immigrant, does the immigrant label constitute both the old and the new immigrations? As the old immigration assimilates, does it evolve into a new category beyond the immigrant but that is still not “real American”?

Built into the term immigrant is therefore an operating function of negation; the immigrant in America continues to be defined by what the immigrant is not—*non*-native, *non*-American, *not*-greenhorn. Beyond the definitions of admissible and inadmissible classes of aliens in the immigration policies is the cultural defining of the immigrant in relation to those who have already immigrated and assimilated as well as those who continue to immigrate after them. Thus, the term immigrant must be continuously understood in terms of its temporality which fixes the immigrant identity by establishing it in accordance with the set of relations with which it intersects. Both the negation and the temporality inherent in the term can best be understood by examining the negative stereotyping of the “new immigration.” As Bennett notes, the “objections raised against the new immigration” appear “to have influenced Congress to try a new approach to immigration control” without “any intention of passing on the truth or accuracy of the objections raised” (32). These objections range in intensity and specificity—some are explicitly racist and others are more general observations that stereotype all new immigrants regardless of individual race and/or culture.

In a stereotype of all immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, for example, the “new” immigrants were seen to be “generally [...] not only ignorant but their low

standards of living tend[ed] to depress the American wage standard and to create slums, unemployment and crime” (in Bennett 32). The association between immigrant urban communities and poverty and the negative stereotyping of the new immigrant function to render immigration inextricable from poverty. If immigration equals poverty, then eliminating immigration eliminates poverty. If immigration equals poverty, moreover, it comes to be seen as a foreign import rather than as domestically caused. Notwithstanding the origins of poverty, be it domestic or foreign, the association of the immigrant with poverty naturalizes the immigrant as a subhuman, rat-like being whose tolerance for such dehumanizing conditions emphasizes if not proves the immigrant’s essential difference from the native who cannot survive or accept such subhuman living conditions. Class, rather than race, thus becomes an operative marker of difference that separates not only the immigrant from the native, but the assimilated immigrant from the new, impoverished immigrant. From the new immigrant’s perspective, moreover, it is the native and/or the assimilated immigrant who keeps the new immigrant in impoverished conditions.

An understanding of assimilation as effacement of any remaining foreignness necessitates the naturalization of the immigrant, although the requirements for naturalization demanded that the immigrant already be properly assimilated by having lived in the country for a number of years and having a command of English. Because most of the new immigrants spoke other languages, it is not surprising that some of the objections made were on the basis that the “rate of naturalization of the new immigration is much lower than for immigrants from northern and western Europe. [...] The new

immigration is disinterested in the responsibilities of citizenship in a free and self-governing country” (in Bennett 33). Paradoxically, again, other objections were raised that suggested that the new immigrants were hostile to a “self-governing country”: one objection claims that almost “all outbreaks of anarchism and socialism can be traced to the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. These people have had no experience with or understanding of representative government” (32), and another similarly claims that there “are over 1,500 foreign-language newspapers, many of them disloyal to the United States. These newspapers are published in 30 different languages. Many of them are opposed to private property and free speech. The newspapers perpetuate the difficulties of assimilation. They do not have the American viewpoint of citizenship. *They encourage foreigners to remain foreigners*” (32; emphasis mine). Rhetorically, these objections suggest that any input from the immigrant toward enacting political and/or social change is immediately perceived to be foreign because only an assimilated immigrant can hold *American* values and beliefs. Hence, any objections are rendered non-American (non-assimilated), which therefore establishes any perceived political ideal that is in opposition to capitalism, like socialism or communism, to be essentially foreign.²⁹

2.5 Theories of Assimilation

The objections to the new immigration, while emphasizing the need and desire for

²⁹Yet, as Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* suggests, the very concepts of community versus individualism, and of a kind of socialism need to be read as foreign since they have equally American roots. According to Frederic I. Carpenter, the “group idea [in the novel] is American, not Russian; and stems from Walt Whitman, not Karl Marx” (713).

assimilation and assimilable types of immigrants, nevertheless register a fear of actual mixing, as the following objection indicates: “If a lower race mixes with a higher race in sufficient numbers, history teaches us that the lower race will prevail. The lower race will absorb the higher when the two strains approach equality in numbers. The lowering of a great race means not only its own decline, but that of human civilization” (in Bennett 33). The limits to or anxieties over assimilation are manifested when thinking of assimilation as a physical rather exclusively as a cultural process, particularly when assimilation is contingent on racial identification—only the same (or similar) races need assimilate. The concept of assimilation thus points to various understandings if not misuses of the term. According to the *OED*, for example, the verb “to assimilate” is defined as follows: “1. to absorb into the body or into the group or system, to become absorbed into something. 2. to absorb into the mind as knowledge.” Stringently adhering to this definition, the immigrant, who is *outside* the national body or system, is literally and symbolically absorbed *into* the existing body or system when s/he willingly *enters* the body or system. The immigrant is thus positioned as a consumable product to be either absorbed (which grants the immigrant use-value) or expelled by the body (which disavows the immigrant of any use-value to the nation and is determined instead to be excess or even toxic waste).³⁰

³⁰A powerful visual example of alien assimilation is offered by the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which first introduced the alien race known as the Borg. The Borg is a collective with a single mind, and each individual, known as a drone, is assimilated into the collective. Each drone is a hybrid humanoid and machine, and the collective is informed by each drone’s mind. Hence, the Borg assimilates all species it comes into contact with and in doing so alters the individuals while it enriches its existing dominant collective. Hence, culture becomes a

The fears that the immigrant will change, disrupt or corrupt the existing body or system from within suggest that the process of assimilation is flawed since it is the consumed immigrant who has the power to alter the existing body or system, which also points to a failure to assimilate if the immigrant maintains her/his foreignness (or origin). This fear characterizes the immigrant as a deadly viral threat which has considerable subversive power to alter or assimilate the body. This threat or power is manifested by the immigrant community rather than the individual since its strength is largely derived from its size in relation to the body. Understood in this context, the threat is twofold: on the one hand it suggests that a growing immigrant body or system will invade and then assimilate the host body or system; on the other it suggests that multiple bodies or

product that is made available to all members of the collective, and history becomes a collective memory that is shared by all of the collective's members. The Borg's catch phrase, "Resistance is futile, you will be assimilated," emphasizes assimilation as coercion—willing or unwilling all who come into contact with the Borg will be assimilated into the collective. The Borg collective is also depicted as an empire which conquers and assimilates (or absorbs) in the process of its discovering other civilizations. As such, it is characterized as an evil threat that seeks to control the universe and destroy all that is individual and *human*. But the Borg offers a useful example when looking at the assimilation models of the nation and the immigrant: the incoming immigrant is not colonized by the traveling Borg but chooses to enter Borg space, thereby paralleling the nation with the collective. In the immigrant's choice lies the crux of the immigrant's assimilation. In choosing a specific nation as a *permanent* space of residence, is the immigrant morally obliged to assimilate into that existing body or system? If the immigrant chooses not to assimilate but to import into the existing body or system her/his native culture, is the immigrant threatening to disrupt, corrupt, or assimilate the existing body or system? An inverse scenario is offered in the series *Star Trek: Voyager*, in which a single surviving Borg drone, known as Seven of Nine, is adopted by the Federation crew of the starship *Voyager*. While attempts are made to humanize Seven of Nine, in other words to assimilate her into the existing body or system of the ship (and by extension the Federation), concessions are also made to allow her to retain some of her cultural identity (Borg remnants). Physically, she is more human than machine (unlike the Borg drone who looks more machine-like than humanoid), but effectively remains a visible hybrid thereby reinforcing her difference from the other humanoid species aboard the ship.

systems will develop within the host body or system thereby disrupting the construct of an apparently unified body or system.

Differentiating between assimilation and amalgamation is therefore necessary: unlike the implicit power politics inherent in the process of assimilation in which one lesser part is assimilated into a larger, more dominant body, amalgamation means, according to the *OED*, “to mix, to combine.” Although the process of amalgamation shares some qualities with the process of assimilation, to the extent that the two terms are often used interchangeably, exchange is highlighted over domination in a process of mixing or combining. While assimilation thus emphasizes the transformation of a single (or few) element(s), amalgamation emphasizes the transformation of *all* parts, including the dominant body. Hence, whereas assimilation focuses on the smaller or lesser part(s), amalgamation focuses on the larger or dominant body or system. One of the most striking examples of amalgamation in the context of immigration politics is offered by Israel Zangwill’s *The Melting Pot* (1908), whose title has transcended the play and been popularized to emphasize assimilation *and* amalgamation.³¹ As Yasmeeen Abu-Laban and Victoria Lamont note, the “way in which the play inspired an array of readings of America as a melting pot, not all of which were consistent with Zangwil’s positions on immigration and assimilation,” is appealing (37), as is the endurance of the term, which

³¹The play was first produced by Hugh Ford at the Columbia Theatre in Washington on October 5, 1908. It was later produced by Norman Page and the Play Actors at the Court Theatre in London on January 25, 1914. According to Maldwyn A. Jones, despite “the controversy surrounding it, [...] Zangwill’s dramatization of America as a melting pot was a huge popular success and ran on Broadway for months” (in Abu-Laban and Lamont 36).

“has more to do with the potential for diverse readings inherent in the term than with the supremacy of a particular immigration politics associated with it. Indeed, the melting pot, as a symbol of national identity, remains as fraught with ambiguity as it was during the period of its initial popularization by Zangwill” (38).

Read as a metaphor, the melting pot, “(like the Statue of Liberty) refers to processes of immigration, relations of ethnic diversity, and notions of national identity and purpose” (23) whose “versatility [...] made it particularly useful as a symbol of national identity which specifically identified ‘America’ as a land of immigrants” (39). This is not surprising considering that the term was coined from an immigrant narrative. What is perhaps more surprising is that Zangwill was not an immigrant to America but was “born in London of a poor Russian immigrant family, educated at the Jew’s Free School in the East End of London, where he later became a teacher and published prolifically, essays, stories, and plays, becoming known for his ‘Dickensian’ portrayals of types of London Jewry” (Moses, “Literary” 131). As an “English citizen who spent relatively little time in the United States” (Abu-Laban and Lamont 31), and whose political activism focused on Zionism, woman suffrage, and immigration” (24), Zangwill produced a play that idealizes “an America that is not so much a nation as a negation of all traditional nationalisms” (Moses, “Literary” 133). For him, Wilson J. Moses argues, “American culture was an entirely original phenomenon, something completely new” (“Israel” 615). Its novelty allowed him to theorize immigrant issues. It is easy to see how

The Melting Pot as a document engaged both in the “field of cultural

production,” to borrow the term exhaustively mapped out by Pierre Bourdieu (1993), and in what we call the field of policy production, enacted within the legal-formal arena of state institutions, practices, policies and laws [And, it is not surprising that, while Zangwill] was subjected to vigorous criticism in the theatre community for the explicitly political content of *The Melting Pot*, the play was widely admired by the public and policy makers alike, including President Theodore Roosevelt [to whom the play is dedicated with his permission]. (Abu-Laban and Lamont 24)

What is more surprising, however, is that at a time when America was concerned with regulating its international as well as national image, it adopted this double import (Zangwill is an insider/outsider in England who remains outside America) and internalized it, at least partially, as a symbol or vision of itself.³²

If the meanings of the melting pot are ambiguous in American culture, so too are these in Zangwill’s play, which operate in varying textual and performative levels. As a literary text, the play offers its protagonist’s vision of the melting pot which is disclosed in the dialogic of a fervent evangelical and alchemical discourse. David Quixano, a

³²Zangwill relished the fact that the play, “designed to bring home to America both its comparative rawness and emptiness and its true significance and potentiality of history and civilisation, has been universally acclaimed by Americans as a revelation of Americanism, despite that it contains only one native-born American character, and that a bad one” (“Afterword” 215-16). He concludes his “Afterword” by stating that his play “has had the happy fortune to contribute its title to current thought, and, in the testimony of Jane Addams, to ‘perform a great service to America by reminding us of the high hopes of the founders of the Republic’” (216).

Jewish immigrant violinist who is regarded as an untrained musical genius and who is described by his uncle, Mendel Quixano (who is a pianist), as belonging “to the species of *pogrom* orphan—they arrive in the States by almost every ship” (Act 1, page 37), holds an idealist vision of an America that is still in the making and of which the immigrant is an integral part.³³ His vision is doubly articulated in his speech which is then paralleled with the “American Symphony” that he is writing. David sees in America “the seething of the Crucible” (Act 1, page 33), a vision that is explained as follows:

DAVID

[...] America is God’s Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand

[Graphically illustrating it on the table]

in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won’t be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you’ve come to—these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! *God is making the American.*

³³In Zangwill’s play, the Jewish immigrant serves the synecdochical function of standing for *all* immigrants, which Zangwill explains as follows: if the Russian Jew “has been selected as the typical immigrant, it is because he alone of all the fifty has no homeland. ... There is none, therefore, more in need of a land of liberty, none whose future it is more vital that American should preserve [...]” (202-03).

MENDEL

I should have thought the American was made already—eighty millions of him.

DAVID

Eighty millions!

[*He smiles toward VERA³⁴ in good-humoured derision.*]

Eighty millions! Over a continent! Why, that cockleshell of a Britain has forty millions! No, uncle, *the real American has not yet arrived. He is only in the Crucible, I tell you—he will be the fusion of all races, perhaps the coming superman.* Ah, what a glorious Finale for my symphony—if I can only write it. (Act 1, pages 33-34; emphasis mine)

Symbolically, the “real American” who is still in the making is waiting to be written (as is David’s symphony). Following the alchemical principle of transmutation, base (historically burdened European) identities are transmuted into a singular gold or superior identity (the “new” or “real” American Übermensch), which also marks a holy union between humanity and god. There can be no Übermensch immigrant nor is the native-born

³⁴Vera Revendal is an immigrant born to the Russian aristocracy who escapes political persecution in Czarist Russia because of her socialist rebellion. Initially characterized as an anti-Semite, she struggles to overcome her prejudices and works in the United States with the settlement house movement. According to Moses, this “was an urban reform idea, originating among the educated classes to alleviate the cultural and spiritual poverty of the communities in which the immigrants often resided. Settlement houses existed for the purposes of assisting the immigrants in finding health, education, and social welfare services. They also provided artistic, political, and intellectual activities for the neighbourhoods they served. As an idealistic, upperclass young woman, Vera Revendal would have been a typical settlement house type. As an immigrant from a Russian aristocratic family, she would have been extraordinary” (132).

superior since both are regarded as base ingredients. It is in the fusion of the crucible (or the alchemist's "pregnant pot") that the superior race is formed. This race necessitates the immigrant as a crucial ingredient, but in entering the melting pot and melting, the immigrant, like the native-born, ceases to exist. It is the disappearance or melt-down of difference that is emphasized as is the emergence of a completely new construct.

At the end of the play, which marks the success of David's performed symphony on the Fourth of July to a gathering of recently arrived immigrants to New York's urban settlement program as well as four music critics, David and Vera watch the sun setting over Manhattan's skyline as David points to the *sounds* of the crucible: David is "[p]rophetically exalted by the spectacle" of the sunset and states:

It is the fires of God round His Crucible.

[He drops her hand and points downward.]

there she lies, the great Melting Pot—listen! Can't you hear the roaring and the bubbling? There gapes her mouth

[He points east]

—the harbour where a thousand mammoth feeders come from the ends of the world to pour in their human freight. Ah, what a stirring and a seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian,—black and yellow—

VERA *[Softly, nestling to him]*

Jew and Gentile—

DAVID

Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross—how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. Ah, Vera, what is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem where all nations and races come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labour and look forward!

[He raises his hands in benediction over the shining city.]

Peace, peace, to all ye unborn millions, fated to fill this giant continent—the God of our *children* give you Peace.

[An instant's solemn pause. The sunset is swiftly fading, and the vast panorama is suffused with a more restful twilight, to which the many gleaming lights of the town add the tender poetry of the night. Far back, like a lonely, guiding star, twinkles over the darkening water the torch of the Statue of Liberty. From below comes up the softened sound of voices and instruments joining in "My Country, 'tis of Thee." The curtain falls slowly.]

(Act 4 pages 184-85)

As a prophetic figure, David foretells the future of America and sees in it already the transformation that is the process of amalgamation. In this last scene, Vera tells him that

she understands how the immigrants, for whom the symphony was composed and played, “were fired by [David’s] vision of their coming brotherhood, lulled by [his] dream of their land of rest” (Act 4, page 179). Earlier in Act 3, Vera identifies David as “the prophet of the living present” (147), thereby recognizing his “dream,” in quasi-biblical terms, as prophesy—which further lends signification to the American Dream.

David’s prophetic vision is underscored by his own ability to amalgamate and perform *within* the crucible, rather than simply observing and blessing it from the outside (and above). David’s “melting” is illustrated by his ability to overcome his cultural, traumatic memory in order to love Vera, the daughter of Baron Revendal whom David recognizes as the “butcher” of the pogrom in Kishineff in which his family was massacred and he was wounded. Again, couching this political position in biblical imagery, Zangwill emphasizes David’s transformation as a painful but necessary process; David tells Vera:

And *my* soul? What of *my* soul? False to its own music, its own mission, its own dream. That is what I mean by failure, Vera. I preached of God’s Crucible, this great new continent that could melt up all race-differences and vendettas, that could purge and re-create, and God tried me with his supremest test. He gave me a heritage from the Old World, hate and vengeance and blood [..., and] I said, “Even thy Crucible cannot melt this hate, cannot drink up its blood.” And so I sat crooning over the dead past, gloating over the old blood-stains—I, the apostle of America, the prophet

of the God of our children. Oh—how my music mocked me! And you—so fearless, so high above fate—you how must despise me!

(Act 4, page 179)

In the pragmatic reconciliation of a love-struck couple who are temporarily torn apart by their histories (à la *Romeo and Juliet* and the later American-ethnic *West Side Story*) is the philosophy that preaches, in David's words, that "the ideals of the fathers shall not be foisted on the children. Each generation must live and die for its own dream" (Act 3 page 147). David seeks Vera's forgiveness for his initial inability to look past her father's part in the pogrom, while Vera states that it is she "that should go down on [her] knees for [her] father's sin" (Act 4, page 181), to which David, again philosophically, concedes that the "sins of the fathers shall not be visited on the children" (Act 4 page 181). Vera, who since her youth in Russia has deviated from her father's politics, feels the burden of generational "unpaid debts—debts that can only cry for forgiveness" (Act 4 page 181).

The performance of David's and Vera's amalgamation is dramatized to suggest that "ethnic amalgamation [be seen] as bodily fusion," as Abu-Laban and Lamont's reading of the play indicates:

Zangwill's fleshed-out version of the melting pot illuminates the way in which the image operated within a racializing discourse similar to that of the Dillingham Commission,³⁵ ranking immigrants according to their

³⁵The Dillingham Commission was set up to investigate the effects of immigration and concentrated mainly on the new immigration. Drawing on the study of anthropologist Franz Boaz, "himself foreign born" (28), who argued that "immigrant bodies can transform" (28), the Dillingham Commission, suspicious of Boaz's conclusions, states that

supposed bodily essences. In certain respects, Zangwill disrupts essentialist racial categories in order to affirm the capacity of different ethnic groups to integrate within the body politic; yet he represents this process in terms which paradoxically affirm essentialist ties between body and ethnicity. Thus, his melting pot is not so much about collapsing cultural boundaries as it is about collapsing bodily boundaries. The romance plot between Vera and David therefore figures ethnic integration as primarily a bodily matter: their desire for one another overrides the cultural differences between them. Desire also supplies the vehicle for the play's critique of anti-immigrationism: Vera categorically rejects the advances of the only native-born American in the play, the idle, arrogant Quincy Davenport Jr, son of American 'new money,' and a vocal racist.

(32)

The physical union suggested by David and Vera's impending marriage (to which various characters object) does point to a physical (as well as cultural) fusion, thereby suggesting that the "new" or "real" American race is a hybrid which the native-born, whom Quincy

"children born not more than a few years after the arrival of the immigrant parents in America [are] developing in such a way that they differ in type essentially from their foreign-born parents." ... The commission apprehensively stresses the need for more work on the subject given the "entirely unexpected result," which implies that "even racial physical characteristics do not survive under the new social and climatic environment of America" The caution of the commission on these findings as contrasted with those about the supposed temperaments of races, or the issue of assimilation and the immigrant family, is worth underscoring In particular, it suggests the extent to which the commission's recommendations depended upon essentializing race by inscribing the image of a stable immigrant body. (29)

Davenport Jr represents, is eager to stop from forming. Not only does Quincy desire Vera for himself (although he is already married), which suggests another kind of fusion since she is an immigrant (albeit from the Russian aristocracy), but his character functions as an obstacle that threatens to destroy David's vision. With "*prophetic passion*," as the stage directions indicate, David tells Quincy that he "shall not kill [his] dream! There shall come a fire round the Crucible that will melt [Quincy] and [his] breed [...] America *shall* make good . . .!" (Act 2 page 88). Kept from Vera's body, Quincy's body is not the dominant assimilator but one more body to be fused; he is one character in a cast of ten (and one male body out of five), which suggests that the native-American's contribution to the "real" American body is simply a fraction.

But Zangwill's play, because of its use of and emphasis on biblical and alchemical discourses, suggests that David and Vera's physical fusion be read symbolically as in, for example, Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*. If David is a prophet and America a dream or prophesy, then Vera represents 'Truth,' which, in the play is largely manifested by history. When, for example, David cannot reconcile himself to her in Act 3, Vera tells him: "Let Vera comfort you" (Act 3 page 157). Literally, she is a woman who is trying to comfort and, as the stage directions indicate, "*tranquillise*" her lover. Symbolically, however, she is telling the prophet to let Truth comfort him. Similarly, David's words carry a symbolic meaning when he tells Vera (Truth) that she is "fearless" and "high above fate" (Act 4 page 179). Read symbolically, then, David and Vera's fusion has less to do with a physical union (incidentally they have not been married nor is there any

indication that sexual intercourse has taken place) and more to do with a fusion of idealism (future) and truth (history). This doubleness is underscored by Zangwill's ambiguous position on the pragmatism of amalgamation. As he states in the "Afterword" appended to the play, "the crucible, if visible only to the eye of the imagination like the inner reality of the sunrise to the eye of Blake, is none the less a roaring and flaming actuality" (199). He also states that "in the crucible of love, or even co-citizenship, the most violent antitheses of the past may be fused into a higher unity is a truth of both ethics and observation" (203).

Opposed to religious intermarriage—which, "wherever there is social intimacy, will follow, even when the parties stand in opposite religious camps; but this is less advisable as leading to a house divided against itself and to dissension in the upbringing of the children" (209)—he is also opposed to interracial physical fusion: writing against racism toward what he calls "ex-Africans" (207) and calling attention to the American history of slavery and the existing "spiritual miscegenation" (207), he nevertheless contends that "the prognathous face is an ugly and undesirable type of countenance or that it connotes a lower average of intellect and ethics, or that white and black are as yet too far apart for profitable fusion" (206). Such a "profitable" fusion would require an already 'watered-down' version—"the Red Indian [...] has found it almost as facile to mate with his white neighbours as with his black" (205), leading him to posit that "the American immigrants [...] be the natural links towards the fusion of white and black, but a similar instinct of pride and peril seems to hold them back" (205). Hence, he concludes

that

the negroid hair and complexion being, in Mendelian language, “dominant,” these black traits are not easy to eliminate from the hybrid posterity; and in view of all the unpleasantness, both immediate and contingent, that attends the blending of colours, only heroic souls on either side should dare the adventure of intermarriage. Blacks of this temper, however, would serve their race better by making Liberia a success or building up an American negro State, [...] or at least asserting their rights as American citizens in that sub-tropical South which without their labour could never have been opened up. (207)

Zangwill’s crucible, then, should be understood in terms of cultural exchange: “The Jew may be Americanised and the American Judaised without any gamic interaction” (207). The play, as Abu-Laban and Lamont point out, offers a “secondary plot [...] that] disrupts the biological fixedness of race by humourously representing the assimilation of the Quixano’s Irish maid, Kathleen” (33). It is the “spectacle of Kathleen’s gradual assimilation into Jewish culture [which] supplies the only explicit dramatization of assimilation in the entire play—neither David nor Vera undergo such a radical shift in terms of their ethnic identity despite the intensity of their romantic crisis” (33).

The physical or cultural extent of mixing that is desirable or ideal is a much debated factor, and showcases the interplay between race, ethnicity, and immigration. However, there is another equally crucial factor that needs to be examined. In his view of

Dr. Charles Eliot, ex-President of Harvard University, Zangwill states:

Dr. Eliot points to the still unmelted heaps of racial matter, without suspecting— although he is a chemist—that their semblance of solidity is only kept up by the constant immigration of similar atoms to the base to replace those liquefied at the apex. Once America slams her doors, the crucible will roar like a closed furnace.

Heaven forbid, however, that the doors shall be slammed for centuries yet. The notion that the few millions of people in America have a moral right to exclude others is monstrous. Exclusiveness may have some justification in countries, especially when old and well-populated; but for continents like the United States—or for the matter of Canada and Australia—to mistake themselves for mere countries is an intolerable injustice to the rest of the human race. (“Afterword” 210)

The melting-pot model suggests that until all ingredients have been added and melted the American is not yet made, which implies that at some point, as Zangwill concludes, the immigration doors must close. Immigration, in this sense, exists only as an ephemeral moment in which the immigrant enters the pot’s apex, and continues to exist (or be visible) as new bodies enter. Those already within the pot are in some way melted, and therefore no longer new. It is in arguing for the maintaining of an operating melting pot—which, again, implies a deference in the making of the American—that Zangwill’s model needs attention as he displaces the moral burden from the immigrant and places it

on the nation. As a continent, not a nation, America is morally obliged to include rather than exclude *all* immigrants on the basis that it has the geographical space and resources to house the overpopulated old worlds, but, more importantly, because it exists as an ideal that creates a new and improved civilization. This suggests that in order for America to be indeed superior it must act morally. The prescribed morals, moreover, need recognition within and outside America. Immigration (old and new) thus functions to construct America's image as being morally superior, even in light of the internal and external objections to the apparently 'inferior' types and classes of incoming immigrants. If, as Zangwill suggests, America is morally obligated to willingly accept the immigrant, then the immigrant's position in America needs political (civil rights) and social recognition (cultural production). In this inverse model, it is America that *owes* something to the immigrant rather than the immigrant who is indebted to America.³⁶

From a British or European perspective, the American continent, as a group of settler-invader colonies, does not exist en par with Europe's more established (un)civilizations and functions, in the still imperial mentality, to fulfill its purpose as Australia (as a penal colony) had; America's purpose is to relieve Europe of its problems (excess population and inhuman historical brutality) and as such becomes an immigrant

³⁶It must be noted that Zangwill's play emphasizes the fervent gratitude that the impoverished immigrants feel toward America. From its romantic perspective, the immigrant is naturalized as a loyal and eager civil participant, as David's words illustrate: "Flag of our Great Republic, guardian of our homes, whose stars and stripes stand for Bravery, Purity, Truth, and Union, we salute thee. We, the natives of distant lands, who find [*Half-sobbing*] rest under their folds, do pledge our hearts, our lives, our sacred honour to love and protect thee, our Country, and the liberty of the American people for ever [*he ends almost hysterically.*]" (Act 2 page 53).

(desti)nation. From an American perspective, however, the need to overcome an imperial designation is mingled with a need to control its identity and image. Despite the immigration quota system that restricted entry to *specific* peoples, and the anxieties over the extent and process of assimilation or amalgamation, by the 1950s the American population

beginning to appear was not [...] homogeneous [...], as first hoped for, but a plural or multiracial one of about 30 white nationality groups, plus the black, red, yellow, and brown. The “melting pot” was not melting them down into a type one could point to and say, “There is a citizen of the United States.” The melting pot had been replaced by the “mixing bowl” in which the ingredients were to be blended by a common political allegiance. But, many ingredients would retain their distinctive flavors, contributing them to the whole, like so many spices. [...] The United States had not yet become the graveyard of European nationality and culture.

(Bennett 103)

The “mixing bowl” metaphor allows for a national character to emerge that is informed by (multi)cultural diversity and freedom within an overarching homogenous political unity. That difference is all too visible, however, still points to any remaining anxieties over the unified political construct. The emphasis of the political (as a signifier of American unity) over the cultural (which suggests (multi)national diversity within), points to Horace M. Kallen’s theory of “cultural pluralism” or “cultural democracy,”

which holds that “democracy and a common use of the English language is [only] necessary to a proper cooperation of the different [ethnic] groups. While maintaining freedom for the individual and ethnic group, this theory holds each has an obligation to maintain and further the welfare of the American people as a whole” (Bennett 104).

The idea of cultural pluralism separates the political from the cultural and allows for an imagined immigrant nation to emerge. An affiliation of political unity and vision that unites diverse peoples who share a geo-political space characterizes the emergent immigrant nation. In a sense, cultural pluralism can be seen as an embryonic version of a kind of globalization in which diversity is made available to all who are united by a common political viewpoint. What makes the cultural pluralist nation different is its emphasis as a micro-globalized society that exists within more rigidly defined nations, which further works to naturalize its superiority on both political and cultural levels; America becomes the unified Europe and *better*s it. This points to an ideal nation whose strength is marked by its having (therefore owning) and bettering (which implies some form of assimilation) all the other nations of the world. If having cultural diversity is allowed because there exists political homogeneity, then the emphasis on the political over the cultural needs attention. If cultures can co-exist and possibly even mix, political diversity cannot exist as it disrupts any remaining unifying agent on the otherwise already diverse mixture. Hence, the emphasis is on ensuring that America be a politically unified nation, which further antagonizes already strained views on ideas deemed foreign or anti-American. Hence, while difference in culture is accepted (and possibly even desired) to

add flavour, political differences are not. Problematically, in identifying some cultures as being inextricable from undesirable (un-American) politics, certain groups are therefore regarded as contaminants to the mixing bowl. Hence, as race has been a determining factor in the reasoning for alien exclusion, so too has political affiliation or belief which, unlike race, is not always evident, visible, or even determinable and which, paradoxically, is then made visible by fusing political views with specific cultural identities.

PART II

2.6 Canadian Immigration: A Historical Overview

Canadian immigration history, like that of America, is infused with overtones of nation-building and national(ist) myth-making. Unlike the United States, however, Canada remains a British colony well into the mid-nineteenth century and Canadian citizenship only comes into effect as late as 1950. By the time Canada becomes independent and has the power to bestow Canadian citizenship on its native and immigrant subjects, it has undergone a continual process of differentiation from its imperial past, Britain, and from its (cultural) imperialist present, the United States. As a result of this dual imperialist encroachment, Canada emerges in an ambiguous space: if Britain represents the Old World and the United States represents the New World, what can Canada, a New World nation infused with Old World protocol, possibly represent? What kind of immigrant nation can Canada become, sitting on the fence as it were, perpetually in a state of in-betweenness? As a New World nation, Canada, like the United States, serves Europe's purpose of divesting its overpopulation and requires immigration to defend its territory. During the Confederation debates of 1865, for example, George Brown's advocacy of immigration was met with approving cheers:

there is hardly a political or financial or social problem suggested by this union that does not find its best solution in a large influx of immigration. The larger our population, the greater will be our productions, the more valuable our exports, and the greater our ability to develop the resources of

our country [...]. Double our population, and we will at once be in a position to meet promptly and effectually any invader who may put his foot with hostile intent upon our soil. (in Whitaker, *Canadian* 3)

Interestingly, in Brown's view, the immigrant is not regarded as a threatening invader but as a presumed loyal resident who will eagerly help to keep hostile invasions at bay. Furthermore, the immigrant is portrayed as an essential tool in the nation's resource and economic development. Hence, the immigrant is immediately characterized as a loyal protector and a labourer closely connected with the development of the land (natural resources) and its economy (productions and exports), rather than as an alien leech seeking to drain or destroy the nation.

Yet, the idyllic relationship suggested by Brown's vision of immigration is undermined by the discrepancy between the apparent welcome of the much-needed immigrant and the immigrant's disregard for Canada as a destination for permanent residence. Unlike the United States, Canada's main problem with immigration was keeping immigrants, as well as its residents and British citizens, from migrating southward. The first Immigration Act of 1869 and its subsequent amendments, for example,

were designed primarily to ensure the safety and protection of immigrants *en route* to and upon arrival in Canada. The few admission prohibitions that were legislated were intended to exclude those with physical disabilities or criminal tendencies, or those who were unable to support

themselves upon arrival. These restrictions were not consistently enforced, and in the early years many immigrants who arrived without funds were able to avail themselves of lodging and transportation assistance provided by the federal and the provincial governments. (Kelley and Trebilcock 62-63)

Yet, in spite of these allowances and perks, the immigrant “flow through to the United States was constant throughout the late 19th century; it seemed that neither Confederation nor the National Policy and the opening of the West along an all-Canadian transport route could reverse Canada’s position as a mere transfer-point between Europe and America” (Whitaker, *Canadian* 4). Situated somewhere between the Old World and the New World, being part of both yet constituting neither, Canada faced the difficulty of establishing itself not only as an autonomous nation but as a desirable destination for the much coveted desirable immigrant.

From the immigrant’s perspective, entering Canada represented a necessary or useful means of entering America, not the continent but the United States. Capitalizing on Canada’s need to attract and retain immigrants, Canada inevitably functioned not as a haven for the oppressed but as a haven for those in transit.³⁷ Interestingly, this relationship persists as both legal and illegal immigrants often enter Canada with the intention of then

³⁷It would appear, then, that Canada, as an immigrant nation, emerged first as a kind of borderland. Indeed, thinking of Canada as a borderland, or in poststructuralist terms as a matrix of borderlands, has been suggested by Marshall McLuhan’s seminal essay, “Canada: The Borderline Case,” and more recently interrogated by W.H. New’s *Borderlands*. But while Canada can be termed a cultural borderland, can it really be typified as one in the context of immigration? Is Canada similar to other borderlands or border-towns like Tijuana?

entering the United States since entering Canada is often easier: even if permanent residency is denied, remaining in Canada until a hearing date to appeal a rejection has been set provides sufficient time to then enter the United States illegally. Crossing over to the United States from the Canadian border has also been relatively lax: the 49th parallel boasts a reputation as the “longest undefended border” and certainly enjoys a different reputation from that of the Mason-Dixon line. The southward drain, as it is typically termed, is increasingly becoming a point of contention, preempting discussion over a joint immigration policy that could help keep out the unwanted. The issue of a joint immigration policy surfaces most often when there is controversy, like the trafficking of Asian illegal aliens (e.g., the Chinese “Boat People”), or more recently over terrorists who enter Canada (particularly through Montréal, which raises issues over Québec’s more open policy that privileges francophone immigrants as a means of competing with the rest of English-Canada) and then infiltrate the United States or else set up operations in America from Canada.

In spite of needing immigrants, especially after the War of 1812 when an American invasion threatened the Western territories, early Canadian immigration policies denote the same high standards as American ones, and in doing so maintain the image of the desired immigrant as a quasi-Übermensch. The Immigration Act of 1872 begins to identify “classes of person[s] who ought to be denied entry” (Galloway 10), particularly paupers and “any ‘criminal, or other vicious class of immigrants’” (in Galloway 10). Between 1896 and 1914, the prohibited classes include “‘tramps,’

‘loafers,’ and ‘ex-convicts’ assisted by British organizations,” as well as “‘servile,’ ‘criminal,’ and ‘morally degenerate’ [...]” (Kelley and Trebilcock 116). Emphasizing the moral (or puritanical) character of the immigrant, the Act of 1910 excludes women or girls “coming to Canada for any immoral purpose” (Whitaker, *Canadian* 11). The Immigration Acts of 1906 and 1910, expand the classes of aliens who are to be excluded. The Immigration Act of 1906, for example, prohibits entry to

any person identified as “feeble-minded, an idiot, or an epileptic, or... insane.” Those identified as “deaf and dumb” or as “dumb, blind or infirm” would only be permitted to land if their families were able to provide permanent support. Furthermore, those afflicted with “a loathsome disease, or with a disease which is contagious or infectious,” were also denied entry, as was anyone identified as a “pauper, or destitute, a professional beggar, or vagrant, or who is likely to become a public charge.” Lastly, anyone “convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude, or who is a prostitute” was also not permitted to land. (Galloway 14)

The classes of prohibited aliens here read almost identical to those stipulated in earlier American immigration policies, thereby suggesting that the United States and Canada have similar, if not identical, conceptualizations of who and what an immigrant is. It is therefore not surprising that the lists of excludable classes in Canadian policies target those deemed in any physical, mental, or moral sense inferior.³⁸ As in the United States,

³⁸For more classes of prohibited aliens, see Appendix B.1.

Canada envisions the (desired) immigrant as a superior type—only the best from the best can enter. Consequently, by excluding the inferior and including the superior types, Canada naturalizes its own native as “the best.” The only signal that suggests otherwise is the immigrant’s choosing the United States over Canada. Canada thus begins to fight with its image of being second best.

Like the American policies, the prohibited classes, as Galloway notes, are “frequently defined in vague, value-laden, and vituperative terms” (10). Such latitude was useful in maintaining the perceived threat of imminent destruction at bay—be it moral, physical, economic, or political—but, as Whitaker notes, the vagueness of the exclusions served more specifically as a means of enforcing “ethnic discrimination” (11). Section 38 of the 1919 amended Immigration Act, for example, authorized Cabinet “to prohibit any race, nationality, or class of immigrant by reason of ‘economic, industrial, or other condition temporarily existing in Canada’; or because such immigrants were unsuitable, given the social, economic, and labour requirements of the country; or simply because of their ‘peculiar habits, modes of life and methods of holding property’ and their ‘probable inability to become readily assimilated’” (Kelley and Trebilcock 184). Hence, the emerging Canadian national identity defines itself, like America before it, in binary terms. The specific exclusion of visible Others (Asians and African-Americans in particular) points to the demand that desired aliens assimilate into Canadian society.³⁹ Great

³⁹As in American immigration policies, Asians were especially targeted as an apparently unassimilable class to be subsequently taxed prior to its eventual exclusion (particularly the Chinese and the Japanese). For more details on the Chinese exclusions see Appendix B.2.

measures were taken to ensure that unassimilable aliens either be denied entry or else eventually expelled. Up to 1914, for example, deportation practices were more regulated and implemented to weed out undesirable immigrants who failed to become economically independent, or who were believed to cause “social unrest.” During this time, the rights to naturalized citizenship, which under the Naturalization Act “provided that all naturalized subjects shall ‘be entitled to all political and other rights, powers and privileges’ as a natural-born British subject” (142), were also revised and made more difficult to attain by requiring among other things five years of residency instead of three, particularly for those belonging to a race believed to be “unassimilable and therefore not desirable permanent residents” (158).

The question of assimilation in Canada coincides with the American expectation of and desire for the immigrant’s assimilation. What differentiates the Canadian vision of assimilation from its American counterpart is that those who *could* assimilate were those who were regarded as being *already* of the same stock as Canadians—the Northern white peoples (British, Americans, Scandinavians and Dutch); those believed readily adapted not only to the English language and customs but to the harshness of the Nordic climate. Early Canadian immigration policy is somewhat deceptive. In spite of the vague terms of exclusion, there appears to be no tolerance for the alien (or the immigrant-as-alien) within since the included were not regarded as unassimilable foreigners to be kept out. The immigrant, by comparison, was already of one’s own kin by Nordic association; in other words, the immigrant was a quasi-native or native-like since s/he was a native of the

North. In Canadian early immigration policy, the alien was to be kept out whereas the immigrant was to be kept in. This distinction between immigrant and alien further informs the distinction between the immigrant/alien and the native. Whereas the alien versus native is maintained, the immigrant versus native binary is not. In fact, the immigrant and the native are more closely linked than the immigrant and alien. It is only when Canada begins to invite and accept undesirable immigrants that the immigrant and the alien become more closely linked, thereby distancing the immigrant from the native. When this happens, debates over immigration in Canada, like those in the United States, point to two competing ideas: selective and moderate immigration of “Canadian stock-like peoples” and exclusion of undesirables, and aggressive importation of agriculturalists (and later industrialists), preferably from British, American, and Scandinavian stock but also allowing Continental Europeans and Asians to “fill the gaps” (Kelley and Trebilcock 112). Not surprisingly, the resulting native versus alien binary that is evident in the United States explicitly manifests itself in Canada in burgeoning national terms. It is then that the immigrant-as-alien is needed and used to authenticate the native in Canada.

Perhaps the most unique trait in early Canadian immigration history is its close association with the land itself, which is seen not only in the provisions made for the preferred desirable agriculturalist immigrant but, more significantly, in the housing of immigration law. As Galloway notes, “in the *Constitution Act, 1867* (formerly the *British North America Act*), one finds the subject matters of Immigration and Agriculture located in the same section” (9). Similar to early American immigration policies that grant power

to the individual State, Section 95 provides that in “each Province the Legislature may make Laws in relation to Agriculture in the Province, and to Immigration into the Province; [...] and any Law of the Legislature of a Province relative to Agriculture or to Immigration shall have effect in and for the Province so long and as far as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada” (in Galloway 9). From the outset, then, Canadian immigration policy is closely associated with agricultural policy, thereby raising interesting questions regarding the process of indigenization. Immigrants who were already closely associated with their native agricultural land were privileged and offered farmland to settle and work in Canada. Being closely associated with the land naturalized the agriculturalist immigrant as a native literally *of* the (Nordic) land to be imported and transplanted. This type of immigrant-as-native appears to have little if any agency or choice; her/his transplantation (from one sector of land to another) is, in a sense, inconsequential since s/he maintains the same occupation and close connection with the Nordic land. The agricultural immigrant in Canada thus authenticates the relationship between the nation as a people and the Nordic land, thereby granting the native Canadian a truly Nordic character (*of* the land).

By 1892, immigration legislation was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior, which was mostly dealing with the settlement of public lands (Kelley and Trebilcock 116). Like the earlier American immigration policies that granted land to desirable immigrants, Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior under Laurier’s Liberal government, “simplified the regulations of the

Dominion Lands Act, the 1872 piece of legislation that granted a quarter section of free land (160 acres or 64.7 hectares) to any settler 21 years of age or older who paid a ten-dollar registration fee, lived on his quarter section for three years, cultivated 30 acres (12.1 hectares), and built a permanent dwelling” (Forging). The immigrant’s role in the development of the future nation lies in the immigrant’s connection with the land and the expertise that s/he imports and implements. Whereas the immigrant in America is a necessary foreign alien that helps to identify the native national body in binary terms, the agricultural immigrant in Canada is a necessary ingredient in the future making *of* the land. Although not born on Canadian soil, the *desired* immigrant was nevertheless regarded as being *of* the Northern land, thereby having a connection with the American North, Canada. Therefore, in importing settlers only from the Northern European regions, or settlers of stock from these regions, the desired Canadian immigrant was neither an alien nor a foreigner, but already a native of the Northern lands (of which Canada was a part). Establishing its Nordic character, moreover, was crucial in its differentiation as a nation—especially in comparison to its southern neighbour.

Sifton’s aggressive efforts to increase immigration opened the doors to Continental and Asian immigrants, although he was an advocate of “the Chinese head tax and the Alien Labour Act of 1897, which were designed to restrict the admission of contract labourers to Canada” (Kelley and Trebilcock 120-1). In 1902, Sifton summarized his views on immigration as follows: “Here, then, we have the situation in a nutshell.—a vast and productive territory becoming quickly occupied by a throng of people who will

be called upon to take up the duties of citizenship almost at once, whose successful pursuit of agriculture will make them financially independent, and who in a short time will constitute a most potent factor in the national life of Canada” (118). Sifton’s views are interesting in their defining of the immigrant as a needed citizen with “duties” to the nation—the successful populating and developing of the land. Such “duties,” moreover, point to a ready-made place for the immigrant within the nation; prior to arrival, the immigrant was already a vital, productive, and necessary member of the national community. The rewards for performing such duties included financial independence for the immigrant, and an equally independent and solidified nation.

Although Sifton’s “efforts to secure British, American, and Scandinavian immigrants attracted relatively little criticism, his welcoming of Eastern and central Europeans was highly contentious” (131). Sifton’s description of these “foreigners” further helps to explain his understanding of the immigrant. To him, the “foreigner” was a “stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children” (in Whitaker, *Canadian* 7). This romanticized view of the male peasant agriculturalist posits the immigrant as a non-threatening newcomer who already belongs to the land by virtue of a generational occupational legacy. The promise of agricultural fertility is further implied by the immigrant’s masculinity, naturalized by the “stout wife” who, like the land, produces “a half-dozen children” and is able to sustain and raise them to become products

and heirs of and to their father's agricultural labours.⁴⁰ When immigration is closely tied in with a specific land, in this case the Nordic land, the agricultural immigrant of the Nordic land is defined as having a natural right to immigrate. Immigration, then, is not regarded as a privilege for those who already work the Nordic land elsewhere in the Northern or European hemisphere.

Sifton's views, however, were met with opposition from those who saw these "agriculturalist peasants" as subhuman, or at the very least as different from the established Canadian people, thereby qualifying the native versus alien binary. As Kelley and Trebilcock further note, "Sifton was accused of not being able appropriately to distinguish between 'quantity' and 'quality.'" As one Conservative MP explained, "Canadians welcome British, American, French, and German immigrants because 'they belong to the races to which we belong, they are men who tend to the elevation of our population, and to the progress of our country. They are accustomed to our institutions, they are suitable to our climate, and we desire to get them'" (131). The quantity versus quality argument had been voiced by A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior in 1893, who wrote that "if the Government of Canada cared merely for numbers, for quantity rather than quality, there would be little difficulty, even now, when the governing conditions are so extremely unfavourable, in producing an enormous volume of immigration to this country at comparatively little expense" (in Kelley and Trebilcock

⁴⁰This romanticized view is best illustrated by one of the Canadian Heritage television vignettes, aired in the 1990s, depicting a newly arrived, stout, hard-working, unidentifiably Continental-European couple, in what appear to be the early 1900s, working the fields and building a house while the wife is in the late stages of pregnancy.

110). As is evident from this statement, after the initial open-door policy that sought to recruit and retain settlers was implemented and a few visible immigrant communities did indeed begin to exist, there was a growing sentiment of distrust and concern over the quality of the incomers. By 1905, for example, Frank Oliver, then minister in charge of immigration, voiced his misgivings over Sifton's "open door" policy, arguing that "it is not merely a question of filling the country with people.... It is a question of the ultimate results of the efforts put forward for the building up of a Canadian nationality.... This can never be accomplished if the preponderance of the population should be of such a class and character as will deteriorate rather than elevate the condition of our people and our country at large" (in Whitaker, *Canadian* 8).

Increasingly, Canadian immigration policy and debates around said policy, undoubtedly responding to a perceived threat of unwanted Eastern and Central European mass migrations, qualify the meaning of the immigrant so that the immigrant is no longer seen as the benign and needed Nordic kin but as an invading, foreign alien threatening to destroy the native (by outnumbering the native and by not assimilating). MP Thomas Sproule's comments in the House of Commons, echoing Franklin's concerns in America, illustrate this shift. Sproule

condemned the government for being too ready to welcome the "riff raff" and "refuse" of every country in the world in its desire to populate the country rapidly: "We are importing the undesirable elements of Europe... people who know nothing of our institutions, who are not in any way to

the manor [*sic*] born, who are aliens to the conditions of Canadian or American life, who are imbued with instincts and natures which have not in themselves any tendency to elevate humanity but rather to lower it in every particular.” (Kelley and Trebilcock 131)

Such opposing views to immigration led to an eventual backlash against open immigration under Oliver’s administration. As in America, the immigrant’s threatening image works toward establishing a native versus alien dichotomy that naturalizes not only a native Canadian people but a formidable nation under foreign attack. No longer snubbed by the immigrant, Canada acquires importance as an all-too-desirable destination—even if the alien force constitutes not the desirable immigrant but the unwanted masses. Precisely when dissonance over who is to be let in and who should be kept out occurs, Canada exhibits the workings of a national(ist) agenda that begins to define itself not in relation to (or as part of) an amalgamated Nordic alliance but as an independent nation in its own right and with its own prejudices.

Unfortunately, this emerging national character displaces the immigrant into the realm of alien and in doing so participates in the subcategorizing of the immigrant. If the prohibited classes of aliens were vague in the 1906 and 1910 Immigration Acts, by 1923 they were narrowly and clearly defined; “prohibiting the entry of all immigrants except for six narrowly defined classes. These were agriculturalists with sufficient means to begin farming; farm labourers with arranged employment; female domestic servants; wives and children under eighteen of those resident in Canada; United States citizens

whose labour is required; and British subjects with sufficient means for self-maintenance” (Galloway 15-16). Culturally, moreover, Oliver’s remarks about the Galicians and Slavs, who were the more visible (European) foreigners in the West, characterize the unwanted immigrant as alien-like as the Germans had been in America. According to Oliver, the Galicians and Slavs were “people who have no ideas in regard to our system of government or social life, who have no ambitions as we have, who are aliens in race and in every other respect” (Kelley and Trebilcock 132); in other words, these immigrants were a “danger to our social system, our municipal institutions and our general progress” (132). Rather than focusing on the immigrant’s inability to assimilate, Oliver’s response points to the native’s desire to maintain the immigrant-as-alien’s difference. Of particular interest here is Oliver’s understanding of assimilation:

Do you know what assimilate means? It is a nice sounding word. Do you know that it means that if you settle on a farm on the prairies amongst them or in their neighbourhood you must depend for the schooling of your children on the tax-paying willingness and power of people who neither know nor care anything about schools? Do you know that it means intermarriage of your sons or daughters with those who are of an alien race and of alien ideas? That is assimilation or else there is no assimilation.

(132)

Assimilation, for Oliver, means the assimilation of the outnumbered natives into the transposed alien communities. His beliefs are reiterated by Mackenzie King, who stated

that “it was ‘impossible ever to hope to assimilate a white population with the races of the Orient.’ To even contemplate assimilation would bring Canadians ‘face to face at once with the loss of that homogeneity which ought to characterize the people of this country if we are to be a great nation” (Kelley and Trebilcock 203). The threat of a dreaded hybrid race, seen as inferior to the “pure” Nordic peoples, reveals that it is not the unassimilability of aliens that is at issue but the Canadian view that alien assimilation is undesirable.

Although Canadian interests in immigration shifted from agriculture toward a more industrial vision, particularly after the First World War, responses to the immigrant-as-alien did not. Interestingly, while a nationalist if not nativist sentiment was growing in favour of the exclusion of incoming foreign aliens and the expulsion of existing foreign aliens, companies saw in the immigrant the potential for lucrative business. Skilled industrial workers became as desirable as agriculturalists had been, thereby emphasizing the shift in the immigrant’s utility from the land to the economy, which displaces the immigrant from—or rather *off*—the land. For Canadian business interests, the desperate foreigners needing work to survive in Canada (to survive and remain in Canada by not becoming a public charge) could be used to break up emerging unions. Cultural and linguistic heterogeneity rather than homogeneity in the immigrant population was welcomed, as it represented an ideal labour force that did not speak the same language and could therefore ensure an unorganized pool of immigrant workers who were eager to work (often for less) in order to survive and avoid deportation. From the existing native

labour force's perspective, however, the heterogeneous influx of aliens constituted a threat to the existing native's economic security; the aliens were the invading Other stealing jobs and breaking up unions in the short-term, and deferring organization in the long-term. The industrial immigrant is thus defined as a desired cheap labourer but also as a loathed scab (and, under unionist terms, disloyal, not to be trusted). During the Depression, restricting labour immigration was also in keeping with the growing paranoia of communism. According to Galloway, "concern about labour strife led to the expansion of the criteria of exclusion and deportation to embrace anarchists, political radicals, and others who were identified as likely to be disruptive within and without the workplace" (16). Not unlike American policies, the 1919 Act provides that a person is liable for deportation if s/he "is a member of or affiliated with any organization entertaining or teaching disbelief in or opposition to organized government" (16).

Paranoia over spies, anarchists, communists, and enemy aliens further defines the immigrant. The enemy alien, in particular, naturalized the existing native versus alien binary, as is evident in Mackenzie King's statement in 1914:

This I take is not because of any declaration of individual or national superiority on the part of the people of Canada over the people of any other national, country or race ... The country is the people; the people are the country, and it is the first duty of the country ... to take such measures as may be right and expedient to prevent, if prevention is necessary, the occupation of the country by a population [...] of those ideals of

civilization which we believe ourselves to be here for the purpose of working out to their highest degree. (in Kelley and Trebilcock 163)

Echoing earlier American sentiments, King's statement points to the growing notion of a native Canadian people, or nation, which is *of* the land. Rhetorically, by signaling a common enemy, the foreigner (or alien, or immigrant), and by deeming that enemy dangerous to the common good, the construction of a people and a nation is naturalized and solidified. The definition of the immigrant, up to this point, illustrates the contradictory and ambiguous space allotted to the immigrant within the Canadian nation—at once a loyal subject worthy of national protection for whom immigration is a right, *and* a threat from which the Canadian nation must defend and secure itself. Increasingly, under King the immigrant acquires more foreign markers, especially as these relate to existing racist and nationalist prejudices. Echoing the American “old” versus “new” immigration, the first groups of desirable immigrants acquire mythologized idyllic proportions against which the newly arrived immigrants are judged.

2.7 Passing and Masking in Frederick Philip Grove's *A Search for America*

Are You the New Person Drawn toward Me?

Are you the new person drawn toward me?
To begin with take warning, I am surely far different from
what you suppose;
Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal?
Do you think it so easy to have me become your lover?
Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd
satisfaction?
Do you think I am trusty and faithful?
Do you see no further than this façade, this smooth and
tolerant manner of me?
Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a
real heroic man?
Have you no thought O dreamer that it may be all maya,
illusion?

— Walt Whitman, *Calamus*

Walt Whitman's poem serves as an epigraph for Frederick Philip Grove's grail-like quest, *A Search for America*. Like Whitman's critique of the dreamer's vision of America, Grove interrogates the immigrant's vision or dream of America by characterizing the male immigrant as the gullible and naive dreamer seeking to find rather than transform the "real" America. In the process of his search, Grove's protagonist and narrator, Phil Branden, undergoes a number of transformations that are necessary for his eventual find. Unlike the epic grail quest, however, Grove's Branden begins as an active but blundering naive immigrant (and as such constitutes a state of purity) but ends an almost cynical and passive observer; he can only find his elusive grail when he has acquired experience and knowledge (which, in Judeo-Christian terms links him closer to

the Fall than to a state of Grace). Although a Whitmanesque echo is evident in Grove's conceptualization of the immigrant-as-dreamer and his desire to see his dream-America materialize, Phil Branden also responds to the various arguments about immigration in 1920s Canada. First and foremost is the immigrant's choice to enter, depart, and re-enter Canada, which effectively naturalizes Canada, rather than the United States, as the idyllic America. That the immigrant finds these idyllic qualities in rural Canada is no coincidence either; indeed, the privileging of the agricultural over the urban (but pointedly not industrialized) immigrant is a rhetorical shift that taps into the nation's own past idealization of the desirable immigrant. By focusing on the agricultural immigrant, Grove's text effectively repositions the immigrant as native of the North-western land, thereby responding to the growing portrayal of the immigrant-as-alien in an increasingly urban and industrialized landscape. In Grove's text, transformation is therefore more political than it is philosophical: as the immigrant transforms Canada into the ideal America, so too does the ideal "America" transform the immigrant back into the nation's ideal.

When Robert Kroetsch wrote that "Frederick Philip Grove is perhaps the most complex and most instructive ethnic writer yet to appear on the Canadian literary scene" (65) in 1985, he was referring to an important immigrant figure who in his own lifetime and posthumously became a *national* figure in Canadian literature. Grove, in effect, inscribes the literary immigrant of early Canadian immigration history into the national canon. Grove's literary representations remind us that, initially, the desirable immigrant

was regarded as kin, not alien, and as such was indeed central to the development of the nation's agricultural economy. Nationally, Grove equally positions Canada in the centre by celebrating it as the ideal America which the United States promised but failed to deliver. Grove's own immigration, and his novel *A Search for America* (believed to be autobiographical when it was first published in 1927), illustrate the European immigrant movement from Europe to Canada and the subsequent movement from Canada into the United States that destabilized a coherent immigrant presence in Canada.

But Grove and his text are not without controversy. "Passing" as an immigrant from the desirable class (Northern European),⁴¹ Grove's account of his decision to move south is of particular interest; however, it is his move back north and his proclaimed choice to become a Canadian over an American that is of most importance, particularly at

⁴¹"Passing" is typically regarded as a racial or queer strategy that has informed postcolonial understandings of mimicry. Strategies of passing for white, for example, have been interrogated in Nella Larsen's fiction, as have strategies of passing for an imperialist in Olaudah Equiano's autobiographical narrative depicting his life first as a slave and then as an emancipated but anglicized African. See, for example, Elaine K. Ginsberg's *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*, as well as Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *The Signifying Monkey* and Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*. But "passing" has also been identified as a strategy in queer narratives or in drag performances. I am therefore also drawing on Judith Butler's study of gender, sexuality and performativity in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter* to call attention to the performance of identity (racial, sexual, and in this case national and immigrant) that marginalized peoples deploy as a means of entering the centre, however temporary that entrance may be.

Consequently, a reversed mimicry is also evident. Whites seeking to pass for black are becoming much more prominent, especially in the entertainment industries (particularly in rap circles). John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me*, depicting Griffin's drug-enhanced performance to experience prejudice in the American South, can be seen as a prototype of white male performers "performing" blackness—not so much white actors donning black faces for black roles but rappers, like Eminem or Snow, whose performance of blackness is particular to the inner-city ghettos. Even though there have been successful and influential white rappers, like the Beastie Boys, the image of the "authentic" or credible rapper is that of a black man, usually a gang-member, from the inner-city hood. Someone like Vanilla Ice, who accentuates his whiteness in a black world, becomes a laughable mimic.

a time when Canada is emerging as an autonomous nation. Grove's perspective of what makes (or will make) Canada a great nation in his fiction, essays, and public speeches gained currency; the (desirable) non-threatening immigrant provides insight into what a native either does not see or takes for granted. It is in this subtle distinction that Grove manifests the difference between the immigrant and the native, reminding the nation of the immigrant's value not only as an agriculturalist but as a mirror that reflects back the "truth." The desirable immigrant's voice and perspective is therefore one of privilege.⁴² However, as Grove's case shows, such privilege demands strategic maneuvering and masking, thereby forcing the undesirable immigrant to find creative or subversive ways to voice that truth.

Deemed the national (token?) immigrant voice of the 1920s in Canada, Grove filled a socio-literary need. As Terrence L. Craig points out, when "Grove began publishing in Canada, there was a significant absence of realistically portrayed immigrants in Canadian literature in English" but an abundance of "unrealistic stereotypes of immigrants, especially in the fiction of [Charles] Gordon" (94). A first-generation immigrant and a writer who wrote in English, Grove naturalized the "authentic" or realistic European immigrants in his fiction, particularly in *Settlers of the Marsh*, and used himself as in his public speeches, like "Nationhood." His fiction and his public speeches (subsequently published in a collection in 1929, *It Needs To Be Said*) further naturalized Grove as a national immigrant voice and persona, a function not

⁴²The undesirable immigrant, in contrast, is simply voiceless or, if granted a voice, generally unheard and/or unheeded.

unlike that of his American counterpart, the rags-to-riches Anzia Yezierska.⁴³ His success, as Kroetsch and Craig have noted, was no small accomplishment. According to Craig,

Grove must be given much of the credit for breaking the English-Canadian monopoly in Canadian literature by validating the experiences of aliens as equal to those of charter-group Canadians and by insisting on the common humanity of both. He did this largely from an assumed English-Canadian point of view, which he coated with enough layers of European aesthetic sophistication to ingratiate himself with those English-Canadians who suffered, paradoxically, from a cultural inferiority complex when they looked back on European civilization. (94)

Craig's observation points to the inception of immigrant (rendered erroneously synonymous here with ethnic) writing into the English-Canadian canon, leading us to question the possibilities and limitations of such an inception. Unquestionably, it is crucial that the immigrant be given a voice within the nation rather than remain,

⁴³Of course, a more fitting comparison is Theodore Dreiser insofar as Dreiser, although born in Indiana, was the son of a poor Catholic German immigrant. However, although Dreiser's naturalist fiction can also be read as fiction of social protest, especially the urban-set *Sister Carrie* (1900), his novels do not focus on the immigrant or the immigrant community or life in America. He does, however, touch on the corruption of the Irish immigrants in the figure of Edward Malia Butler in *The Financier*, who makes his money by regularly "winning" the city's garbage contracts. In the context of immigrant literature of the 1920s, Yezierska is a more fitting American counterpart.

following Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the voiceless subaltern within.⁴⁴ Paradoxically, the position of the immigrant writer, like that of the immigrant generally, necessitates and maintains difference, which is simultaneously celebrated and condemned. While Grove chose to become an audible immigrant writer who explicitly maintained and used his difference, would he have been as successful had he chosen to hide, or assimilate, his difference?⁴⁵ Would he have been rendered a mimic English-Canadian literary voice instead of an innovative “new” voice?

Grove’s public persona points to various strategies that the immigrant utilizes in order to survive and achieve literary success in America, which, in his fiction and speeches Grove vehemently asserts “is a continent, not a country” (*Search* 92). While Grove did not hide the fact that he was an immigrant, he did hide his origins. His symbolic use of masks and his characters’ preoccupation with passing for natives therefore reverberates extra-textually and points to Grove’s own passing strategies. Employing discourses of passing to read immigrant literature, especially Grove, is a useful strategy. As Elaine K. Ginsberg reminds us, the assumption behind most critical

⁴⁴As aforementioned, within the immigrant class distinctions are made and hierarchies established that privilege desirable classes of immigrants over those deemed undesirable though not necessarily excludable. Hence, those belonging to the undesirable class of immigrants effectively occupy the position of the subaltern. Even Grove’s liberal views on immigration and the rights of immigrants have limits, European ones.

⁴⁵Grove’s inception as an immigrant voice should not be confused as an ethnic voice since his ethnicity was conspicuously ambiguous. His difference, moreover, constitutes an immigrant difference rather than a racial or ethnic one. It should be noted, however, that his ethnic difference played an integral part as he concealed it and passed himself for a Scandinavian European rather than as a German.

work on “the process and discourse of ‘passing’ in American history and in the American cultural imaginary” examines “the status and privileges associated with being white and being [heterosexual] male” (5). Yet, “in addition to black/white and female/male passing, some issues of national identification and of sexuality where those issues impinge on the political questions related to race and gender” equally apply (5). It is in this context that Grove’s passing informs his fiction. In Grove’s case, passing for a Scandinavian European effectively hid his German origins. Douglas Spettigue rightly identified Grove with the German writer Felix Paul Greve (Dudek 97). As Kroetsch elaborates, Grove

was a writer who arrived in Canada in the early part of this century and who gave the impression that he was a Swedish aristocrat who had fallen on hard times while visiting in Toronto. He went out to the prairies and set about becoming a Canadian writer, working in English, and by the time of his death in 1948 he had succeeded to a remarkable degree.... Only in recent years have we discovered that Frederick Philip Grove was not a Swede but rather a German writer of bourgeois background... who faked his suicide and migrated to Canada and became, under his assumed name, a central figure in Canadian writing. (65)

Grove’s self-masking is understandable considering that he immigrated during the first “important periods of continental European immigration to Canada,” from 1897 “through the outbreak of World War I” (Padolsky 34). Although German emigrants had been included in the desirable class during the Sifton administration, by the outbreak of World

War I, under Oliver's administration, they were deemed "enemy aliens," subject to subsequent internment during the War and discriminated against more generally after the War.

Interestingly, as K. M. McLaughlin notes, "[i]mmigration studies tend to divide immigrants and their experiences in Canada into the categories of old and new immigrants. What is especially interesting about the Germans is that they are both" (3). In fact, they "have remained the third largest ethnic group in Canada, rarely outnumbered as immigrants to Canada in any decade since Confederation except by those from the British Isles" (3). Moreover, a large number of German immigrants to Canada "came only *after* first emigrating to the United States" (3). Grove's circular immigration pattern thus points back to early German immigration, which found a haven in Canada rather than in the United States as a result of American anti-German sentiments that rendered Germans apparently unassimilable and the Canadian need to retain immigrants, which led to promises being made to German agricultural groups, like the Mennonites, of "large areas of land where they could settle as a community, retaining their language, their religion and an exemption from military service" (10). Fearing that Mennonites would depart when "they had outgrown the land available in Manitoba[, ...] the Canadian government set aside a second large area, comprising 42 townships, near Rosthern, 40 miles north of Saskatoon" (10). John A. Macdonald's government privileged German immigrants who were regarded as being "particularly well-suited to the challenges of Western settlement. In addition, they were members of the northern, Teutonic 'race' and they were related to

the British by the blood-line of the Royal family” (10). German immigrants were rarely “subject to the poverty, disease and despair which characterized so many of the Irish famine immigrants” of the mid-1800s (5). Given the British prejudice against the Irish, it is not surprising that the German immigrants were favoured.

By World War I, “the age of innocence for Canada’s Germans” came to an end (12). McLaughlin elaborates:

From being a much favoured people within the nation, overnight they were villified as the enemy. This was a war not just against Germany, but against ‘Germanness’, and it was no longer possible to be both a German and a Canadian. Indeed, German-Canadians no longer felt at ease speaking their mother tongue. German-language church services were halted and the Canadian government moved to suppress all German language newspapers across the country. German schools were immediately closed. It was no longer possible to proclaim as W.H. Breithaupt had in 1916 Berlin, Ontario, that “we are Germans and proud of it.” Within a few months Berlin, Ontario, in fact, ceased to exist; it was renamed Kitchener, after Britain’s famous general in the war against Germany. In Western Canada the names of Koblenz, Bremen, Prussia and Kaiser also disappeared from the map. The sense of pride in being German was replaced by feelings of anxiety and uneasiness. Immigration from Germany ceased abruptly and before the war’s end some 8, 500 German-Canadians and Austro-

Hungarians would be interned. (12)

The “anti-‘foreigner’ sentiment that Grove had to address,” Enoch Padolsky argues, “was perhaps stronger than pre-War opposition to these same groups” because of a number of factors:

First, the West was no longer “empty” and settlers as such were not perceived to be needed as they were during the first pre-War wave of immigration. By the end of the decade even the need for imported farm labour was decreasing. Mechanization and the growth of nearby labour pools in the prairie cities reduced the need of immigrants of any kind. Immigrants brought in ostensibly as farm labourers and domestics were perceived by some as displacing “Canadian” settlers or as drifting to the cities. Secondly, there was less confidence that the “foreigners” could be “Canadianized”—the numbers were considerable and the “foreigners” seemed to be resisting “superior” Canadian (i.e. British-Canadian) values and culture. Grove’s focus on “Canadianization” and assimilation can be traced to this wide-spread public fear. The War had also increased resentment against the former “enemy aliens” within Canada... and there had been anti-German riots after the veterans returned. This too must have had an impact on Grove—he was after all a German in Canada during this whole period. (34)

Grove’s passing for a Northern European (non-German) was crucial to his having and

maintaining a powerful and influential immigrant voice within the nation. But his passing can also be read more generally in relation to his fictional immigrants' anxieties which articulate the need to pass for natives in order to ensure survival in the foreign, therefore threatening, country of entry. Rhetorically, the strategies of passing reverse the threat and posit that it is the nation (or natives), not the immigrant, which is to be feared, or, at the very least, that the fear of the foreign is simultaneously felt by both natives *and* immigrants. However, in *A Search for America*, Phil Branden clearly suggests that the immigrant has more to fear in the foreign nation than the natives do of the incoming foreigner. In a rhetorical discussion of American "graft," Branden asks: "Is it that the 'grafter' consciously or unconsciously drifts toward the immigrant? Does he there scent his prey? Or is it that the immigrant, coming as he does into a world which he does not understand, here finds the one feature which he by force must learn to understand if he wants to survive?" (93).

Grove's subversive tactics, however implicit, are evident throughout his text, particularly in his use of masks. K.P. Stich identifies one such masking as a hide-and-seek "search" that holds a challenge for the "critic of this cryptic autobiographical work [who] may expect only partial success, as if in response to Phil's reconciliation to only 'partial victories' [...] in his quest" (161). Stich's reading of *A Search for America* calls attention to the imbrication of "the recurrent wood/tree motifs" and

Grove's philological erudition and playfulness in his cunning biographical games [which] provide a compellingly plain solution to his choice of

names: Greve means thicket, grove in Chaucer's English; Phil's Swedish family name is not so much a Scandinavian form of Brandon as simply a Swedish noun meaning the fire; and Grove stands, above all, for the new growth after the fire (Branden) has ravaged the old growth (Greve) and also for a grave in the Low German spoken in Greve's northern Germany. Consequently the recurrence of thickets, deadwood, firewood, trees, and pruning in *A Search for America* imposes a consistent psycho-biographical level of meaning on Phil's already more metaphorical than literal identity and travels. Phil's relatively late resort to pruning and grafting trees suggests that Greve did not use the name of Grove immediately upon arrival in the United States. (160-61)

However "playful," Grove's textual masking held, if indeed revealed and unmasked, serious consequences and ramifications for him, and possibly for other emerging immigrant voices. And, if such "cryptic" messages do permeate Grove's text, the possibility that other subversive and equally "cryptic" messages are left to decipher equally exists. The use of such textual disguises reveals a kind of doubleness and points to a preoccupation that is closely associated with being an immigrant, especially if that immigrant happens to belong to an undesirable or "enemy alien" class. That the immigrant goes so far as to taunt the reader with textual clues further points to the condemnation for the native audience that fails to recognize the masks and solve the riddle, and reinforces the existence of a kind of double sensitivity.

Grove's authorial disguise, or doubleness, is paralleled with the various maskings and unmaskings that his protagonist and narrator undergoes. From the outset, Branden calls attention to his questionable national and class origins:

I was not British-born; but my mother had been a Scotswoman, and from my earliest childhood I had been trained to speak the English of fashionable governesses. I had acquired—*by dint of much study of English literature*—a rather extensive reading and arguing vocabulary which however showed—and, by the way, to this day shows—its parentage by a peculiar stiff-necked lack of condescension to every-day slang. My father, Charles Edward Branden by name, had been of Swedish extraction, himself rather an Anglophile. For many years previous to my emigration, *I, too, had affected English ways in dress and manners*; occasionally, when travelling in Sweden or in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, *I had connived at being taken for an Englishman*. I am afraid, if I could meet myself as I then was, I should consider my former self as an insufferable snob and coxcomb. (1; emphasis mine)

Branden's constructed identity is that of a true English gentleman insofar as truth is derived from literary fiction. As a meta-fictional Englishman, Branden characterizes himself as fitting the desirable immigrant label. Because he is a hybrid, the product of the union between Northern Europe (Swedish father) and Britain (Scottish mother and assimilated English manners), Branden represents the desirable immigrant of Northern

stock who has already been assimilated into English language and culture. Rhetorically, however, an enlightened and more mature Americanized Branden characterizes his youthful self as a pretentious snob; an inauthentic English gentleman who is unmasked in Europe when his father loses his fortune. This immediate negative self-representation implicitly calls into question the desirability of the apparently superior British emigrants, and calls attention to the relative ease with which an affected or acquired identity can ‘pass’ for another more desirable one. Branden reveals his father’s methods to “cover the ignominy of [their] origins” when he first marries Branden’s mother (5), and celebrates his father’s attainment of happiness before his death: “He was fortunate; for at last he realized his dream, even though only for a short time; and I can imagine how he felt about it, taking it as a final reward for duty well done during a lifetime of disguise” (8). Exactly what Branden’s “duty” is, or what his “lifetime of disguise” encompasses, is left unclear.

Grove calls attention to a tension between the masks that the immigrant seeks to don and the mask that labels the immigrant. When, for example, Branden first arrives in Canada, Bennett, himself an immigrant who by now has been assimilated to the point that Branden assumes he is a native American, un.masks Branden’s presumed passing: “Green here? [...] Been in this country long?” (20). The “green” mask that the recent immigrant unknowingly and then reluctantly but inevitably wears is an instant marker that defines the immigrant as gullible and naive. For Branden, the “most heinous of all crimes [... is] a crime which also involves the most humiliating admission of abject inferiority: ‘green-ness’!...” which, he concedes, is “the first step in [his] Americanization” (21).

Understandably, Branden's "most immediate ambition, like that of every immigrant, [is] to differ from the average American as little as possible" (82). Grove's use of the term "abject inferiority" is rather interesting here, as it draws parallels to Julia Kristeva's later 1980's work on sexual abjection (1980). Kristeva uses a French psychoanalytic feminist position to focus on the historical expulsion, the rejection of the Other (woman), but she also recovers in that abjection the power to shock, or horrify, with which the Other (woman) can regain some of her lost socio-linguistic power.

In contrast, Grove's unassuming and naive Branden cannot possibly shock. Humorously, it is the naive Branden who is mortified when he first learns that there is "no law in this country against assuming a false name" (89), which the less naive Grove has already assumed. Branden's non-threatening quasi-tragic naturalist-picaresque character contests the nation's abjection, although his various metamorphoses—from a European "insufferable snob and coxcomb" into a "green" immigrant turned tramp and later hobo before becoming a respectable Canadian teacher—do point to a few didactic and key 'shocking' moments. While tramping and exerting some control over his destiny as a wanderer, he identifies a moment in which fate once again forces him from his chosen path. Recalling his earlier metaphor of seeing himself "trying to cast anchor somewhere; and whenever I thought I had done so, I was cut adrift again" (247), when he is happy to be adrift and wandering he is caught inside a railway cart and literally driven off his planned destination. Grove then proposes a more horrifying metaphor for the immigrant's experience in America:

I was beside myself with rage and fear; and in my foolish panic I began to hammer the door with my fists, and to yell and to shout at the top of my voice, till I was hoarse.

Then I sat down, in front of the door; and tears of fury coursed over my cheeks. I raved in insensate anger against God and fate and the world. I felt cheated and trapped, like an animal, like a wild beast. And as a trapped beast will—to the very last, to the limit of its strength—rather than give in, fight against that trap which has caught it, so I fought on again, without thinking, without reasoning. I stood and hammered away at that door till the knuckles of my fists were bleeding; till I had spent the last of my strength. True symbol of much of the immigrant's life! (359)

The image of the immigrant-turned-hobo as a trapped animal who, in his fear and rage is further dehumanized, points to an inherent contradiction. The caged immigrant/animal enters the cage of his own free will. The horror of the image of the immigrant-turned-savage intensifies with the understanding that the immigrant's cage is a result of a misconception (or misreading) of that space—the immigrant believes it to be a sheltering haven when, in fact, it is a cage. Immigration is thus rendered synonymous with entrapment.

No matter which mask Branden dons, the natives recognize him as something different from what he pretends or purports to be. After tramping along the river, for example, and coming into a town in search of work, he reinvents himself: "I looked quite

civilized now that my hair was cut. I did not realize how unmistakably foreign my breeches made me appear; it took the war to make the average American accept breeches as sensible leg-wear” (312). His foreignness, evidently still visible, costs him a job: “My friend of the night before had called him a funny fellow; but he had added that he was easy enough to get along with. I must have antagonized him. I had antagonized people before. What in me was it that did it? I came to the conclusion that it was the fact of my recent immigration” (315). The outer mask (first green then the foreign breeches) is representative of an apparently innate difference that distinguishes the immigrant from the native. Hence, when Branden states, near the end of his narrative, that three “months ago [he] had been a hobo; now [he] adopted the disguise of one [and has] since gone out like that again, a good many times; [he] ha[s] always enjoyed such holidays” (437), it follows that he is either recognized as being different, or an inauthentic hobo, or else that he has mastered the art of passing. Earlier in his narrative, for example, Branden is rescued by a country doctor who intellectually befriends him and, in doing so, Branden recognizes him as the first of many “Lincolns” who populate western rural America. His emblematic characterization is crucial when he, as “Lincoln,” replies to Branden’s self-assertion that he is just “a common tramp” as follows: “You’re not [...]. Don’t do an injustice to yourself. You may have been tramping, but you are not a tramp. There’s a *difference*” (331 emphasis mine). The actual success that Branden has in donning different masks is therefore questionable. The narrative further suggests that it is only when Branden learns to accept and later utilize his recognizable difference that his

Americanization is complete. Significantly, in the process, he is able to recognize other immigrants' masks. When, for example, he first meets Ivan, he says: "You are Russian, are you not?" to which Ivan replies: "'Born in Russia; but I have my papers,' meaning apparently that he was naturalized" (373). Ivan's answer to Branden's unmasking points to the inherent problem of difference—must the immigrant retain the mark of difference even if naturalized and, therefore, fully assimilated or Americanized?

In analyzing the immigrant's difference, it is useful to situate first the immigrant's space(s) within the nation that simultaneously invites and abjects him/her. Much of Grove's immigrant narrative is devoted to the sympathetic portrayal of the naive Branden as a victim of American greed and graft. Such a representation is a rhetorical device that allows the immigrant to be identified as a non-threatening, familiar, honest, hard-working, gullible and idealistic newcomer (echoing Whitman) whose victimization allows the native readers to see the nation, and the nation's treatment of its immigrants, through the immigrant's eyes. However, Branden's victimization points to other problems. In her study of sexual power in naturalism, Irene Gammel reads Branden's victimization as indicative of his overcoming the feminized object he has become. According to her, Branden's search in North America is "not so much to discover (or become alienated from) a true (innate) selfhood, but rather to create himself as subject" (140). In this sense, because Branden represents the immigrant, it follows that the immigrant is not a subject but has the possibility of becoming one. Gammel further argues that, "[s]ubjected to a process of feminization and victimization, Branden senses

the danger of disappearing altogether, of finding his masculinity—and thus his positive subjectivity, according to the logic of naturalism—completely shattered on the new continent” (142). Here, Gammel’s reading echoes Kroetsch’s reading of Grove’s experiences: “Grove faked his own death. And yet in a symbolic way there was nothing fake about it; he died out of one culture and into another” (70). This process of death and rebirth, of losing one’s subjectivity and searching for the possibility of remaking another, has existential ramifications for the immigrant’s identity, particularly when considering the lack of power that the immigrant has in establishing and naturalizing his/her chosen new identity: difference is a constant marker that repels various chosen masks.

Gammel contextualizes Branden’s problematic subjectivity in the naturalist genre. According to her,

[i]n North America, Branden finds himself entrapped in the typical naturalistic plot, often occupying a “female” position as he becomes victimized in his journey across America. In fact, in the course of his cultural and linguistic crisis, in his personal experience of entropic disorientation in a new culture, the new Canadian immigrant experiences a precarious sense of his own “feminization.” The cultural and linguistic uncertainty experienced in the new country, and the accompanying “loss” of power and masculinity, prove so unsettling for Branden that he can only articulate this loss of control by impersonating a female role in the naturalist plot of decline, eventually to exorcize both his “femaleness” and

his “sexuality” when he is reborn as “a new man” in Canada. (137)

Certainly, as Gammel suggests, the lack or absence of Branden’s sexuality invites critical inquiry. Although Branden appears to be disinterested in sex, Grove’s narrative reveals textual slippages that suggest otherwise. Such sexual slippages point back to Grove’s elusive identity, and the suggestion that Greve was forced to immigrate in order to avoid a sex scandal. Dudek, for example, points out that the “Hinrichs Katalog for the years up to 1904 gives us four small items by Felix Paul Greve dealing with Oscar Wilde” (97).

While Dudek shies away from suggesting that Greve’s associations with Wilde be read as evidence of Greve’s implied homosexuality, he does concede that “this was a component of his secret self” (97). Heterosexual passing in Grove’s fiction occurs in the feminization of America which then serves to authenticate the immigrant’s heterosexual masculinity.

Just before he becomes a tramp, for example, Branden muses:

I was young, in the early years of manhood. My whole body and soul were astir with the possibilities of passion. Love was not only a potentiality; it was a prime need; it was a craving, a cry of my innermost being.

And this love had no object except the woods, the mountains, the streams; bird, insect, beast, gossamer threads, smoky haze, the smell of the earth. These, or more briefly, the country, I loved.

My love for it was not the love for a friend—which is the love for that which is not; it idealizes, substitutes, omits, redraws. It was not the

love for the mother—which is the love for origins, help, food, shelter, care, guidance, akin to gratitude. It was the love for the bride, full of desires, seeking all things, accepting them, craving fulfilment of higher destinies. Forgotten was where I came from; forgotten what I had gone through; forgiven in advance what I might rush into and still have to suffer. Every fibre of my being yearned. And though what lured me was nature, yet it was also America. (272)

By feminizing America as his bride, Branden averts himself of his own feminization and imposes his masculine dominance over the land. Literally, he penetrates America by following her river (or canal) into the mid-western, fertile interior. Symbolically, he penetrates America in search of that “spiritual” ideal he identifies with Lincoln, the Father, who, psychoanalytically, he seeks to find, match, and become through his philosophical musings and writings. In the process, he desires to take possession of the Mother (Nature, the land, America—Lincoln’s Wife and Mother). He questions: “Was Lincoln an accident? Was there in this America a soil from which he had grown?” (237). Finding, wedding, and penetrating that fertile America becomes Branden’s spiritual search: “Unconsciously I was classing myself side by side with Lincoln, as opposed to that part of America which had wounded and hurt me” (237). Branden recognizes that only if America can give birth to him can he be *of* America, although this re-birth is purely spiritual: “Where, then, was the ground out of which [Lincoln, Lowell and Thoreau] had grown? Where was the soil that had borne them, so it might bear me?”

(163). Seeing himself as a seed, he seeks to “find, in this labyrinth of roads, and fields, rocks and soils, that spot of humus where I could take root *in order that I might grow*. I had so far accepted myself, my innermost I, as something given, something stable, enduring, as something *that was*. [...] I suddenly saw myself as a mere germ, as a seed that wanted to be planted. I realized that I was nothing finished; that there were still possibilities of growth in me” (115), and reasserts that the “one thing needful for the seed is to be planted” (163). Oedipally, Branden sees himself both as seed and planter; he needs his own seed to be planted in order to be borne by the Mother (the land), nurtured and grown to become the Father (Lincoln), and, in the process, sees himself as a potent young man seduced by the feminine (the idea of America) and is thus in desperate need of sowing his seeds. He needs to find the soil—in order to dominate the soil; in order to legitimize and naturalize his own home-grown subjectivity.

It would appear, then, that in order for the immigrant, who is feminized, to attain subjecthood, he must assert his masculine domination over the other “feminine” signs, namely the land and America. Implicitly, the feminized immigrant in the process of becoming a subject is defined in masculine terms, not unlike Whitman’s “new person” who erroneously sees America as a faithful lover (though significantly not necessarily feminized) and safe ground to remake himself into a “real heroic man.” If becoming a subject also implies becoming a native, then America as a feminine sign represents not a lover but the Mother who can transform the immigrant by rebirthing him into a native son who is reborn in (and of) her lands. The construction of the immigrant in the masculine

offers the male immigrant strategies for reclaiming his subjectivity (or manhood as it were) by feminizing that which he can have dominance over (like the feminine land which, rather Oedipally, rebirths him). But this model or definition leaves little room for the female immigrant to maneuver within heterosexual terms. In fact, by defining the immigrant in the masculine the female immigrant appears to be perpetually on the outside, having to rely on her immigrant male counterpart to negotiate not only his space but hers as well. To be left outside the male-immigrant and female-land equation means to remain in the ambiguous domestic immigrant space that Yeziarska's Sara wants to escape.

Branden's sexual ambiguity, however, is more complex and his feminization, or the feminization of the immigrant, needs further analysis. Echoes of Sifton's vision of the agriculturalist Eastern European immigrant are evident in Grove's characterization of Ivan; when Branden first meets Ivan he thinks of him as the personification of Tolstoy's Sergei Ivanovitch. When he sees him working on the farm, however, Branden idolizes him as the desirable (male) immigrant and concedes that "Ivan looked a different man" who reminds him "of Levin himself—the man who stands squarely upon the soil and who, from the soil, from *his* soil, reaches out with tentative mind into the great mysteries. This man was to me, on this evening, while we were rattling along the road, the personification of all that is fine and noble in bodily labour; of *the joy of muscle and sinew that want to play in mere exertion*. I envied him his strength" (399; emphasis mine). Branden's glorification of Ivan's manliness lends itself to homosocial

interpretations, but it is his comparing himself to Ivan that is of utmost interest: “From him was reflected into myself, into my own weary limbs and aching joints, an exhilaration, a quiet satisfaction with weariness honestly come by, with pain resulting from having used and called into action hidden reserves of bodily powers of whose very existence I had been in ignorance” (399). Yearning to imitate Ivan and to become the type of manly man that the soil bears, thereby typifying the manly agriculturalist immigrant, Branden’s feminization is, again, apparent. But his feminization also points to the remnants of his European class origins which mark him as being different from other tramps and labourer immigrants. In retrospect, he asserts that he has “sometimes felt inclined [...] to put down [his] education among the liabilities rather than among the assets” (13). Not surprisingly, however, it is when he learns to use his education as an asset that he places himself in a position of power within the amorphous immigrant body. Lacking the ideal physical body for tilling the land, Branden asserts his power by flexing his mind, which allows him to serve a metonymic function that is also one of cultural and linguistic mediator and translator.

Branden’s synechdochical function, moreover, occurs as result of a shift that takes place in which Branden moves from seeing and representing himself as an individual to his identifying with and thinking of himself as a part of the existing body, or class, of immigrants; as he asserts: “When I came from Europe, I came as an individual; when I settled down in America, at the end of my wanderings, I was a social man” (436). Having “devoted the major part of [his] life to the task of ‘Americanizing’ others[, he] ha[s], from

choice, since [he] found [his] ‘level’ in the New World, spent most of [his] years among that part of the population of this continent which is of foreign origin. [...] If [the immigrant] is unable to speak the language, he feels helpless, not without bitterness” (92-3). Grove identifies the “level” as a kind of class that is markedly separate from the other “levels” or classes in American society. While his identification with and eventual becoming a voice for the immigrant body is a useful and needful strategy that can inscribe the immigrant into the nation’s centre, the politics of synecdochical representation demand attention. If, for example, the individual, heterosexual male immigrant becomes the immigrant voice who speaks for the immigrant communities, does he speak for the individual members that constitute said communities? Does he, for example, speak for the female members of such communities whose experiences of immigration are largely informed by their sex and position within both the national and their domestic cultural communities? If the individual becomes *the* voice, is there room for a multiplicity of immigrant voices or of plural(ist) immigrant representation?

From the outset, Branden realizes that once “he was stripped of his social pretensions” the outward markers (or masks) of class, like clothes, that are recognizable in Europe mean nothing in America, where nobody “paid the slightest attention to [him]” when dressed as a fashionable, upper-class European gentleman (30). He equally notes that “what we call culture, education, breeding is largely a matter of environment, something that it takes very long to acquire but which may, after all, be acquired and, therefore, lost” (61). Specifically, he typifies the average immigrant as being able to move

simply from one life into another of equal status and/or value:

As a rule the immigrant who goes from one country to another still preserves some connecting-link with the past. He continues in the same work which he has been doing; and, while he learns new ways of doing his work, he moves among the same class of people to which he belongs himself. He may even keep up pretty close relations with his old environment. Letters at least will arrive. I do not mean to use the word 'class' here in a sense indicative of air-tight partitions between social strata; in that sense class does not exist in America. There still remains the use of the word as a convenient synonym for "social environment." (41-42)

From Branden's experience, which we gather is both common and different from that of other immigrants, it is evident that Branden has been socially misplaced and that America has already created a class or level for the immigrant, regardless of whether that immigrant fits that class.

For example, Branden states that immigrants "from Eastern Europe [like Ivan] were wanted to do the hard work in America, that kind of work for which the man born in America had become too soft through easy living. They were highly welcome to employers who found it increasingly difficult to secure help for that class of work. But they were not at all welcome to those who they regarded as their equals in the country" (340). Branden positions himself as an equal to the American-born male who has grown

“too soft through easy living,” thereby contesting his feminization. When he situates himself within the level of the hard-working labourer immigrant, he differentiates himself and states: “I had had a vision of the continent which stretched beyond the rim of the coast-lands. [...] The labourer was the man whom I wanted to study; unconsciously I understood by that the labouring immigrant: others who, like myself, had come into this country to make a living, but who had the strong arm to make a success of it. I wanted to see them in the mass, to weigh their chances for a real life. [...] I realized by this time that mine was of necessity an exceptional case” (356-57). The testimonial narrator thus turns social anthropologist and voyeur, bringing into the soft, middle-class American household, where he has already claimed, the “real” horrors of “immigrant America.”

In identifying with the immigrant labourer but maintaining the soft American as equal, Branden becomes a social activist and Grove’s novel becomes easily identifiable as a non-threatening and somewhat polite novel of social protest. In a post-War era rife with political paranoia over “government subversives” of “enemy alien” race, Grove, through Branden, first demystifies the threat of socialist ideals: “I did not know at the time just what socialism was or meant. So far I had had a vague idea that it meant the ‘subversion of the state’; I considered it one of the many paradoxes in which Bernard Shaw indulged that he tried to persuade the world that he was a Socialist, when the whole world knew all the time that he was perfectly respectable and nice” (69). Rhetorically, a respectable producer of culture like Shaw, who also happens to be a “perfectly respectable and nice” person, cannot possibly be a “damned foreign agitator” (444) or a threat to the state.

Branden then continues to naturalize socialist ideals by stating that he “had never seriously thought of such topics as Old-Age-Insurance. [...] In this practical case, of which there must be many duplicates in a great industrial organization like that of America, [he] felt at once, as [he] feel[s] to-day, that society is at fault if it leaves the provision for old age to the individual’s thrift, or, worse still, puts it beyond his powers to look out for himself” (69). Placing the responsibility of the elderly on the state is another rhetorical device that allows him then to place the “social burden” of the immigrant on the state. For example, in identifying the country doctor as one of the many Lincolns, Branden posits socialism not as a “foreign” or “alien” idea but he naturalizes it as an American ideal that coincides with the ideas of Lincoln’s democracy, as the doctor’s understanding of immigration indicates: “We invite the immigrant. We tell him, Come and you will find freedom and economic independence. And when he follows the call, we turn him loose to shift for himself” (331).

Given the opportunity to discuss further, as equals, his political views with his later American boss, Mr. Mackenzie, Branden tells him: “When I leave this life, I am going to talk Red to every man like you [...]. But I am going to be the most conservative of the conservatives when I talk to the men. I cannot help believing that at heart you mean right, even where you are doing wrong” (432). Straddling the middle between political and cultural extremes, a stereotypically Canadian position, Branden voices his socialist vision in which the state takes charge and responsibility for its immigrants. He tells Mr. Mackenzie:

“What would I do if a property like this fell into my hands at the present time, I being what I am and having gone through what I have seen of the world? I will tell you; but it will seem Utopian. First of all I should spend some hundred thousand odd dollars in providing proper dormitories for the men—a white-tiled bunk-house with proper bathing and washing facilities and decent beds: that would settle the vermin. Then gymnasium, reading-room, and play-room equipped for the proper kind of games: that would settle the goings-on in that bunk-house hall of yours. Next I should provide proper work for them the year around. You would soon anchor that part of your floating labour supply which can take root. And lastly I should divest myself of my property. [...]

I mean, I should feel that it is sinful for me to let even an appearance persist as if I were really the owner of all this and as if the men were working for me. It is surely better for the country if the same amount of grain, or even a smaller amount, is produced by a greater number of independent farmers, each holding a fraction only of what you hold. I am not an economist, but I can see that real democracy can be arrived at only in one of two ways, by collective ownership or by a limitation of wealth. I do not presume to decide on their relative merits; I do not expect to see either way realized in my lifetime.” (433-34)

Branden’s “utopia” places him in the position of power as land-owner so that he might

divest the existing economic system. Similarly, as teacher to the immigrants in the Canadian prairies, and to the ‘natives’ in their literary households, Branden (Grove) positions himself as an (independent) agent of the state, taking social responsibility and implementing social(ist) policy by raising awareness and combating ignorance through fiction. Again, Branden’s power derives from his privileged position and his ‘difference,’ which allows him to mediate between the world he identifies with and the world in which he places himself.

Branden’s doubleness is worth reconsidering. As Gammel asserts, “Branden maintains a precarious borderline status: he is simultaneously subject and object, acting and acted upon, authority figure and victim, with the novel blurring the naturalist boundaries between knowing spectator and ignorant victim, between masculine and feminine” (148). Branden’s “borderline” status, understood in terms of the split between the young and the old voices, has been characterized by W. J. Keith as “a curious ‘double-view’ effect” and by Frances Key as a “‘biformity.’ [A] tendency ‘to propagate opposing points of view’” (in Gammel 147). For Gammel, this “dialogic principle is an ironic technique of self-subversion that allows the new ‘I’ to put the old self on trial and to play the role of vicious, critical prosecutor at the same time that both young and old narrator put America on trial, testing the American reality in their odyssey across the country” (147-48). Branden’s multifaceted binary splits and polarities emphasize his constant mediating between two opposing or conflicting worlds or principles. His negotiation points to an immigrant sensitivity; the immigrant continually mediates

between the Old World (the past, memory; the world of origin) and the New World (the present/future; the host nation). Such mediation can be understood in terms of temporal and spacial displacement, which evoke anxieties over “taking root” in order to “grow.” Once stabilized (or planted), the doubleness emphasizes a hybrid consciousness whose perspective is unique precisely because of its different components. Hence, as Padolsky notes, Grove’s stressing of “the retention of the old world heritage, and the contribution of the minority member in helping to ‘make this country a great nation’” (43), and his conclusion that “you can destroy; you cannot assimilate” (44), resonates of emerging anxieties over the potential loss of the immigrant voice and sensitivity which, again, is inherently ‘double’ (if not multiple). In Grove’s portrayal, it is the doubleness, or rather the hybrid sensitivity, that redefines the immigrant.

Much has been made about Grove’s immigrant vision of ideal America, by which he means Canada. In a footnote in *A Search for America*, Branden/Grove notes: “I have since come to the conclusion that the ideal as I saw and still see it has been abandoned by the U.S.A. That is one reason why I became and remained a Canadian” (436). Discussing Grove’s idea of nationhood in his essays, Padolsky celebrates Grove’s anti-assimilation vision as an early version of the multicultural mosaic (43). Similarly, Craig notes that Grove was critical “of the American melting pot’s products, and acutely conscious of the European cultural benefits made available to Canada by the immigrants,” which led him to espouse “a vague plan for a ‘federation’ of nationalities, possibly anticipating a politically defined form of multiculturalism” (95). In “Nationhood,” Grove states that

“Canada has been aspiring to nationhood” and glorifies French Québec because of its ability to retain its cultural, linguistic, and religious autonomy within the dominant British Empire. According to Grove, “within an Anglo-Saxon federation lives an alien race, not only willing but eager to uphold a union which at one time was forced upon it” (141). Suggesting that Canada models itself on Québec’s separatism within, he turns his attention to the “influx of alien elements” that exists and is “no less great [proportionately] than the United States” and proclaims that we “do not, as our neighbours, abominate hyphenation; we welcome it; for I repeat, the principle of the British Empire is not that of the Melting-Pot; it is federation” (148-49). Grove’s promoting of the British “federation” as a Canadian (or American) ideal points to a tacit understanding of an “immigrant nation.”

Grove emphasizes that he is “a Canadian by choice” who

was searching for an environment which would help me to express that individual, tragic reaction to life, the world, the universe—to God—which I felt to be alive within me]. I sought it in vain in the United States. I found traces of it; but there was more of it in Canada; and so, after having left [Canada, I returned] to it. What kept me in Canada [...] was the fact that I found here more clearly than elsewhere the germs of such a new or distinctive shade in the generally tragic reaction of human souls to the fundamental conditions of man’s life on earth. (154-55)

Grove’s vision of that “distinctive shade” can be understood in terms of his own

immigrant persona: his doubleness which marks him as a uniquely individualistic naturalized citizen who is continuously mediating between the “Old” and the “New.” In this sense, Grove seems to be privileging the hybrid sensitivity that retains and celebrates its origins as well as adopts the new cultural norms. Grove, through Branden, is not speaking from a strictly European (Swedish/German) perspective, but from a hyphenated position—that of the Canadianized European. While complete assimilation, understood to mean erasure, is undesirable, threatening and relative, partial assimilation, or hyphenation, is desirable and necessary if the immigrant is to survive in America. If the immigrant is to become a subject, moreover, hyphenation, meaning the partial retention of origin, is equally necessary to the survival and growth of the emerging subjectivity. The emerging subjectivity, rooted in its hyphenation or doubleness, is what defines the subject’s individuality. Grove insists that “the fundamental conditions of man’s life on earth” depend on what he has “defined as individuality in a people’s civilization. On that individuality, [he] has said, depends true nationhood” (163). In privileging that “individual” sensitivity, Grove’s idea of nationhood is truly that of the “immigrant nation.”

In Grove’s *A Search for America*, then, Branden—and Grove by association—represents the immigrant largely in individualistic, upper/middle-class, heterosexual masculine terms; as he recalls in the beginning of his narrative, he left Europe because he “did not want to be ‘cut’ or snubbed because [he] was no longer the son of a reputed millionaire” (9). Unlike other “honourable gentlem[e]n” who were

“exceedingly poor” and went to the colonies (South Africa) for “twelve years under an assumed name, [...] ‘made [their] pile’, and returned to Europe to step back into [their] proper place in society” (12), Branden wants to stay in “the country of his adoption [...], paying with his culture-influence for the money” that he will make since he sees “the colonials as probably sorely in need of such influence” (12). In both cases, a culturally barren but materially wealthy America offers the means to achieving social placement for the otherwise misplaced European male individual. Because the desirable immigrant repays his debt with his culture, America needs the desirable class of immigrant as much as the immigrant needs America.

In his search for the ideal America, then, Branden also searches for his ideal social place, or “level,” within America, which he eventually finds among the established European immigrant communities in the Canadian prairies. Although he identifies himself with these immigrants and becomes their self-appointed representative and advocate, he nevertheless retains his distance and emphasizes his individuality and his privileged social status. Branden thus undergoes a shift from being an upper-class European individual to a middle-class “social immigrant” fighting for the rights of the voiceless, lower-class, agriculturalist European immigrant communities. Somewhat paradoxically, his self-identification with these immigrant communities is mitigated by his equal self-identification as separate from them. Hence, he, an enlightened “social(ist) immigrant” whose empathy with proletariat European male immigrants is a result of his having had ‘authentic’ first-hand experience with poverty and manual labour, emphasizes

that his ‘natural’ social position, because of his (upper-class) education, is that of cultural and linguistic mediator and translator. As a synecdochical immigrant voice he universalizes (within Eurocentric and male limits) the immigrant and the immigrant experience. But Grove, through his fictional characters and persona, also becomes a symbol of the (literary) individual immigrant whose social position or “level” in his “adopted country” is that of the insider/outsider; he is simultaneously inside and outside *both* the national and the immigrant cultures, which places him in a position that allows him to contribute actively to the production of both a national and an immigrant culture (or subculture) from a unique (privileged yet limited) perspective.

3

Alie(N)ations

For I will dwarf myself, and live in a hut
Upon the outskirts of nowhere, receive no mail,
And speak so low that only god shall hear me!
Then, surely must we be as bosom friends.
The spot's not touched. I have not read your mind.
It is, perhaps, —I whisper this—my manners,
That now are much too loud, —and now too hushed—
Now ultra-demonstrative, an instant later
All of self-effacement and punctiliousness,
The alien's typical alterations?

False!

For on occasion and in divers lands
Sojourning, I've set up abode with you,
Drank the same drinks, partook of the same food,
Applauded the same music, uttered the
Very same language, thought a similar thought, —
And still you have sneered *Foreigner!* and still
Your hate was great, as reasonless hatred is.

— A.M. Klein, from "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"
[Version 2] (lines 85-101)

In the preceding section, I interrogated the construct of the immigrant nation by focusing on the politics of assimilation. Espoused by the subcategorization of the immigrant, the overriding binary of the old immigration versus the new immigration inadvertently promotes assimilation as the vehicle of acceptance and, because of the adoption of a national-origins quota system of immigration, entry of discriminated groups. The melting pot as a model of assimilation is hailed as the answer to two competing visions of America: it promotes diverse immigration as necessary to the

making of a new, unique, and superior “American” character (people and nation).

Alchemically, the assimilation process enables this prototypical American character to emerge. The immigrant nation can therefore be defined in terms of assimilation. From the immigrant’s perspective, however, assimilation is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it offers the means of attaining upward mobility and even personhood, as Anzia Yezierska’s *Bread Givers* suggests. On the other, as both Yezierska’s Sara Smolinsky and Frederick Philip Grove’s Phil Branden attest, assimilation renders the immigrant a mimic. Hence, while immigration is needful, it nevertheless impinges on the immigrant who must find ways of subverting the process. Grove’s *A Search for America* offers, in addition to mimicry, the strategy of “passing” for native. Emphasized in both mimicry and passing is the double-consciousness the immigrant denotes as s/he negotiates her/his way among the imposed and desired identity constructs.

The immigrant nation, however, has a counter-side which can be termed an alien nation. Emphasizing not the immigrant but the alien, the alien nation alienates the alien within while restricting entry to the alien outside seeking entry. As with the immigrant nation, key issues revolve around strategies of assimilation. Passing and mimicry, however, are hailed by the alien nation as evidence of the immigrant’s unassimilability. In doing so, the alien nation emphasizes difference and, once again, promotes the binary of the native versus the alien. Hence, although the melting pot continues to melt some immigrants (whose assimilation or “whitification” marks their transmutation from immigrant to ethnic), others are kept from the crucible’s pot. The alien nation is a result,

in part, of the social and historical developments that see two World Wars, the Depression, and the Cold War. It is at a time when America is reconstructing itself that the immigrant-as-alien is used to authenticate not the superior American character emerging from the melting pot, but the native.

In this chapter, I will examine the construct of the alien nation as it manifests itself in the production of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 in the United States, which further subcategorizes the immigrant. Under the aegis of the alien nation the immigrant is criminalized either as a political subversive or else as an illegal worker. Culturally, the immigrant is displaced and abstracted in science fiction narratives that mask, rather than mimic, alien identity. This critical and historical paradigm frames my analysis of Don Siegel's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), which is based on Jack Finney's novel (1954). In the second part of this chapter, I explore the Cold War rhetoric that seeps into Adele Wiseman's explicit portrayal of the immigrant in *The Sacrifice*, published the same year as Siegel's film's debut. Of particular interest here is Wiseman's setting of her novel in an unnamed Canada at the time of the Russian pogroms rather than during the Holocaust. Wiseman's strategies point to the immigrant classes of the Displaced Persons, or refugees, which she rhetorically draws on to charge the federal practice of excluding Jewish refugees during and after World War II.

PART I

3.1 The Politics of Alienation

It may seem we have come far since the days of John Edgar Hoover and Joseph Raymond McCarthy; however, when reading the social and political paranoia that fed the witch hunts and Red Scares of the 1950s in a post-Cold War era, specifically at a time when the United States is at war with terrorism, intriguing parallels between the 1950s and the early 2000s surface. In the 1950s, anxieties over alien invasions registered the fear that indistinguishable communist agents infiltrated the nation to destroy it; today, the threat of the Arab terrorist or the Muslim suicide bomber, who has been superficially assimilated into American culture, is cause for anxiety. Echoes of 1950s national security rhetoric permeate the United States response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as is evident in Tom Ridge's address of October 8, 2001. Ridge, appointed Director of the Homeland Security Committee, informed the nation that the Committee would be taking measures to ensure homeland security along all borders and to protect the United States from future attacks. Stressing American unity, Ridge mentioned that all levels of government (federal, state, and county municipality) were working together to protect America. These comments contradict the popular domestic representations of the various levels of government that routinely impair rather than help each other's investigations.⁴⁶ It

⁴⁶Consider, for example, the many plots concerning two (or more) different offices fighting over the rights to a certain case in such popular television dramas as *The Agency* and *Law & Order*. In these shows, the CIA is often in conflict with the FBI, but sometimes forced to work together, albeit reluctantly. Other times, it is the local police force or the state District Attorney that is at odds with a federal investigation possibly involving a foreign diplomat.

takes a common foreign enemy, an invading alien Other, to band together these otherwise estranged sectors. Patriotic duty thus promotes patriotic unity, and in doing so resurrects the cult of the native.

In his address, Ridge assured the nation (and those who receive CNN broadcasts): “we will continue to defend liberty, to secure liberty as we secure this nation,” since “liberty is the most precious gift we offer our *citizens*” (CNN Broadcast; emphasis mine).⁴⁷ America’s emphasis on national defense is an understandable course of action and is not contested here; what is contested are the by-products of national defence that directly affect the immigrant: what happens to the immigrant who is not yet a citizen when national security measures revive nativist sentiments that privilege the citizen over the permanent resident? What happens to said immigrant when s/he happens to be closely associated with a group—by accident of birth, nationality, conscious religious or social affiliation—believed to be linked to a terrorist group? The immigrant need not be a terrorist her/himself, but her/his (perceived) close proximity with anything terrorist can have unfortunate consequences. What the hysteria roused by domestic anxieties over alien

Fighting turf wars, as it were, dissension and fragmentation are comically and dramatically emphasized over competent and collegial unity.

⁴⁷Celebrating America as a “homeland” rather than a “native land,” which implies inclusion of the immigrant who regards America as “home,” Ridge called attention to the historical “national effort” that built the nation to illustrate another chapter of national unity. However, when recalling the building of the railroad, he left out the Asian “coolie” labour. Similarly, when recalling those who fought in World War II, he left out the racist exclusions that worked to restrict immigration from undesirable national, ethnic or religious groups. Lastly, he mentioned putting a man on the moon, an inference that depicts the United States as an imperial power.

invasions and takeovers reveals, be these communist or terrorist, is how fragile the immigrant's place within the nation truly is, and how arbitrary certain restrictions, exclusions, and scapegoating can become. Any immigrant, regardless of assimilation and past conduct, can come under scrutiny because of uncontrollable external factors. Extenuating circumstances thus undermine the immigrant's assimilation, behaviour, and achievements in the nation. In the event that any national, religious, or political group wages war on America, immigrants belonging to or associated with (however tangentially) said group are immediately suspected and policed. Granted, there are some measures that determine which immigrants (or groups thereof) are more likely to be suspected and persecuted, thereby undermining the apparent randomness, but the process remains the same; the only elements that change are who the players are.

During times of peace and plenty, the nation can afford to be generous (in more than spirit). In troubled times, the immigrant may find out just how much a part of the nation s/he truly is (not). What makes the 1950s so confusing is that they appear to be, as Charles Dickens may have so eloquently put it, "the best of times and the worst of times."⁴⁸ Nostalgic representations of the 1950s during the 1970s and 1980s, such as the television series *Happy Days* or the musical *Grease*, depict an age of innocence filled with hamburger joints, poodle skirts, diners, hula hoops, and the birth of rock n' roll. Well behaved and groomed teenagers rebelled only so far—drag racing, wearing leather

⁴⁸I am borrowing Dickens' opening line of *A Tale of Two Cities*.

jackets, and smoking cigarettes. These signs of rebellion, while pointing to a more dangerous criminal world, are simply emblems of teenage cool. In contrast, more dystopic nostalgic accounts dealing especially with the Red Scares and the pivotal trial and subsequent execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1951 and 1953, like E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* and Robert Coover's *The Public Burning*, depict a rather dark chapter of silence, repression, and political persecution. Such representations of the 1950s tap into an era where the conflict between good and evil acquired hyperbolic dimensions. Grander than life metaphors, like Cecil B. DeMille's biblical cinematic epics (like *The Ten Commandments* or *Samson and Delilah*), and hero-worshipping Westerns featuring John Wayne, characterized this dual age in the all-American discourse of the frontier—the enemy within provided the villain in what played out as an old-fashioned cowboys versus Indians game. In the context of immigration, the immigrant can be said occupied the Indian's role, and as such could measure up to become a heroic figure as the native's trustworthy side-kick.

The 1950s mark a volatile period in the immigration history of America, largely because of Cold War paranoia, domestic fears over alien invasions, and the rapid assimilation of the 1920s new immigration as a result of the Second World War. According to Marion T. Bennett, the highly unstable times during the 1940s “put a premium on American citizenship, and resident aliens flocked to the federal courts to be naturalized” (85). It is worth noting that although many had been eligible for naturalization, a significant number had opted not to take advantage of this “privilege.”

Their refusal fueled anti-immigration sentiments as it testified to the new immigrant's unassimilability and disloyalty. However, fearing deportation, naturalization became an effective means of demonstrating patriotic loyalty. The sudden increase in naturalized citizens also worked to distinguish the new citizen from the immigrant, thereby alluding to another binary opposition within the immigrant body. As the new immigrant assimilates and becomes naturalized, a new marginalized immigrant figure emerges. As aforementioned, the pattern that defines the immigrant operates in sets of binary oppositions. In the absence of a discernible immigrant Other (that which occupies the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid), another is produced (thereby maintaining a hierarchical pecking order).

During the 1950s, the emergent subcategories that redefine the immigrant appear to operate largely on political rather than racial terms, pitting the subversive alien against the loyal native, and within the immigrant body the illegal versus legal alien. At the bottom of the chain is the emergent criminalized immigrant, or, rather, the resignified alien. The 1950s immigrant, like that of the 1920s, thus ruptures into myriad sections. What ultimately defines the immigrant in this hysterical period is her/his increasing alienation. Moreover, because of the influx of seasonal workers during World War II and business interests to keep a cheap foreign labour force at home, the immigrant increasingly came to be seen as a temporary rather than permanent resident. Given the international overflow of Displaced Persons by the War whose plight ultimately catapults

American (and Canadian) refugee policy into developing in its own right,⁴⁹ the immigrant acquired an aura of transience, thereby establishing an ephemeral rather than rooted presence in the nation.

That there were anxieties over immigration in the United States is evident when considering the history of immigration legislation of the 1950s. Beginning in 1947, Congress authorized the expenditure of \$50,000 for “a full and complete investigation of [the] entire immigration system” (in Bennett 109).⁵⁰ Although the said investigation was supposed to have been completed in one year (by March 1, 1948), it was extended until March 1950 “and the limit of expenditures was increased to \$235,000” (Bennett 109). The extension and considerable increase in federal spending point to the political and social importance that immigration issues held at this time, namely in relation to subversives. It is therefore not surprising that the production of the Immigration and Nationality (McCarran Walter) Act (INA) of 1952 is the most extensive and detailed immigrant legislation dealing with political subversives, namely communists.⁵¹ One of its

⁴⁹The provisions for the Displaced Persons (or DP's) greatly differ from those afforded to the immigrant. Yet, like the preferences within the immigrant categories, similar preferences were implemented in the admission of DP's. See, for example, Appendix C.1.

⁵⁰See Appendix C.2.

⁵¹The INA of 1952, which forms the basis of contemporary (but considerably amended) immigration policy, revised the existing immigration law which “consisted of the two basic acts of February 5, 1917 (qualitative controls) and May 26, 1924 (quantitative controls) and over 200 additional legislative enactments, including the significant exclusionary restrictions in the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950” (Bennett 136-37).

most interesting aspects, for example, is the definitions of the “general classes of aliens ineligible to receive visas and excluded from admission” (66 Stat. Section 212). These general classes focus primarily on the following political subversives:

- “anarchists”;
- aliens who are associated with, however tangentially, any party or association “that advocates or teaches, opposition to all organized government; aliens who are members of or affiliated with the Communist Party or any section, subsidiary, branch affiliate, or subdivision of any such association or party, regardless of what name such group or organization may have used, may now bear, or may hereafter adopt”;
- aliens “who are members of or affiliated with any organization during the time it is registered or required to be registered under section 7 of the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950”;
- aliens who write, publish, distribute, display “any written or printed matter, advocating or teaching opposition to all organized government”;
- aliens “who are members of or affiliated with any organization that writes, circulates, distributes, prints, publishes, or displays, or causes to be written, circulated, distributed, printed, published, or displayed, or has in its possession for the purpose of circulation,

distribution, publication, or display, any written or printed matter of the character [previously] described” (66 Stat. Section 212 no. 28).⁵²

In the context of the Cold War, the subversive alien renewed the vigor of nationalist sentiments as it refueled the native versus alien binary. The reappearance of this binary, in spite of the continuous emerging binaries within the immigrant body, customized the alien as a more homogeneous entity that was essentially different from the native (equally homogeneous) whereby native comes to mean good and alien evil. The native versus alien binary thus acquires mythological proportions as it becomes indicative not only of a political and economic war but, more importantly, of a moral war. At the same time, maintaining the binary between the alien and the native displaced the immigrant insofar as there is an increased distancing of the immigrant from the alien.

As in previous immigration policies, the term immigrant continues to be defined in relation to other terms (such as national of the United States), or else by what it is not. For example, among those listed in the nonimmigrant classes of aliens are aliens who do not have “the intention of abandoning” their residence in a foreign country or who are temporarily visiting; or aliens who are “in immediate and continuous transit through the United States” (59 Stat. 669). An alien who has the *intent* of *abandoning* her or his *foreign* country in order to *enter* the United States *permanently* can therefore be defined

⁵²For a complete transcript, see Appendix C.3. For definitions of the following related terms, “organization,” “totalitarian party,” and “world communism,” see Appendix C.4.

as an immigrant. Implicit in this definition is the contradictory perception of the immigrant as disloyal (insofar as s/he abandons her/his foreign country of residence), which brings into question her/his loyalty while emphasizing her/his foreignness, and the immigrant as loyal (entering the United States permanently and therefore owing allegiance). Paradoxically, how can the immigrant be trusted when s/he is regarded as a traitor who has already betrayed her/his native country? One possible solution is to envision the immigrant as inherently American whose love for America (and allegiance to America) overpowers her/his allegiance and love for her/his foreign country. If, moreover, the immigrant comes from a foreign country that is at odds (if not war) with America in search of freedom and all that America stands for, then the immigrant can be regarded as a “true” (but still not native) American. Still, the language used to define the immigrant allows for contradictory interpretations.

The subtle difference between the immigrant and the alien can be explored further by examining how the terms alien and immigrant are (re)defined in the INA of 1952. For example, the term “‘alien’ means any person not a citizen or national of the United States” (66 Stat. Section 101). The immigrant who has been “lawfully admitted for permanent residence,” in contrast, has “the status of having been lawfully accorded the *privilege* of residing *permanently* in the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the immigration laws” (66 Stat. Section 101 emphasis mine). As such, the immigrant is presumed to be a “national of the United States,” meaning “(A) a citizen of the United States, or (B) a person who, though not a citizen of the United States, *owes permanent*

allegiance to the United States” (66 Stat. Section 101; emphasis mine). When the immigrant becomes a national, the immigrant ceases to be an alien. Following this legislative logic, we can infer that the immigrant ceases to be an immigrant when s/he becomes a citizen, which is possible through naturalization, meaning “the conferring of nationality of a state upon a person *after birth*, by any means whatsoever” (66 Stat. Section 101 emphasis mine). However, although the immigrant may cease to have immigrant status legally, it is unclear whether s/he ever ceases to be an immigrant culturally—even after naturalization.

This question can be addressed in the context of two other terms, “entry” and “permanent,” also defined in Section 101, “Definitions,” of the INA of 1952. The term “entry,” in particular, ought to be highlighted since it marks a change in legislation as it “had not been precisely defined by [previous] public law” (Bennett 138). Culturally, as we will see, the term “entry” points to the immigrant’s origins in America when defined as follows:

(13) The term “entry” means any coming of an alien into the United States, from a foreign port or place or from any outlying possession, whether voluntarily or otherwise, except that an alien having a lawful permanent residence in the United States shall not be regarded as making an entry into the United States for the purposes of the immigration laws if the alien proves to the satisfaction of the Attorney General that his departure to a foreign port or place or to an outlying possession was not intended or

reasonably to be expected by him or his presence in a foreign port or place or in any outlying possession was not voluntary: *Provided*, That no person whose departure from the United States was occasioned by deportation proceedings, extradition, or other legal process shall be held to be entitled to such exception.

[...]

(31) The term “permanent” means a relationship of continuing or lasting nature, as distinguished from temporary, but a relationship may be permanent even though it is one that may be dissolved eventually at the instance either of the United States or of the individual, in accordance with law. (66 Stat. Section 101)

The importance of the immigrant’s first (and only) “entry” into the United States points to the beginning of the “relationship of continuing or lasting nature” between the immigrant and the United States. Although the immigrant’s “entry” cannot be compared to the immigrant’s “native” identity, it does mark the origin of the immigrant’s identity as a potential American “national” or even “naturalized citizen.” It is the immigrant’s “entry” that retains the immigrant’s *origin* as an *immigrant* who is given the privilege of *entering* the United States.

The emphasis on permanence as a means of distinguishing between the immigrant and the alien is evident when considering the provisions made during the Second World War to “encourage agricultural labor to come in on a *temporary* basis from other

American countries to facilitate the production of food for the war effort” (Bennett 71; emphasis mine). Among the provisions for the temporary (or seasonal) migrant labourer, stipulated in the Act of June 28, 1944, was funding to ensure her/his return. Invited in to assuage the labour shortages (first agricultural then industrial) caused by the war, the temporary worker migrant was desirable as a short-term solution. However, after the war, preferences for the “wetback” (cheap, docile, illegal Mexican labourer) in the South and the Southwest institutionalized the wetback illegal alien. The illegal alien, like the many existing subcategories, works to redefine the immigrant by creating two sets of binary: the illegal versus legal alien, and, in the criminalized alien category, the wetback versus the political subversive. This latter binary characterizes the wetback as a victim rather than as a criminal, especially when contextualized in previous importations of quasi-illegal labour (like the Chinese “coolie” labour, the Irish and the Italians). Yet, the criminalization of the wetback is evident in the arguments regarding illegal immigration and in the attempts to dissipate (if not put an end to all) illegal Mexican labourers. This is evident in the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization’s following comments on the increase in illegal Mexican labourers in 1951:

“They have come in wave upon wave like the tides of the ocean, fluctuating with each season’s agricultural work, receding as apprehensions and voluntary departures take place and rolling in again with each new cycle of agricultural work...[.] Smuggling has not escaped inflation. [...] Never before has our country been more greatly endangered

by the clandestine entry of so many aliens. The path worn by illegal entrants has readied a smooth road for dangerous aliens to travel. Many of them have been found to be professional criminals. Others are subversive. Many are susceptible to communist influence because of their exploited and depressed economic situation in their own countries and, in many instances, in the United States after their arrival. From any point of view, those who seek admission in this manner are highly undesirable...[.] The ratio of legal workers to arrested aliens is 1 to 5. It is evident that the whole spirit of the immigration law is being defeated. These illegal entrants are not inspected as to political ideologies, health, literacy or past criminal record. They are making a mockery of the contract labor provision of the immigration laws which are designed to protect American workers.” (in Bennett 98-99)

As the above statement illustrates, the illegal alien consists of a number of different characteristics. Beginning with the waves of illegal entrants, the wetback invasion is contextualized in the mass migrations of the 1920s. As masses of unwanted or undesirable aliens flooded the ports of entry, so too were the waves of Mexican wetbacks threatening to take over as more masses arrived with the on-going cycles of agricultural work. Unlike the mass invasions of the 1920s, the mass invasions of illegal aliens is threatening because it is secret. Undetectable, the secret, illegal movement institutionalizes itself. Emphasizing the criminality of the act of illegal entry, the illegal

worker is characterized as a professional criminal rather than as a docile peasant in search of work and a better life. More damaging still is the illegal worker's association with communism, which renders her/him a subversive illegal alien, and as such much more dangerous. Finally, the illegal worker is blamed for the corruption and breakdown of the overall immigration system and is pitted as an enemy of the American (native-born?) worker—thereby reiterating the distinction between the native and the alien.

Anxieties over legal and illegal immigration continued to centre on issues of assimilation, thereby echoing the arguments that were prevalent during (and prior to) the 1920s. During the 1947-1950 investigation by the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate, led by Chairman Senator Pat McCarran, and immediately following the 900-page Committee's report, debates over immigration, unlike the earlier debates, focused on the increased inability to tell the difference between a native (or "true" American) and an alien (or "false" American). The assimilated immigrant was simultaneously rendered a mimic (of a "true" American) and a puppet (of an evil government). Dehumanized as a mimic and a puppet, the immigrant metonymically comes to stand for an evil totalitarian government seeking to destroy all that is "good" and "true"—all that is "American." It is as though in acquiring evil characteristics the alien can become distinguishable from the native. Crucial to this premise is that evilness is a recognizable difference. Making that difference apparent was achieved, in part, by the (mis)treatment of all immigrants, who were legally required to register and be

fingerprinted as stipulated in Title III of the Alien Registration Act of June 28, 1940.⁵³ Refusal to comply could set apart the immigrant, since registration “was to be under oath and there were severe penalties for failure or refusal to register and be fingerprinted or for fraud in registration” (Bennett 66). In contrast, a native is generally fingerprinted only when arrested or when applying for national security clearance. But more telling than the actual record-keeping of aliens and alien activity in the nation is the belief that immigrants should willingly and cheerfully comply lest they have reason not to. Criminalized, the alien is presumed guilty (and is therefore policed); assertion of her/his civil rights is read as admittance of guilt on the one hand, and, on the other, questions whether the alien (or immigrant) should have the same civil rights as the native. Disguised in patriotic rhetoric, this message is clear in President Calvin Coolidge’s message to Congress two decades earlier, on December 6, 1923: “America must be kept American.[...] We should find additional safety in a law requiring the immediate registration of all aliens. Those who do not want to be partakers of the American spirit ought not to settle in America” (in Bennett 49). Refusal or objection to being policed effectively labeled the immigrant un-American, and therefore a criminal or traitor.

The criminalization of the immigrant is also evident in the Act of June 28, 1940, in the expanded list of deportable aliens which included “convicted smugglers, those who had aided others to enter or try to enter the United States illegally, [and] those who were

⁵³For more concrete examples see Appendix C.5.

convicted of carrying or possessing weapons in violation of law [...]. The act made it unlawful to advocate or attempt to overthrow the government by force and violence and provided for deportation of aliens who did so” (Bennett 65). Perhaps more telling is the institutionalized interpretation of the excludable classes, since the bureaucratic language of the deportable categories made it possible to exclude or deport anyone *suspected* of political disobedience or disloyalty. The law barred “aliens about whom ‘there [was] reason to believe’ they would be ‘subversive to the national security’” (81). In policing the immigrant’s activities in the nation, legalizing and encouraging the surveillance of all new and existing immigrants, the immigrant’s status in the nation is legally undermined. What this mandatory documentation emphasizes is that the immigrant is not American (therefore not good and not true). Since the immigrant is most often defined by what s/he is not, the immigrant can only be defined here by what the American is not; not-American, evil and false.

The immigrant’s inherent association with falseness registers another anxiety pertaining to immigration, namely that of the existing corruption of the immigration system that makes it possible for criminal illegal aliens to routinely enter using falsified records. Yet, because the immigration system is American, and can therefore not possibly be evil or false, its corruption (or the origin of its corruption) is located outside America. The illegal alien thus provides a useful scapegoat as the infecting source of the American immigration system, corrupting an otherwise clean, good and true all-American body. This corruption is attributed to the incoming outsider, the illegal alien (and the illegal

machine that traffics human cargo), but also to the outsider within—the assimilated immigrant who has gained entry into the American governing body. What ensues is a systematic identifying and segregating of legal and illegal aliens, a binary that further fuels anti-immigration sentiments of *all* immigrants. Even the good immigrants are therefore more closely associated with the (illegal) alien than with the native.

The restrictions of the 1950s that criminalize the immigrant appear to illustrate a shift in the immigrant's perceived difference; rather than alienating the immigrant because of her/his race, s/he is alienated because of her/his presumed political ideology. Supporting this premise is the repeal of the historic head tax (particularly on the Chinese prior to their exclusion) that comes into effect in 1943. Moreover, the Committee's recommendation that the Asiatic barred zone be eliminated equally points in this direction. However, it is at this time that racial exclusions and racist prejudice become more veiled or closeted. For example, although the Committee preserved the quota system, it "recommended changes respecting the manner in which quotas would be established and the determination of preferences within quotas. The biggest proposed change was to make quotas available to certain Asian and Pacific peoples not previously eligible in accordance with the national origins plan" (Bennett 120). Hence, while some Asian immigrants were now eligible under the quota system, paradoxically, the "latter plan was retained as the basic formula [...] for determining quotas" (120), thereby ensuring fewer numbers of still unwanted but tolerated immigrants. Another rhetorical veiling manifests itself in the scrutinizing of the immigrant's character and the explicit

exclusion of those deemed “immoral.” It should be noted that the term “immoral” is ambiguous at best as it is defined, like the term immigrant, by what it is not. For example, in the INA of 1952, “good moral character [...] was a requirement for suspension of deportation and for registry as well as for naturalization” (Bennett 139). The INA emphasizes that the criminalized alien is immoral (e.g., a prostitute, gambler, fraud, murderer or convicted criminal).⁵⁴ The vague criteria of these terms make it difficult to determine an immigrant’s “good moral character,” and is therefore largely dependent on the officer’s discretion or interpretation.⁵⁵

Morality became an excuse to keep excluding the racially undesirable. The relationship between certain national (or racial) groups and immorality was made explicit in Part I Chapter 2 of the Committee’s report, which defines the “Characteristics of the Population of the United States” (113) by analyzing national immigrant groups as follows:

its distribution within this country, employment, religion, social organization, crime and insanity incidence, sex, marital status, birth and death rates, education, reliance upon relief and percentage of naturalization

⁵⁴See Appendix C.6.

⁵⁵Although not specifically sexist, refusal of entry based on the immigrant’s immoral character provided a useful tool to weed out the sexually undesirable. It was on the Committee’s recommendation that “homosexuals and other sex perverts” were added to the medical exclusions (in Bennett 115), although, paradoxically, there was a recommendation for a relaxation of crimes “involving moral turpitude” (115). Significantly, the “question of what moral turpitude consisted of was left unresolved” (116).

and assimilation. From this data it is possible for the reader to draw his own conclusions as to which nationality and racial groups hold the best potential for adding to the strength and welfare of the national community. There are wide variances shown between the many groups listed. From its analysis the committee concluded that it was desirable and necessary to retain the quota system by which immigration is limited numerically and by geographic source. (Bennett 114)

Hence, although appearing to rectify some of the racist exclusions of earlier policies, the INA of 1952, as per the Committee's recommendations, maintained the quota system and provided clauses (such as that pertaining to an immigrant's "good moral character") to safeguard against racial, national (or sexual) unwanted immigrants. The veiling of racism was also made possible by the centrality that the immigrant-as-subversive acquired, thereby making all other exclusions seem, to an extent, unimportant or commonplace.

3.2 The Alien Nation

The term "Alien Nation" has been used to theorize the relationship between the nation and the alien insofar as the alien, as a native from an Otherworld, functions as an Other within the nation. As such, there appears to be little difference between the alien nation and the immigrant nation. However, by focusing on the legal and cultural definitions of the alien, and the increased distancing between the alien and the immigrant, a discernible difference between the alien nation and the immigrant nation also becomes

apparent. The alien nation is largely concerned with the alien Other like the Gothic villain, monster, extra-terrestrial alien, or vampire. In the context of immigration, it speaks to the demonized alien who is Othered precisely because of her/his criminalization.⁵⁶ The alien nation is therefore more closely associated with the illegal or subversive alien, or else with those belonging to excludable or undesirable classes. Renewed emphasis on nativism, moreover, calls attention to the immigrant's foreignness, which accentuates her/his Otherworldliness. America's transformation from an immigrant nation into an alien nation is marked by its move to police alien activity along its borders, particularly at the point of entry, but also within the nation. Such policing measures function to regulate alien activity but also to naturalize the immigrant as a criminal who must be continuously under surveillance. In the alien nation, the immigrant must prove, again and again, that s/he is of good moral character and is useful to the

⁵⁶Notably, the term "alien nation" is most often used in gothic or science fiction discourses. For example, in *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality*, Cannon Schmitt investigates the "mutual articulations" of the nation, gender and the Gothic (2). Specifically, Schmitt's reading of "the Gothic in conjunction with the question of the nation" (10) suggests that the way in which the "English are displaced, figuratively if not physically" leads their Englishness to admit Otherness, and in so doing "England itself becomes an alien nation" (3). Similarly, *Alien Nation* (U.S.A., 1988), directed by Graham Baker, is a film about race relations in which alien workers assimilate into Earthling society but are nevertheless discriminated against. Its sequel, *Alien Nation: Dark Horizon* (U.S.A. 1994), is based on the TV series after *Alien Nation*, and directed by Kenneth Johnson. In this sequel, the alien workers have further assimilated into Earthling society but must face renewed racism when a human-supremacy group develops a virus to destroy them. The alien workers also face domestic or nativist problems when an alien infiltrator plots to return them to their home planet (Tencton) and slavery. Finally, Peter Brimelow's *Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster*, is a cultural and historical interpretation of the relationship between immigration and race in America ensuing from the "epochal Immigration Act (technically, the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments) of 1965" (xv).

United States. By conflating the words into a singular term, alie(N)ation, I am emphasizing the nation's alienation of its alien. The nation, in a sense, becomes itself alien-like as it continues to alienate the alien within.

The relationship between the alien and the alie(N)ation is best characterized by defining the nation as the alien's host body, which in turn casts the alien in the role of a parasite. Because of its concern over whether or not the parasite is dangerous to its host body, the nation monitors parasitical activity much like a doctor tracks a spreading disease. The medical metaphor was used extensively to refer to the communist agents infecting the nation, particularly as "cancers invading the body politic [...]. The fear was that, like a creeping disease, the ideas of Communism would take over individual citizens without their knowing it, thus infecting a cell of the body politic. When enough cells were infected, the body politic would succumb to the disease" (Murphy 57). Understood in this context, the host nation is self-depicted as a body politic *already* diseased and weak which must protect itself from infection. This model identifies the border as the nation's weakness and the immigrant as the source of (a lethal) infection who *enters* with the *intent to infect*. Whether the body is fooled into allowing the parasite to feed off itself, or whether the parasite is able to enter undefeated, the metaphor points to a flawed immigration system whose weakness (the point of entry) has allowed the parasite in. As the White agents fight off the Red, little is done to understand the infectious alien as anything other than a threat. Conversely, the very actions of the nation do little to promote the alie(N)ation as the idyllic paradise it is supposed to be. Yet, although the nation is

policing the alien, the politics of alienation suggest that the criminalized alien, as invader and infector, wields considerable power over the weakened nation. Paradoxically, although America protects itself with such tactics from the evil alien, its self-representation cannot possibly conceive of itself as a weak nation, thereby raising an interesting question: is the alie(N)ation a cover or veil to hide the real intentions—to act out on an unconscious level destructive fantasies against the alien not because the alien represents a real threat but because the alien is an Other?

As an object of difference, the immigrant elicits a fear that could be based on race and/or nationality; the racially different Other's customs and traditions challenge notions of normalcy and threaten to corrupt the assimilable order. Hence, much stock is placed on the immigrant's intent, as we have discussed in relation to her/his choice to enter and intent to remain in the nation permanently. To the question why an immigrant would want to enter, there appear to be only two possible answers. The first positions the immigrant as refugee-like, a victim of economic hardship or political or religious persecution whose intent is to leave her/his presumed native place to enter a safe haven in order to survive and thrive. Survival and the pursuit of a better economic and social life is a quality easily understood and championed in America, as it mirrors much of its own national myths. The immigrant's intent to survive and thrive, moreover, reaffirms the notion that America, as an immigrant nation, is, indeed, a promised land. However, when the immigrant is understood to be a political subversive or a criminalized alien, her/his intent of entering America is read as an aggressive move to destroy the superior quality of life,

the morally superior promised land, which is rendered incomprehensible; why would anyone want to do so? It is in the incomprehension of the alien's intent that the foreignness or alienness of the immigrant is manifested. Fearing what is not always understood leads to active measures of control to safeguard against it altogether. Therefore, while the idea of an alie(N)ation suggests that America be seen as a nation of aliens, the emphasis lies on the various alienating forces the nation uses to alienate and alienize the immigrant. Responding to this kind of treatment, the alien, in turn, alienates the nation. Hence, while promoting tenuous connections to promote the union of some factors against others, the alie(N)ation ultimately works by alienating all factors by creating, through paranoia and anxiety, considerable doubt among all facets of society. It is precisely in that self-provoked action that alienation threatens to destroy national identity and unity.

3.3 Literary and Cinematic Representations of Alien Invasions and the Alie(N)ation: Jack Finney's and Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*

There is a proliferation of alien invasion narratives in American 1950s pulp fiction and B-movies which, as critics have convincingly argued, can be read as displaced social anxieties or political allegories. Cyndy Hendershop, for example, asserts that science fiction is the genre that “stands out as a medium par excellence for expressing powerfully but individually the paranoia symptomatic of the late 1940s and 1950s America” (26). Also celebrating the allegorical dimensions of the horror genre, best-selling author Stephen King argues that when “the horror movies wear their various sociopolitical hats—the B-picture as tabloid editorial—they often serve as an extraordinarily accurate barometer of those things which trouble the night-thoughts of a whole society” (198). Peter Bogdanovich explains that “the B-movie director could many times work in a freer atmosphere than some of his higher budgeted contemporaries” since he was never “taken very seriously by critics, and even less so by the studios (as long as costs and schedules were closely observed)” (173). Such freedom is no small luxury, especially at a time when Hollywood's politics are scrutinized by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) during the 1948 hearings that led to the conviction of the “Hollywood Ten.”⁵⁷ The subsequent blacklisting of directors and writers made the artistic freedom of

⁵⁷The HUAC “came into being as a result of a hunt for subversives following World War I, long before McCarthy was a member of Congress” (Dmytryk 33). While the “Committee's previous targets had been labor unions and other workers' organizations” (33), its attention to show business, and Hollywood in particular, coincides with the development of the MPAPAI (Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals) in 1944 (33-4). On March 7, 1944, Senator Robert R. Reynolds “inserted a communication in the *Congressional Record* that

political expression not only a luxury but a liability. Hence, in addition to the relative dismissal of B-movies and directors, which could avert scrutiny to a degree, the possibilities offered by the symbolic, surrealist, and abstract Otherworldly beings and monsters provided the necessary camouflage to project displaced political agendas or unconscious anxieties unto the screen. As Heidi Kaye and I.Q. Hunter put it in their analysis of contemporary alien identities, aliens “are irresistibly metaphorical; the films use them to represent alien presences much closer to home” (3).

The 1950s B-movie often imbricates two popular genres, science fiction and horror, leading critics like David Seed to read it as gothic insofar as the “characters are driven by external forces” and the alien is depicted as evil (166).⁵⁸ Portraying a seemingly

announced the principles of the Motion Picture Alliance” as follows: “Because of the flagrant manner in which the motion picture industrialists of Hollywood have been coddling Communists and cooperating with the so-called intellectual superiors they have helped import from Europe and Asia, there has been organized in Hollywood, the Motion Picture Alliance” (in Dmytryk 34). According to Hollywood director and member of the Hollywood Ten Edward Dmytryk, it was the MPAPAI which “was responsible for supplying HUAC with a number of friendly witnesses” (all of who were members of the Motion Picture Alliance) as well as “*initiating* the Hollywood hearings” (34). The group of subversives that became known as the “Hollywood Ten” consisted of nineteen witnesses, mostly screen writers, but “the rest of the Nineteen were later excused from testifying but never forgiven for their sins,” and the group became known as the “Hollywood Ten” (59). Interestingly, Dmytryk, a naturalized American citizen, is a Canadian emigrant, and his father was a Ukrainian immigrant to Canada.

⁵⁸I am less interested in Seed’s discussion of the film’s gothic motifs (e.g., the use of light and shadow to emphasize growing awareness and “collective social change” [166]), which is more in keeping with psychoanalytical readings of the film, and more with his reading of the alien and the film’s use of alienation, which lend themselves to my reading of the film’s metaphorical representation of the immigrant. His focus is largely with the Repressive State Apparatuses (following Althusser) that make possible “the estrangement of different members of a community from each other” (154), which mirrors the domestic estrangement of communists and communist-sympathizers (real or believed) as well as the estrangement of certain legal and illegal immigrant groups—particularly those believed to be prone to subversive propaganda.

familiar and all-too-ordinary world that is suddenly and unexpectedly turned upside-down, these films allow the chaos that ensues as a result of alien invasions to apocalyptically come close to destroying Earth, “by which it [is] meant the United States, circa 1955” (Biskind 188). It is only when the Rightful order is restored that Earth (or a Right’s version of America) is truly “saved” (in quasi-evangelical terms) from both the invading aliens and, more importantly, from the “wrong” kind of order that made possible such alien invasions in the first place. It is only when the proper, or rather Rightful, order is restored that the nightmare can finally end. While these films have transgressive moments in their portrayal of a nightmarish world, they are ultimately conservative in that they seek the restoration of an even more traditional order.

Because the “revival of interest in Science Fiction [...] coincided with the early peak of the Cold War,” the most dominant critical readings of 1950s science fiction films convincingly draw connections between the “takeovers by alien forces, [which are] sometimes specified and sometimes not” (Seed 154), and Communism or McCarthyism. Charles Freund, for example, points out that Don Siegel’s 1956 film adaptation of Jack Finney’s 1954 novel, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*,

is often singled out as a political parable, though its purported politics apparently depend on who is looking at it. To some it’s another anti-Red fable, while others prefer to see it as an attack on McCarthyism. Either way, the little town it’s set in, Santa Mira, makes a perfect target. Straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting, this community of neighborly Main

Street storekeepers and doctors—pushing hand mowers across their spacious lawns and whiling away summer evenings on their big porches—embodied a cherished American self-image: that we are a homogeneous nation whose traditions and values spring from the bosom of these small towns. (23)

As a “masterful piece of political allegory” (Brosnan 161), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* may epitomize the use of science fiction as a means of safely voicing unpopular or threatening opinions, but it also illustrates what happens when politics are necessarily abstracted and camouflaged. The ambiguity of the film’s politics mirrors that of its aliens, lending itself to multiple, often contradictory, interpretations. Perhaps for this very reason television writer Howard Schuman concedes that “*Body Snatchers* was the scariest and most relevant sci-fi film [he’d] ever seen. Perhaps the most relevant movie period. It illuminated the Eisenhower 50s and it went on shedding light in the 60s [...], becoming more] horrifyingly on target in the 80s than in any other decade” and continued to have metaphorical value well into the 1990s (39). For Schuman, the relevance of Siegel’s film lives in its unambiguous political message, which Glen M. Johnson interprets as follows: “Siegel’s heavy emphasis on the familiar cold war metaphor of sleep vs. wakefulness [is highlighted in] his preferred title for the film [...], *Sleep No More*. The screenplay follows Finney in literalizing the metaphor: people can be snatched only while they sleep; awake, they recognize subversion and fight it” (6).

The lure of the science fiction alien and the science fiction film as political

allegory lies in its representational value. As Kaye and Hunter put it, in “the end, alien identity is all we have, since we are strangers to ourselves. The strange is made familiar and the familiar strange as we seek to understand ourselves through texts that question our ideas of who we are and what we are not. Whether we look within our society or to other nations, into the future or to another world, we learn about the alien within ourselves which we may not always recognize or want to admit” (3-4). Hence, the ambiguity of science fictional alien narratives also suggests alternative paranoiac fears which are not only external (“fear of ‘them’”) but internal (“anxiety about ‘us’”) (4).⁵⁹ In his examination of the alien invasion narratives of the 1950s, Seed notes that the aliens invade “the domestic space [...] which culminates in the usurpation of the very citadel of the self—the human body” (152). It is reading the body as target that leads Hendershop to argue that although

the paranoia of this time period has frequently been linked to anti-Communist sentiment roused most dramatically by Joseph McCarthy, it is perhaps the atomic bomb that served most immediately to create paranoiac systems in postwar American consciousness. The repressed of atomic paranoia in 1950s America is radiation contamination.... Within the larger category of alien-invasion films of the 1950s, a subgenre is discernible that

⁵⁹This last quotation is taken from Kaye and Hunter’s commentary on Peter Hutchings’ “Satan Bugs in the Hot Zone: Microbial Pathogens as Alien Invaders,” which is published in their collection.

deals with the internal invasion of the human body by an alien force. (26)

There certainly is value to Hendershop's interpretation, particularly when considering the amorphous changes and mutations that the Earthling (or notably white American) human bodies undergo on screen. Johnson argues that, as "a symbol[,] the alien is more limited than the mutant" (5). Contemporary criticism that focuses increasingly on the mutant certainly concurs; as Patricia Linton argues, aliens "in recent science fiction demonstrate the ascendancy of the hybrid, the cyborg. In many contemporary fiction and film narratives, the alien is represented not as definitively other, but as an in-between creature—not entirely strange, not entirely human" (172). But it is precisely the ambiguity of the alien (not the alien's difference that renders her/him alien) and of the paranoid anxieties in earlier narratives that suggests other plausible interpretations which are anything but limited.

It is not a stretch to read the alien of alien invasion narratives as a displaced representation of the excludable or the illegal alien, especially when considering the rhetorical conflation of the terms alien and Communist (or political subversive) in the INA of 1952, as well as the social anxieties over legal and illegal immigration and displaced persons in the debates over 1950s immigration legislation.⁶⁰ Read as such, it is possible to infer that these invasion fantasies (or nightmares) point to social anxieties

⁶⁰A more explicit example in more contemporary science fiction film is Barry Sonnenfeld's 1997 *Men in Black*, with its "cast of intergalactic 'illegal aliens', which suggests fear of invasion from south of the border rather than outer space" (Kaye and Hunter 3).

over the welfare of the immigrant nation, which is perceived to be under attack from multiple alien invasions. Paralleling the nation with the human body effectively uses the human body as a visual and tangible representation of the body politic; hence, the changes that the human body undergoes symbolize the visible and invisible changes occurring within the body politic. In his reading of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Michael Paul Rogin notes that human beings are not entirely *lost* but changed as they become “*hosts* to an alien form of life” (205 emphasis mine). It is possible to read in such changes responses to the fears that the immigrant nation has been invaded and become a *host* to entering (or rather invading) unwelcome aliens (or parasites) seeking to take over the body politic they inhabit. As Seed further argues, one “key effect signaled by the cue world ‘alien’ is loss, an erasure of human qualities” (152). For Seed, the transformation from human into alien does in fact mark the process of “alienation,” which he defines as “the change from self into other” (153). The narratives of alien invasion therefore suggest the conscious or unconscious anxieties over the transformation of the immigrant nation into an alien nation. The threat to the loss of human identity can be thus understood as the threat of the loss of American identity as the American body (politic) becomes host to an alien Other. Conversely, the transformation into the alien nation, from the immigrant-as-alien’s perspective, depicts the transformation of the illusory fantastical promised land into a real inhospitable and hostile land that resents the alien’s presence and calls for a systematic expulsion and cleansing of all aliens. From either the nation’s or the alien’s perspective, the status quo appears to be the perceived and/or desired alienation between

native and alien. Alienation is therefore the response to the integration and assimilation that has already taken place and, as such, emphasizes the painful dislocation or disentanglement between host and alien (and the resistance of this wrenching apart), as well as the prevention from any future fusions.

To determine the relationship between the immigrant alien and the alien nation, it is fruitful first to examine the nature of American paranoia or fears of invasion. In his study, Eric Mottram proposes that these fears are, in a sense, native to the American people since they have existed from “the founding of the republic in 1776...[:] the American people have been singularly prone to invasion fears—fears of entry into the body-mind and into the body politic and economic from forces which might force change, and forces which enforce national unity and obedience” (591). Cataloguing these fears as “neurotic and, increasingly, dangerous” (591), Mottram identifies the many forms that these fears take: there are fears of “some form of underground or overground power, semi-visible or invisible” raging a battle “of good and evil forces;” fears “of insurrection or invasion from within—from blacks, Indians, the Left, student dissent, and so on” (591); fears “of invasion from without—from Russia, Cuba, UFOs, rays, socialism, and so on”; and fears “of total surveillance by God or godlike authority or demonic rule, or from a total surveillance system, the society within the combined construct of the CIA, FBI, Army Intelligence, police, Inland Revenue, Mormon filing system, closed-circuit television, bugging, and so on” (592). As native (or domestic) products, American fears of invasion underscore the familiar bipartisan pull: “for many people total surveillance

fulfils a dream of freedom as dominated security, where for others freedom is release from authority” (592). Although the bipartisan pull suggests that the native or domestic conflict is between the political extremes of the Left and the Right, Peter Biskind identifies the two ideological camps of 1950s science fiction films as being “centrist and radical” (185). As American fears of invasion become “a main subject, a major source [of] media income, [and] a dominant source of the state’s use of national income called ‘defence’” (Mottram 596), the alien invasion narratives of the 1950s suggest anxiety over domestic views of American national identity. In other words, the alien of these narratives is the catalyst in what effectively becomes an internalized fear of the very nature of the self’s—or the nation’s—identity.

Although during the 1950s the American fears over immigrant alien invasions centre on the influx of undetected Communist agents, the increasing fears about the influx of illegal immigrants, particularly Mexican “wetbacks,” is also evident. The Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization’s annual report of 1953, for example, echoes that of 1951:

Unfortunately, today’s history also has among the alien groups some who are notorious, rather than noteworthy, and whose deeds are full of malicious intent rather than of contributions to democratic ideals....

The human tide of “wetbacks” continues to be the most serious enforcement problem of the Service, volumewise. For every agricultural laborer admitted legally, four aliens were apprehended by the Border

Patrol. [... T]here are tremendous odds against the small force of a thousand Border Patrolmen being able to prevent Communists or foreign agents from entering across the borders when they are so enmeshed in apprehending thousands of aliens. (in Bennett 213)

The Commissioner's statement differentiates not only between the "noteworthy" and the "notorious" immigrant aliens, but also between the Communist aliens "whose deeds are of malicious intent" and the troublesome, but far less dangerous, "wetbacks" whose intention of procuring agricultural labour is undesired and resented but conceivable. The most disturbing aspect of the "wetback" invasion, according to the above sentiments, does not lie in the illegal aliens' intent but in the large numbers that crowd the border and distract the border authorities from preventing the "notorious" aliens from entering. The "wetbacks" are therefore represented as a kind of pest—annoying, infectious, and threatening, but ultimately controllable (by prevention and the equivalent of extermination—deportation). The Commissioner's sentiments regarding the difference between the "wetback" and the Communist aliens is also evident in the continued agreements with Mexico over the admission of agricultural labourers in the early 1950s, as well as the response by Congress to the "wetback problem;" among the various options considered by Congress are the circumvention of "basic immigration restrictions, adjust[ing] the status of illegally resident aliens or admit[ting] the excludable" (Bennett

214).⁶¹ Although these considerations suggest a relatively lax response to the illegal Mexican aliens, particularly when pitted against the fear of incoming Communist aliens, the threat of the illegal Mexican invasion is nevertheless felt, as is evident even in Bennett's use of language in 1963: "A tidal wave of humanity continued to breach our southern borders" (214). Bennett's Democratic stand is generally pro-immigration and sympathetic to those scapegoated or excluded unjustly, but in this instance betrays an antagonism toward the illegal masses. Hence, as an alien invasion, the "tidal wave" of illegal aliens is not characterized as evil but is considered dangerous enough to be a continual national security problem.

Pinpointing where the legal and/or illegal alien fits and what her/his role in the alien invasion narratives is necessitates an understanding of the science fiction alien and what it represents, masks or distorts. As Kaye and Hunter argue, "making aliens the enemy is a politically astute way of avoiding negative representations of identifiable sets of humans" (2). While it may be difficult to identify *who* the aliens are meant to represent, outlining the different representations of the various types of aliens can lead to more concrete suggestions. Succinctly mapping the science fiction films of the 1950s, Biskind locates "*Destination Moon* and *Rocket Ship X-M*, both released in 1950, [as] inaugurat[ing] a flurry of [science fiction] films which, before the decade ended, would

⁶¹The continued "problem" and the Congressional response to it culminated in the controversial decision in the mid-1980s under the Reagan administration to grant amnesty to illegal Mexican immigrants.

produce a veritable invasion of little green men, flying saucers, born-again dinosaurs, predatory plants, diabolical juveniles, and enormous insects” (185). Interpreting the differences between an abstract blob, natural plants or bugs, and ‘fake’ humans (i.e., as robots or body snatchers) leads Biskind to conclude that the portrayal of the alien as “primitive, animal, and natural was a centrist fantasy, while the alien as mechanical and technological was a [radical] right-wing fantasy” (194).⁶² He further differentiates between centrist and radical alien representations as follows:

In centrist films extremists were presented as aliens. Who were they? It has long been evident, in fact from the moment the first blob oozed its way across the screen, that the little green men from Mars stood in the popular imagination for the clever red men from Moscow. The media portrayed Russians in such a lurid fashion that the connection was inevitable, even if unintended by writers and directors.... Extremists were not only Russians, but everyone, left and right, who dissented from consensus. More often than not, the communist connection was a red herring, allowing the center to attack the left and right, and the left and right to attack the center, all in

⁶²By 1968, the synthetically produced humans called “replicants” in Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (and Ridley’s Scott’s film adaptation, *Blade Runner* [1982]) are human-like androids who have been produced to serve humans as slaves. Similar to *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the overlying anxiety in these narratives is over the (in)ability to tell the difference between a real human and a replicant, since the replicants look and act all too-human. Indeed, that the replicants *become* more human than human is one of the central ethical questions of Dick’s and Scott’s texts, and continues to find its way into science fiction narratives in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, especially those dealing with androids, cyborgs, or clones (e.g., *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Voyageur*, *I.A.*, *Andromeda*, etc.).

the guise of respectable anti-communism, which itself was no more than a smokescreen for a domestic power struggle. (185-86)

The characteristics of the centrist films include an “Us/Them framework, whereby that which threatened consensus was simply derogated as ‘Other’” (186). The Other need not be a foreign alien but simply a domestic opposite to what the center stands for. The “conflict between centrists and extremists, consensus and the Other, Us and Them, was often presented as a conflict between culture and nature. Since culture was good, nature was generally bad; it was all that threatened to disrupt or destroy culture” (187).⁶³ In setting up the binary system of differentiation centrist films could present “the very idea of alternatives to the [mainstream institutions, the] orthodox manner of living and being ... [as] dystopian” thereby demonstrating that “there was no place to go but home, that is back to the center” (187). Locating “home” as the “center” may explain the “generally more confident and optimistic” aspect of these films in which “often there was no invasion by aliens at all. They were expansion- and exploration-oriented, imperialist rather than paranoid [narratives].... Home is safe; danger lurks out there” (189).

Similarly, extremist films mirrored centrist films by simple inversion: “If centrist

⁶³For example, in the following centrist films “the Other is imagined as nature run wild”: In *Them* (1954), it is ants. In *The Beginning of the End* (1957), it is grasshoppers, while in *Tarantula* (1955), it is a spider. In the same category are films set in the jungle or remote, wild places, like *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954); *Black Scorpion* (1957); *From Hell it Came* (1957), where the Other is a deranged tree stump; *The Attack of the Crab Monsters* (1957), where the Other is an army of jumbo crabs on a Pacific atoll; or *The Monster that Challenged the World* ((1957), where the Other is a school of giant marauding snails. (187)

films dramatized consensus, radical films dramatized conflict, polarization, and the antagonism between the self and society. If centrist films dramatized the views of insiders, radical films dramatized the views of outsiders. It was, of course, possible to attack the centre from the right or left, so that radical science fiction in the fifties broke down into right-wing and left-wing films” (192-93). Privileging the misunderstood perspective of the victimized individual, right-wing extremist films “dramatized the struggle of the outsider ... to force the community to acknowledge the validity of the self’s private vision, even if it violated the norms of credibility that governed the expectations of experts and professionals” (193). Somewhat paradoxically, the alienation of the misunderstood right-wing individual suggests that he (and it is most often a he) becomes a persecuted alien in his own home by the local authorities, although in these films it is “both cops and doctors, the twin pillars of the centrist authority, [who] are vilified. The center itself is the enemy; taken over by aliens, it becomes alien” (194). Hence, while the outcast may appear to be *alien* to the new order, the films work to establish that it is the new order that is ultimately the alien (as impostor or mimic). It is the alien’s masquerade or mimicry that spells out danger. Thus, at

the end of much right-wing science fiction, average Joe, once regarded by everyone as a loony, finally convinces his friends and neighbors that he has been correct all the time. Community is restored, but on his terms, not theirs. They have been converted to his paranoid vision, and what is more, they have been mobilized for action. These films push the populist

sentiments evident in conservative films like *The Thing* to extremes. The alien is destroyed by the resourceful citizens of Smallville without the benefit of federal aid. (195)

The right-wing alien invasion suggests that an alien takeover has already taken place as the center has been alienated. The emphasis on the individual and on small-town (or “Smallville”) middle-America promotes discourses of nativism which are pitted against inclusive or assimilationist discourses of pluralism. As Kaye and Hunter remind us, “the metaphor of the alien taps directly into contemporary anxieties about multiculturalism and gender politics” (3). These films, not unlike anti-assimilationist and anti-pluralist discourses voiced in Congress over issues of immigration, seek to restore the authority and power to those identified as being the true, real, or home-grown Americans. Home, in these narratives, is always the white, middle-class, small-town America rather than the urban centre that has already been densely populated by immigrants (and African-Americans).

Biskind also identifies the characteristics of left-wing films which, he argues, “shared the outsider perspective of right-wing films” (196). What differentiates these films from both centrist and right-wing films is that left-wing films “did not fear [nor advocate the fear of] aliens. In these films, the alien was neutral, benevolent, superior, or victimized” (196). Unlike the right-wing films which challenged the center and its authority, left-wing films attacked the

heroes of the right-wing films [...; the] Paul Reveres who tried to stir

people up to take things into their own hands” by making these characters the “villains—hysterical vigilantes, dangerous paranoids, and the ‘people’ (as in corporate liberal films) who where no better than a mob. Instead of mobilizing people against the alien threat, these films pacified them, protected the aliens from the people. Justifiable alarm to the right was hysteria to the left. In the context of the Red Scare, these were anti-witch-hunt films. (196)

Read in the context of immigration law, these films depict the viewpoint of pro-immigration pluralist narratives of inclusion rather than exclusion and call for a rethinking of societal reception and treatment of the sympathetic, non-evil and non-threatening immigrant.

American fears of invasion may reflect domestic fears between the centre and the margins, or between the Right and the Left, but the alien—or rather aliens—of these narratives point to other fears and need further examination. Contextualizing the “Us/Them framework” that characterizes alien narratives, Kaye and Hunter point out that

the very concept of the alien is grounded in ideas of difference and boundary definitions. It is commonplace, but still true, that we define ourselves through defining an other: we are what we are not. When our sense of self becomes shaky, we attempt to reconstruct an “other” from which to distinguish ourselves in a binary opposition. The notion of identity tends to be exclusive rather than inclusive, creating hierarchies

and prejudice on the basis of class, race, gender, nationality and sexual orientation. It can be divisive and harmful, defining difference only as negative. (3)

If alien invasion narratives are truly more concerned with “us” than they are with “them,” then it might explain the alien’s considerable ambiguity. Commenting on Philip K. Dick’s short story, “The Father Thing” (1954), for example, Seed observes that the “safe domestic interior is startlingly disrupted by creatures which take shape in filth and corruption” but whose origin, rather tellingly, is unexplainable; “it is just from outside, from the realm of the unknown” (152). Equally telling is the unknown origin of the mysterious pods that invade the towns of Santa Mira in Siegel’s *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and Mill Valley in Finney’s novel (1954). In Siegel’s film, when Dr. Miles Bennell, Becky Driscoll, Jack and Teddy Belicec first discover four pods in the process of taking the shapes of their bodies in Miles’ greenhouse, the immediate response is to inquire “where do they come from?” (Mainwaring 7). Miles’ response to Jack’s question, “I don’t know” (70), reveals that the family physician cannot explain this mysterious malady; ironically, science cannot direct them to a source of information that will explain and demystify the pods’ existence and origin. In Siegel’s film, no explanation or theory is offered. It is this lack of information that makes the initial ambiguity of the aliens’ purpose in Santa Mira seem alien and later sinister. It is their unknowability, indeed their dislocation, that leads to their incomprehension.

In his novel, however, Finney provides detailed explanations about the pods’

existence and purpose. The voice of Reason is a scholar, Professor Budlong, who is conspicuously absent from the film, and it is he who provides the demystifying information. Ernesto G. Laura notes that, in Finney's "unpretentious popular novel, the arrival of the pods is accounted for as an invasion from outer space, and there are quite detailed pseudoscientific explanations of how the 'twining' is accomplished, how long it takes, and so on. Don Siegel has dropped all this, leaving the mystery unexplained" (182-83). Similarly, Al LaValley argues that although Daniel Mainwaring, the screenplay writer, "assigned some explanations to Danny Kaufman, most disappeared, leaving the origin of the pods and their mission vague and throwing the intellectual and emotional weight of the film on to Miles alone. The diminution lessened the science fiction aspect of the film as well" (5-6). If the removal of such explanations is important, so too is the transferring of the remaining information from the scholar to the psychiatrist (who, like the scholar in Finney's novel, has already—and quite recently—been transformed into a pod when he explains the pods' purpose), and to the town's family doctor-turned-paranoid rebel. The weight of the pods' information is thus shifted from "pseudoscientific" theory to the realm of family medicine—cured by two aspirins and calling Dr. Bennell in the morning. In the film, Dr. Bennell's family practice quite literally consists of dispensing various pills and making house calls. Risking satirizing the small-town medicine man, this practice points "to America's tranquilizer boom in the mid-fifties," which "Siegel and Mainwaring [the screenplay writer] suggest [reveals] the emotional tensions that underlay the period's preoccupation with the alien and the

subversive” (Johnson 7). Paradoxically, if Miles’ response is to treat the symptom of the social malady by anaesthetizing the patient, then is he not participating in the kind of conformism that makes the invasion and takeover possible in the first place? Even when he realizes that he and Becky must not go to sleep when captured inside his office he medicates them both to keep awake. The popping pills syndrome thus points to a kind of Alice in Wonderland syndrome in which one malady, which is procured by the effects of one pill, can be, albeit temporarily, reversed by the effects of another pill. When the disease proves too much for the small-town medicine man, the federal authorities are called in not to explain the mystery or to cure the town but, somewhat ironically, to take over, thereby suggesting that, like the pills metaphor suggests, it is not the takeover per se that is critiqued here but *who* is taking over.

In Finney’s novel, the explanation about the pods’ origin highlights the tension between the native and the alien. When Miles visits Professor Budlong in search of answers—not cures—he is reminded of Lord Kelvin’s theory:

Lord Kelvin—you undoubtedly know this, Doctor—Lord Kelvin, one of the great scientists of modern times, was one of many adherents to this theory, or possibility. Perhaps no life at all began on this planet, he said, but it drifted here through the depths of space. Some spores, he pointed out, have enormous resistance to extremes of cold; and they may have been propelled into the earth’s orbit by light pressure. Any student of the subject is familiar with the theory, and there are arguments for and against

it. [...]

It is perfectly possible for “space spores,” if you want to use so dramatic a term, to drift onto the surface of the earth. (146-47)

In his interpretation of Lord Kelvin’s theory, Professor Budlong effectively differentiates between the origin of (presumably) human life and the life of “space spores” on Earth (or America) when he states that “it’s quite probable that they have, in fact, though I personally doubt that all life on this planet originated in this way” (147). Such a minor differentiation works to reiterate the difference between the native and the alien. But Professor Budlong’s interpretation does not suggest that the alien life’s origin on Earth (or America) makes the alien life naturally foreign, especially when he states that advocates of Lord Kelvin’s theory “do point out, however, that our planet was once a seething mass of inconceivably hot gas. When finally it cooled to the point at which life was possible, where else could life have come from, they ask, than from outer space?” (147). In other words, Lord Kelvin’s theory is used as a reminder that native Americans were once aliens too—from the space outside the host-claimed-native nation. This theory, by effacing the difference of the aliens’ origin, renders all aliens. If all aliens are simply from outside the host land, and the natives were once aliens too, then there is no reason for the native versus alien binary to exist. In the context of 1950s immigration issues, eradicating the notion of the alien’s origin is a stand to abolish the national-origins quota system of immigration. Professor Budlong’s analysis goes further to suggest that, although the distinction between the native and the alien is maintained, the alien’s life on

earth is also given a long history of existence that suggests that “Earth—the American Earth” (Mottram 593)—has essentially become as native a place for the alien as it has for the native. In other words, America is “home” to native and alien alike, and as such works to emphasize sameness rather than difference between the contemporary alien and its predecessor (who now calls her/himself native).

The explanation for the alien’s invasion and takeover can thus be read as a justification for legal immigration that is voiced, not surprisingly, from the alien’s perspective. When it is revealed that Professor Budlong (in the novel) and Danny Kaufman (in the film) have already been transformed, both appeal to Miles’ rationality (by which it is meant his informed compassion) by explaining the pods’ plan and motive. It is their testimony, particularly Professor Budlong’s, that articulates the immigrants’ position from, predictably, the assimilated immigrant’s position. Professor Budlong tells Miles: “Consider, Doctor, that there are planets and life incalculably older than ours; what happens when an ancient planet finally dies? The life form on it must reckon with and prepare for that fact—to survive” (Finney 173). The “older” planets can be read as the Old World, Europe, which has “finally died” in the aftermath of the Second World War (particularly Eastern Europe as the emergence of the Soviet Union literally marks the death of democracy). The “life form” that must face the decimation of its home must “prepare to survive.” In other words, the remaining life, or displaced persons, must survive by immigrating to a new land, as Professor Budlong’s ensuing lecture indicates: “‘A planet dies,’ he repeated, ‘slowly and over immeasurable ages. The life form on

it—slowly and over immeasurable ages—must prepare. Prepare for what? For leaving the planet. To arrive where? And when? There is no answer, but one; which they achieved. It is universal adaptability to *any and all other life forms, under any and all other conditions they might possibly encounter*” (173). Applied to immigration, Professor Budlong’s rationalization for the pods’ existence on Earth negates any evil intent insofar as the need and desire for survival is not evil but all too human. The alien-as-survivor renders her/him human, and therefore characterizes the alien as a heroic figure. It is the alien’s adaptability to survive—indeed to thrive—in any conditions and in spite of any opposition or hardship that is celebrated here. But surely this is not a new position; survival and success characterize the classic immigrant narrative of the 1920s as heroic as well. What has changed is that this position is being mocked rather than exalted.

Anticipating one objection to the alien’s presence, Professor Budlong concedes that “in a sense, of course, the pods are a parasite on whatever life they encountered [...]” since they take on and feed on their host (173). It is this aspect of the body snatchers that “presents a kind of vampirism where figures are ‘occupied’ rather than ‘consumed’” (Seed 157). In Siegel’s film, the pods foam and from this foam emerge the recognizable doubles of the victims. In Miles’ greenhouse, after discovering the fast-changing pods, Miles attacks the foaming faces with his pitchfork while his own face is foaming with sweat. With rapid camera close-ups of his human sweating face and his foaming double, attention is drawn to his own doubling. Symbolically, Miles raises his pitchfork and it “*enters the chest with a rubbery-sounding thud*” (Mainwaring 75). In killing the dormant

alien bodies in a similar way in which vampires are killed (with a phallic stake penetrating the heart), this foaming scene evokes male premature ejaculation—Miles’ pitchfork enters the bodies *after* they have begun foaming. In her reading of gender politics in Siegel’s film, Nancy Steffen-Fluhr concludes that it is Miles’ “burgeoning intimacy with Becky, not the burgeoning pods, which is the hidden source of his fear. She is the familiar stranger, alien flesh to which he is about to bond himself, and he is worried that his merger may entail some loss of freedom and identity. The pod plot is, at least in part, simply a surrealistic projection of these unacknowledged anxieties, of a man’s terror of falling helplessly in love” (140).

A reading of the pods as vampires can also symbolize a political unconscious. Symbolically, the vampire “sucks” the life from its victim’s body after seducing the victim into a trance-like sleep, not unlike the unsuspecting white suburbanites who are warned against being seduced by the appearance of safety and normalcy, causing them to live in a dormant state. But the body snatchers do not feed on their hosts’ bodies. Instead, their occupation of their human hosts suggests a quasi-imperial or military territorial occupation, thereby rendering the relationship between alien and host less parasitical and vampirical and more political. The film emphasizes the political implications in the explanation that Danny Kaufman offers Miles:

DANNY (*off*): ... less than a month ago, Santa Mira was like any other town. People with nothing but troubles.... Then out of the sky came a solution. Seeds, drifting through space for years, took root in a farmer’s

field. From the seeds came pods which have the power to reproduce themselves in the exact likeness of any form of life.

MILES: So, that's how it began. Out of the sky. (Mainwaring 87-88)

In this explanation, the alien pods are not offered as heroic or legitimate refugees or displaced persons in need of a host land but as a “solution” to an already afflicted host land. Herein lies the flawed logic: only the aliens recognize the affliction of the troubled town as the natives are unaware of their own malaise, but it is the alien invasion that is deemed the cause of the townspeople's trouble. From the aliens' perspective, their presence and intervention is not only warranted but sorely needed. The pods' origin, “out of the sky,” has quasi-biblical ramifications: that can be read either as saving or avenging angels, punishing plagues, or, more pointedly, as invading objects that literally fall “out of the sky”—not unlike the Coke bottle in *The Gods Must Be Crazy* [1984]), like bombs (or *the* A-bomb) or Kamikaze bombers during the War, or immigrants—the numbers of aliens arriving by vessels and airplanes increased in 1954 (Bennett 216).⁶⁴ The increase of immigrants is not to be taken lightly. Because of the “lifting of racial bars to immigration and naturalization,” the number of Chinese and Japanese immigrants and naturalized citizens in 1954 increased considerably.⁶⁵ In 1955, more “people entered the United States

⁶⁴In spite of this increase, however, the admissions under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, whose “largest beneficiaries were the Iron Curtain countries, especially Poland [...], which provided over twice as many DP entrants as any other nation,” came to a close in 1954 (Bennett 218). Displaced Persons were admitted between June 25, 1948 and June 30, 1954 (218).

⁶⁵It is generally accepted that the bug-like aliens of alien invasion films (such as *The Fly*) have recognizable Asian facial features, particularly the oversized, hyperbolic slanted eyes.

through ports of entry [...] than ever before in the history of this country” (218), and in 1957, “Mexican agricultural laborers reached an all-time high [...] since World War II” (224-25).

Discerning who the immigrant alien is in both Siegel’s film and Finney’s novel is not easy since both texts touch on various competing anxieties over immigration issues. For example, Seed argues that there are two kinds of “transformations taking place: pod into humanoid, and human into humanoid. The first challenges presumptions of species definition, the second radically alters the community” (158). Read in terms of immigration, the first transformation challenges presumptions of national definitions (native and immigrant) while the second radically alters the community by infusing it with an assimilated Other—an alien Other so assimilated that it projects the image of the native. According to Marty Roth, “*The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is very much about doubling, about a human population taken over by vegetable simulacra. The lack of distance between the original and the copy here is both scandalous and apocalyptic” (108). As a double, the alien can be read as a simulation of a native, but such a simulation is contingent on the erasure of the alien’s identity. In Finney’s novel, unlike Siegel’s film, Professor Budlong’s explanation of the alien pods as a life form contests the erasure of alien identity when he tells Miles that the pods “are the perfect parasite, capable of far more than clinging to the host. They are completely evolved life; they have the ability to

Politically, the armies of alien bugs have been read as representations of Communist Asian countries looking to invade and take over the West.

re-form and reconstitute themselves into perfect duplication, cell for living cell, of any life form they may encounter in whatever conditions that life has suited itself for” (173). Unlike the native, the alien’s strength derives from her/his adaptability and ability to mimic or replicate, to become the native’s double. From the native’s perspective, the alien’s value as a copy is no match for that of the original. From the alien’s perspective, however, the ability to bridge the differences between alien and native and *become* the native is invaluable and necessary for survival—for attainment of first-class citizenship.

One premise in both Finney’s novel and Siegel’s film is that there is a marked difference between the alien pods and the human hosts, leaving the bewildered Miles and Becky to wonder what happens to their bodies, and to *them*, once the alien pods snatch their bodies. Neither the film nor the novel deals specifically with the philosophical question of what constitutes the self. In both texts, the human body serves as host to both the person and the invading alien. Although not explicitly Cartesian, the implied belief is that something other than the body (e.g., the mind) makes a person *human*. A religious belief would posit that it is the soul, not the mind, that makes a person human. Presumably, it is this something that also differentiates between a human and an alien, although both necessitate the body as host. In Finney’s novel, after discovering the body in his home, Jack asks Miles: “what happens to the original when the blanks duplicate a man? Are there two of them walking around?” (104). The anxiety over the doubling (or cloning in this day and age) of the self is only suggested as an incomprehensible possibility in response to the more threatening fear of being completely taken over, as

Miles' anxiety over this possibility makes clear: "*They're going to get us*" (100). In Siegel's film, after the discovery of the four pods in Miles' greenhouse, Becky wonders: "But when they're finished, what happens to our bodies?" (Mainwaring 70). Miles' simple reply, "I don't know" (70), is followed by his rational hypothesis which is left unproven in the film: "When the process is completed, probably the original is destroyed or disintegrates" (70). In this exchange, it appears as though human identity is literally based on the body; the destruction of the body therefore symbolizes the destruction of the self, leading Teddy to wonder:

TEDDY: Miles, when the change does take place, do you suppose there is any difference?

MILES: There must be.... (71)

The change that is eventually revealed is a lack of emotion, which Danny Kaufman explains to Miles and Becky, as they are about to be transformed, as follows:

DANNY: (*turning and walking to the open door of the reception room*): Your new bodies are growing in there. (*Standing in the door-way and looking alternately at the pods and Miles and Becky.*) They're taking you over cell for cell, atom for atom. There's no pain. (*He walks back to where he was in front of them.*) Suddenly, while you're asleep, they'll absorb your minds, your memories...

CU: *Becky and Miles.*

DANNY (*off*): ... and you're reborn into an untroubled world.

[...]

DANNY: Love. Desire. Ambition. Faith. Without them life's so simple,
believe me. (88)

The lack of emotion represents the drone-like puppet of the totalitarian regime which renders the drone-like agents non-human.⁶⁶ Note that Danny Kaufman's explanation does not answer what happens to the human bodies nor to the human selves. The drone-like non-human is, rhetorically, defined by what s/he is not—human.

What Danny Kaufman's explanation does do, however, is offer the alien-invaded-human as a hybrid, not a mimic. Once replicated, the doubled body absorbs the human mind and memories (presumably what constitutes the human self). If the selves are absolved, then it stands to reason that the emerging pod is, as Roth suggests, an exchange—"[p]ods exchange with their hosts" (108)—rather than a takeover. The idea of an exchange is more developed in Finney's novel when Professor Budlong, in answer to Miles' questions about how he knows "about other planets and life forms [...]" states that there is "not memory [... b]ut there is knowledge in this life form, of course, and—it stays. I am still what I was, in every respect, right down to a scar on my foot I got as a child; I am still Bernard Budlong. But the other knowledge is there, too, now. It stays, and I know. We all do" (174-75). It is the double-consciousness of Finney's aliens, which is

⁶⁶Note the parallel here with Winston Smith in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Another paranoid individual surrounded by drone-like bodies, he searches for answers, truth, and the pursuit of an emotional, or human, life.

absent in Siegel's, that reiterates the pods as stands-in for the assimilated immigrant or else as mutants rather than aliens. As the immigrant assimilates, or absorbs the host's customs, the knowledge of two (or multiple) cultures, languages, customs, and experiences co-exist in one body. This form of "exchange" is best understood as a kind of cultural fusion rather than as cultural replacement or mimicry. The alien is therefore not a simulation of the native but a complex hybrid that imbricates two (or multiple) cultural memories and experiences. Moreover, if understood that the body represents the body politic, then the aliens' position within simply suggests the possibility of double—or multiple—beliefs co-existing in one governmental body.

The anxieties over the alien invasions which are taking over the towns of Santa Mira and Mill Valley may suggest anxieties over the possibility that the American government will be taken over by alien ideas and beliefs (namely Communism) in the not-so-distant future—Finney's novel is set in the year 1976 (approximately twenty years from the date of its publication, thereby suggesting the time-line of the next generation). Although in Siegel's film there is no future setting, the idea of a political takeover, and its effects on the future generations, is clearly and apocalyptically suggested in the spread of paranoia:

TEDDY: They have to be destroyed.

[...]

TEDDY: (*off*): All of them!

MILES: They will be. Every one of them.

[...]

MILES (*reaching with his left arm and grabbing Jack's shoulder*): Listen, we're going to have to search every building... every house in town. (*To all.*) Men, women, and children are going to have to be examined [...].

(Mainwaring 71)

Because Santa Mira and Mill Valley are small, middle-class towns, the characters' anxieties over the alien invasions point to anxieties over the perceived changes afflicting the all-American communities. The alien pods' takeover of these communities emphasizes the increasing difficulty of distinguishing between the native and the alien, which suggests a persistent lingering uneasiness over the assimilation of immigrant groups *already* in America, particularly the upwardly mobile who leave the urban ghetto and move into suburban, middle-class neighbourhoods.

But another anxiety registers not the assimilated immigrant but the illegal alien and the illegal operations s/he is associated with. For example, in Siegel's film, Miles and Becky are hiding inside his office and look out at the busy downtown street where pedestrians are walking. What initially appears to be a morning just "like any Saturday morning" is an odd scene in that it is "too early to be so busy" (Mainwaring 83). Congregating at the apex of a triangle across the street from Miles office, the townspeople, "*in a very orderly way*" (84), walk toward a parked police car. When farmers' trucks carrying loads of pods appear, Officer Grivett begins to announce over a loudspeaker:

If you have Crescent City families, step over to truck number one....

Crescent City. First truck. (*People start going over to the first truck at left*

rear.) Redbank. All with Redbank families and contacts, go to truck

number two.... All with Redbank families and contacts... truck number

two. (*Many people go to the second truck.*) Havenhurst. The first truck.

Havenhurst. The first truck.... Milltown. The third truck.... Milltown. The

third truck. Valley Springs. The third truck. Valley Springs. (84-5)

After distributing all the pods in the three trucks, Officer Grivett tells the people to be “ready again tomorrow” (85), making it clear that the invasion will continue on a daily basis until all towns have been repopulated. In Finney’s novel, the trucks that bring in the pods “were all from the few remaining small farms west of town: Joe Grimaldi, Joe Pixley, Art Gessner, Bert Parnell, and one other” (164). Instead of the local policeman, it is Wally Eberhard, “a local real-estate man,” and “a mechanic at the Buick garage” (164) who heads the distribution of the pods. The destinations are Sausalito and Marin City, both in Marin County. The telling difference is that of those “with Marin City families or contacts,” seven “people came forward, five of them black—Marin City has a large black population” (165). Miles notes that while the white people take one pod each, “Grace Birk, a middle-aged black woman who worked at the bank, took three, and a man stepped down from the curb to help her carry them without crushing them. [He] remembered that Grace Birk had a sister and brother-in-law living in Marin City; whether there were more in the family, [Miles doesn’t] know” (165-66). Hence, racial anxieties are manifested in

that not only are the alien pods taking over, but the black alien pods are taking over in larger numbers. Not surprisingly, Johnson comments that Finney's novel "compares the aliens' victim-agents to American Negroes" (7). In contrast, all the natives and aliens in Siegel's film are white, thereby appearing to be a homogeneous racial representation.

The unusual activity on the street in Siegel's film is characterized as "a malignant disease spreading through the whole country" (Mainwaring 85), but it can be read as a commentary on the postwar relaxation of immigration legislation during the Eisenhower administration, which allowed and privileged nonquota immigrants, especially the spouses and family members (or people with contacts) of aliens already residing in America. The assimilated immigrants (who happen to be all white), who are hardly distinguishable from the natives, conspire and work to populate their towns and the neighbouring towns with their relatives—their own kind. Calling attention to the pods' alienness, it is further suggesting that the recent immigrants are not as assimilated as their sponsoring hosts. This apparent minor difference gains importance when considering that in spite of increased immigration, particularly of displaced persons and refugees, there is a decline of naturalization numbers beginning in 1954.⁶⁷ Interestingly, then, while anxieties over the takeover by assimilated immigrant aliens is evident in Siegel's and

⁶⁷The Immigration and Naturalization Service "continued to conduct an intensive campaign to acquaint [...] aliens [eligible for naturalization] with opportunities to attend classes and prepare for naturalization by studying the English language and the American form of government. The citizenship responsibilities which should go with the high privilege of living in freedom required a 'hard sell'" (Bennett 230). Why does naturalization become so desirable during unstable times (like a world war)? Why is naturalization less popular at "normal" times?

Finney's texts, so too are the anxieties over the takeover by immigrant aliens refusing to assimilate linguistically and politically. The perception is that, because these unassimilated aliens are brought in by their assimilated counterparts, their assimilation is suspect. Is assimilation only a mask? Scrutinizing the assimilated immigrant once more reiterates that there is an inherent or essential difference between native and alien—assimilated or otherwise.

Although at first Miles cannot tell the difference between the natives and the aliens, the ensuing changes to the town, rather than to the individual bodies, is what makes this difference apparent. Suggestively, one such change is the depreciating value of property. In Finney's novel, Mill Valley, the once affluent middle-class town, is described as "dead" after the takeover (121). Miles experiences a "sense of loss" and increasing "shock" when he realizes "that something dear to [him] was lost" (119). In Miles, communal material loss is imbricated with what can be interpreted as Lacanian lack, resulting in the fetishization of the town's "body" (or body parts). Defamiliarizing the town, Miles sees Mill Valley through the eyes of "a stranger": driving through town, Throckmorton Street "seemed like an ordinary, though *rather shabby* shopping street on an ordinary Saturday [...]" (159; emphasis mine). The town's death is clearly associated with its economic decline, as Miles tells Becky when they walk through the town's streets: "In seven blocks we haven't passed a single house with as much as the trim being repainted; not a roof, porch, or even a cracked window being repaired; not a tree, shrub, or a blade of grass being planted, or even trimmed" (121). In contrast, Miles argues that

“an ordinary street inhabited by human beings” shows “evidences of, say, a garage being built, a new cement sidewalk being laid, a yard being spaded, a new window being installed—at least some little signs of the endless urge to *change* and *improve* that marks the human race” (121-22; emphasis mine). The change in the upkeep of the town’s houses, symbolically placing the responsibility of their upkeep on their owners rather than on the town, evokes images of less-affluent towns which are stereotypically inhabited by ethnic minorities and/or struggling immigrants who, under Miles’ premise, are inhuman (or dehumanized) insofar as they do not exhibit the material marks of human evolution. As Johnson argues, in

its concern over the dying town *The Body Snatchers* again mirrors its decade, which brought increasing public uneasiness about America’s cities, along with the creation of ersatz small towns in suburbia, modeled on the Hardy-family utopias of the thirties movies and reinforced by the Springfields and Oakdales of the fifties TV. Finney’s Santa Mira (population 3,890) is given a typical small town ambiance; more important, it is given an out-of-towner; normal Santa Mira needs only two general practitioners. And so when the town turns shabby—unpainted houses with sagging porches, unemptied trash, broken street lamps, empty stores and shattered glass on Main Street—such neglect becomes a product of something sinister. (9)

In Miles’s observation, it is the lack of interest, thereby suggesting an inherent cultural

difference, that reveals the social and cultural rather than economic improvement. It is precisely the social and cultural difference afflicting the town, the difference that tells apart the native from the alien, that is “sinister.” As Johnson further puts it, it is “the decline in values traditionally associated with rural and small-town America [that] is a sign of the presence of an alien consciousness” (8-9).

Similarly, in Siegel’s film, the change in Santa Mira is suggested from the outset when Miles and Sally, his secretary, who are driving into town, notice that the Grimaldi’s Vegetable Stand looks abandoned, closed, and run-down. In his voice-over narration, Miles states that when he last saw the stand “less than a month ago, it was the *cleanest* and busiest stand on the road” (Mainwaring 35; emphasis mine). Interestingly, the Grimaldi surname suggests an Italian heritage, although in the film there is no discernible suggestion that the characters of Jimmy Grimaldi or his grandmother are in any recognizable way Italian (recently arrived immigrant or assimilated ethnic). Still, the Grimaldis are some of the first townspeople to change, thereby pinpointing an anxiety over assimilated immigrants moving into the native’s hometown, which will change the town irrevocably by depreciating the native’s market-value property. Notice also that Danny Kaufman, also among the first to change, has a German-Jewish or a German surname, although, again, there is no suggestion of religious or ethnic difference or markers. Perhaps the most visible ethnic Other is Charley Bucholtz, the local gas- and electric-meter reader who, in both the novel and the film, brings in the pods since he has access to the town’s basements. Bucholtz, a German surname, immediately raises flags

here—a coincidence that the German is a “gas-man” in an immediate post-Holocaust era? Rather than demonized as a Nazi, Charlie Bucholtz is defined by his class, by his profession rather than his origin. In Finney’s novel, for example, Mannie Kaufman explains that Charley Bucholtz’s profession proved ideal in the (illegal) plot to move in the pods: “he enters basements freely, and usually with no one accompanying him. Delivery men, plumbers, carpenters, affected others. And of course once a changeover had occurred in a household, the rest were usually rather easily and quickly made” (181). The undetectable Other—Germans were the first alien group to assimilate—enters the subconscious (basement) of the sleeping town as in a dream. But surely sometimes a gas man is just a gas man? Freudian analysis gives way to Marxism—blue-collar labour is largely performed by immigrants and leads to unionization.

Anxiety over the alien invasion hence taps into what happens to the human body, but also what happens to the town’s body. As more aliens invade the natives’ town, they force the natives off as the once beautiful American hometown is turned into a ghost-like town resembling a stereotypical immigrant ghetto. Becky’s observation in Finney’s novel, moreover, focuses on the alienation of the alien town: is it “possible for a town to cut itself off from the world? Gradually discourage people from coming around, till it’s not noticed any more? Actually almost forgotten?” (126). Alienation of the town (and in the town) is deliberate (part of the alien’s plan) but also consequential (what native—who is not slumming—will be drawn to a run-down town)? Hence, not only does the alien’s presence depreciate the market-value of the town’s property, it also depreciates the social

value of the town. Unlike the all-American small town, an alien town, in comparison, is invisible and unimportant—would invading aliens bother to settle in and absorb New York's Lower East Side? Why choose the all-American suburban town? There are echoes here of Anzia Yezierska's and Frederick Philip Grove's search for the "real" America and desire to penetrate and thrive in the "real" America. If Santa Mira and Mill Valley are stand-in representations for the whole nation minus the immigrant ghettos, if they in fact represent the "real" America, then the implication is that if America is increasingly turned into an alien nation it will become "not noticed any more" and "almost forgotten." It is the alien, not the native, who is thus laden with the burden of turning the promised land into the alien nation. But because it is the native who grants entry to the immigrant, asylum to the displaced person, and opportunity to the illegal alien, the native is held responsible for the economic, social, and political depreciating value of America; it is the pro-assimilation native who is ultimately held responsible for the "spreading disease" of which the invading alien is but a mere, tangible symptom. Interestingly, in an interview with Stuart M. Kaminsky, Siegel states that Mill Valley "is like a cancer growth. The town, like a section of your body, is ill, and it's going to spread, the way, many times, political ideas spread" (157). A cancer growth, or its symptoms, cannot simply be cured or alleviated by pills dispensed by the local family physician.

Somewhat paradoxically, the alien's perspective is indeed needed for native to wake up and see the changes that are occurring in America. In order for Miles and Becky to be able to recognize the alien invasion that is taking place, an inversion is needed; they

need to be positioned as the aliens—they need to be alienated—in their own hometown. In Finney’s novel, Miles has left Mill Valley for one day to treat “a measles epidemic” (7). In the absence of that one day, he is positioned as the native returning home to treat the “first contagious neurosis [Mannie Kaufman has] ever ran into” (25). Similarly, when Becky visits Miles upon his return, in their exchange it is revealed that she has been living in England and has “come home” to find home changed. Becky “lived about three blocks from [Miles’s] house in a big, white, old-fashioned frame house that her father had been born in” (22), but in her absence even her father has changed. In a post-war era, Becky’s experiences are suggestive of the “boys coming home from the war” to find home a changed place. The war trope is further evident in Miles’ nostalgia: “I don’t know how many people still live in the town they were born in, these days. But I did, and it’s inexpressibly sad to see that place die; maybe even worse than the death of a friend, because you have other friends to turn to” (119). The nostalgia for the “old days” in which people died in the places they were born recalls the nostalgia for a time before the war, as Miles’s musing indicates:

Moving along an outlying street, now [...], I remembered something an uncle had once told me about the war, the fighting in Italy. They would come, sometimes, into a town supposedly free of Germans, the population supposedly friendly. But they’d enter with rifles at the ready just the same, glancing around, up, and back, with every cautious step. And they saw every window, door, alleyway, and face, he’d told me, as something to

fear. Now, home again in the town I was born in—I'd delivered papers on this very street—I knew how he'd felt entering those Italian villages; I was afraid of what I might see and find here. (119-20)⁶⁸

In paralleling Mira Valley to an Italian village possibly occupied by Germans during the Second World War, Miles effectively declares war between the natives and the invading aliens whose mere presence has robbed the natives of their paradisaal innocence. Not knowing—or trusting—one's neighbours anymore, the once-friendly townspeople are changed into mistrustful and paranoid individuals, as suggested in Miles's personification of the town's changed houses: "the windows looked like heavy-lidded, watchful eyes, quietly and terribly aware of us as we passed through that silent [Sycamore] street. [...] [T]he porch rails and stair rails [were] hugging the old houses like protective arms, sullenly guarding them against our curiosity. [...] [T]he houses themselves [were] huddled and crouching, alien and withdrawn, resentful, evil, and full of icy malice against the two figures walking along the street between them" (121). Reminiscent of the personified houses in James Joyce's *Dubliners*, the landscape described is akin to an economically marginalized urban street that houses such social ills as alcoholism and domestic violence—hardly the picture of the innocence associated with the white picket-fence

⁶⁸It is telling that Finney uses an Italian village here. The Italian reference may point to the Refugee Relief Act of 1953. According to Bennett, the "largest single group admitted under the act was Italian close relatives of United States citizens or resident aliens. Italian immigrants exceeded the Germans in 1955. Italy now was second only to Germany as the European country furnishing most of our immigrants since 1820" (218). Note, again, that there is a reference to an Italian surname (Grimaldi) and that there are at least two references to German surnames as well (Kaufman—who may be German Jewish—and Bucholtz).

American Dream, especially at a time that precedes the now familiar portrayal of white picket-fenced small town as the facade of modern American gothic horrors suggested by such films as David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and Stephen King's films, based on his books, set in Castle Rock.

Strangers in their own strange land, Miles, Becky and the Belicecs leave their hometown in order to escape the alien invasion that has taken over. After spending the night in a motel under false names, suggesting that their identities are in danger of being truly lost but also pointing to the immigrant's changed name when entering the nation or to the illegal alien's use of a false name to obtain documentation, they decide that it is necessary for them to return to Mill Valley, as Miles states: "When Jack [who is a writer] put it into words, anything but going back *home* to Mill Valley was unreal, without force or conviction. [...] We'd had our running away, and it had done us good; me, anyway. But we *belonged at home*, and not in some vague, unknown, mythical new place. And now it was time to get back, *to the place we belonged*, which belonged to us, and *fight* against whatever was happening, as best we could, and however we could" (117; emphasis mine). Declaring war on the invading aliens, the group of home-grown natives returns home. Their intent is clear, returning their home to its presumed innocent state prior to the alien's arrival. Characterizing the loss of their home as a national security issue, Jack tells Miles: "this is a *national* emergency. [...] So somebody, Miles, the Army, Navy, the FBI, I don't know who or what—but somebody has to move into this town as fast as we can get them here. And they'll have to declare martial law, a state of siege, or

something—anything! And then do whatever has to be done. [...] Root this thing out, smash it, crush it, kill it. [...] We've got to do *something*; we *have* to find a way to reach people who can act!" (104-105). In his fervent speech, Jack appears to be unable to act; only the national authorities seem capable of acting out. Yet because they take matters into their own hands, it is the hometown heroes who act out and save their home, thereby calling into question the effectiveness, authority and efficiency of the protective national authorities.

In Siegel's film, the attack is not directed at the national authorities. Miles's story begins with his recollection and retelling of what has happened in Santa Mira after the added opening frame. The first flashback is of the Railroad Station where Miles is returning home from "a medical convention" *after* receiving an urgent call from Sally (Mainwaring 32). Having been away for two weeks instead of one day, Miles' initial response to the town and to the mysterious disease that lures him back is worth noting: in hindsight, he states that at "first glance everything looked the same. It wasn't. Something evil had taken possession of the town" (32). After meeting in Miles's office, Becky tells Miles that it is "wonderful to be home again" after being away for five years (39). But she also tells him that she has "been away so long [she] feel[s] almost like a stranger in [her] own country" (39). Turned into an alien by inversion prior to her literal change into an alien, Becky's comments take on greater significance as she equates her hometown with her home-country, thereby suggesting that the disease afflicting the town is the disease afflicting the nation. Danny Kaufman's diagnosis of the town's affliction similarly points

to a problem beyond the small town:

MILES: Well, what is it? What's going on?

[...]

DANNY: I don't know, a strange neurosis, evidently contagious, an epidemic mass hysteria. In two weeks, it's spread all over town.

[...]

MILES: What causes it?

[...]

DANNY: Worry about what's going on in the world, probably. (48)

Exactly "what's going on in the world" to cause such hysteria, however, is left unstated.

Localizing the towns of Santa Mira and Mill Valley in California suggests specific anxieties over the increase in illegal immigration. After the war, the decrease of quotas for temporary agricultural workers, namely Mexicans, results in an increase of illegal aliens who threaten the native labour force. The increase in temporary admission of agricultural laborers in 1954 does not solve the illegal alien problem, as Bennett's observation makes clear:

[the] Immigration and Naturalization Service reported in 1954 that 75 percent of all crimes committed in some Southern California and Texas counties were committed by illegal Mexican entrants. "Operation wetback," a semimilitary-type of operation, was effective in rounding up many of these individuals. Road-blocks were established. Areas were

blocked off and searched. The effect of this operation was demonstrated, in part, by a drop in unemployment claims in California [...]. These illegal entrants had gone on the American dole. Others had forced many of our own citizens out of jobs so that they had to do otherwise. Dealers in human contraband ... were apprehended. (216-17)

It is fruitful to consider the images of roadblocks and a semi-military operation apprehending illegal aliens when, in Siegel's film, Miles and Becky, the only two townspeople who remain unchanged, become hunted fugitives desperately trying to avoid being caught by the pods who now control the police, the radio, and the telephone:

DISPATCHER: (*over radio*): Attention all units! Attention all units! Apprehend and detain Dr. Miles Bennell and Becky Driscoll, now believed heading north in a black and white Ford sedan [...] license number 2X37 796. [...] All units designated as roadblocks move to your stations. [...] It is urgent. These two persons must be detained and not permitted to leave Santa Mira. Repeat. It is urgent. (Mainwaring 80)

Knowing they are trapped, Miles and Becky turn to the Californian hills to make their escape. They symbolically find a temporary haven in an abandoned mine-like entrance, itself suggestive of past "coolie" immigrant labour.

That this dark opening into a cave furnishes the setting for Becky's transformation is, in psychoanalytical terms, a misogynist commentary on Miles's betrayal. Having returned to the womb, Miles is threatened; he is about to be consumed by the female. His

expulsion from—and repulsion of—the womb is the underlying cause of his delirium: “I’ve been afraid a lot of times in my life, but I didn’t know the real meaning of fear until ... until I kissed Becky. [...] A moment’s sleep and the girl I loved was an inhuman enemy bent on my destruction” (103). This same misogynist fear can also be contextualized in terms of immigration anxieties, since this is the one moment when the physical union of the native (Miles) and the alien (Becky) comes to fruition. Prior to this moment, any attempt to consummate their relationship has been interrupted precisely by events related to the alien invasion. The fear of mating with the alien thus recalls a fear of miscegenation. The fear is not that the union will produce a mutant or a hybrid being, but that the native will disappear, will be destroyed, in the act of communion with the alien. Hence, the sexualized alien, in the form of Becky, an independent and seductive divorcee, represents the fear of the hyper-sexualized woman in a post-war era who threatens to usurp and destroy the patriarchal order. Misogynist portrayals of the Mother echo earlier in the film when Jimmy Grimaldi’s anxiety is over being consumed (as it were) by his demonized, alien mother. If the child cannot trust his mother, if he can no longer desire her Oedipally, to what is the world coming if not to its end? The Mother as a deceptive and destructive force rather than nurturer becomes unthinkable.

Reproduction and the alien are also closely connected with the anxieties over illegal immigration as manifested in Siegel’s film and Finney’s novel. The invading aliens are agricultural produce grown in the farming fields of California. The growth of these illegal aliens suggests both the increase of illegal Mexican aliens in search of

agricultural work, but also the growth of illegal plants often associated with illegal human contraband. Who is growing what in America's farmland is the key issue, as well as what America is producing—or reproducing. Significantly, in 1955 the Immigration and Naturalization Service's annual report

claimed that for the first time in more than 10 years, illegal crossing of the Mexican border had been brought under control. A special mobile force with modern equipment was given most of the credit. Administrative reorganization of the Border Patrol for greater effectiveness and increased efforts to cope with the problem generally were indeed effective. The wetback problem was reduced to manageable proportions. The backbone of the wetback invasion was broken. Transport planes were used to airlift these aliens to the interior of Mexico to discourage attempts at re-entry. Others were removed by train and ship with the cooperation of the Mexican government. (Bennett 219-20)

But the novel's and the film's depiction of the illegal immigrant alien contest the effectiveness of the "wetback solution" by calling attention to the multiplying illegal aliens found not only in the fields but in the household basements. It is telling that the first alien body in the Belicecs' home is fingerprinted, calling attention to the 1950s legislation requiring all immigrant aliens to be fingerprinted and subjected to routine check-ins, thereby equating the legal immigrant aliens to criminals. The body in the Belicecs' home has "no prints; there were five absolutely smooth, solidly black circles"

(Finney 43), leading Miles to wonder: “Since when do ordinary men have no fingerprints at all!” (Mainwaring 85). The body’s lack of fingerprints points to its lack of identity. As an unidentified body, the alien body represents the multitude of unidentified illegal aliens who cross the border.⁶⁹ In the novel, Miles also likens the foaming bodies to a “crude” doll “made by a primitive South American people” (Finney 98), thereby reinforcing the Latin-American identity of the otherwise demarcated alien bodies.

Further evidence that the aliens are representations of illegal aliens is offered in Miles’ and Becky’s inversion. Immediately after realizing that they, the remaining natives, are now the hunted aliens in a town completely taken over by the “real” aliens, Miles and Becky first hide out in Miles’ office. In Siegel’s film, the camera angle and lighting used in this scene is highly suggestive:

MS: Becky and Miles, inside the closet, low angle. A small window with a grille is at their eye level, casting light into the dark closet. Miles holds Becky with his left arm. They hear footsteps and sink down below the level of their grille. A light is turned on in the office and more light shines on Becky’s and Miles’ faces. Footsteps are louder and a policeman’s cap and upper face are visible as he glances through the grille. He goes away with the sound of footsteps and muffled drumbeats; the light is turned off and

⁶⁹It is worth noting that the Mexico-U.S. Border (or the Rio Grande Border) is not the only border in question. By 1958, there is an increase in “aliens seeking illegal entry from Canada [...]. Most of these were Europeans” (Bennett 227). Although the most significant number of illegal entries were from Mexico, the “battle against alien criminals, subversives and illegal entries by land, sea and air continued” (227).

the office door is closed. (Mainwaring 81-82)

Miles and Becky are literally behind the iron bars of the grille, suggesting they are jailed, and under the eye of the patrolling policeman outside the corridor. Crouched and hiding inside the darkened closet, they are positioned as the very creatures they initially seek to hunt down and expose: “How many of those things are down there in town right now? Hidden away in secret places” (Finney 68). This scene also points to Jack Warner’s attack of “ideological termites” before HUAC, as “subversive germs hiding in dark corners” (in Rogin 201).⁷⁰ Rhetorically, Miles’s and Becky’s inversion suggests an enlightened understanding of the illegal alien on the run. Sympathy for the alien is indeed offered at various points. When, for example, Danny Kaufman and Jack trap Miles and Becky in his office and believe they will finally change them, Miles offers to leave town. Danny Kaufman’s response reveals the aliens’ vulnerability: “We can’t let you go. You’re dangerous to us” (Mainwaring 86-87). If the aliens are perceived as a threat to the all-American native, so too is the all-American native a threat to the alien.

The mutually dangerous relationship between native and alien takes on warlike

⁷⁰Given Miles’s reaction to kissing an alien Becky in the deserted canal entrance to the mine, a queer reading of the film suggests that Miles’s being closeted here has more to do with his repressed homosexual desire. His relationship to Becky can thus be understood in homosocial terms (following Sedgwick), since many of the scenes between Miles and Danny Kaufman, in which information is exchanged, occurs with either Becky present or because it involves her somehow. Supporting a queer reading further is Miles’s hesitation in killing Becky’s pod with the phallic pitchfork, and the film’s focus on his reaction when killing his own pod instead. Notice too that Miles runs off from the voracious and dangerous female (the alien who comes to personalize the alien masses outside the cave), and into the safety of all that is traditionally male—science, medicine, psychiatry, and the government.

dimensions most explicitly in Finney's novel. Inside Miles's office, when Professor Budlong and Mannie Kaufman explain the pods' plan to Miles and Becky, the quasi-imperial alien invasion is revealed: currently spreading through northern California, the pods' expansion plan is to invade "Oregon, Washington, the West Coast, finally; it's an accelerating process, even faster, always more of us, fewer of you. Presently, fairly quickly, the continent. And then—yes, of course, the world" (Finney 184). Clearly pinpointing the aliens' weapons as their sheer number, their *intent* is to invade, repopulate, and take over not only America but the world. It is in this conquest vision, rather than the multiplying numbers, that a political invasion is suggested. Symbolically suggesting a religious divide between East and West, Finney describes how Professor Budlong, having been attacked with a syringe presumably filled with a potent muscle relaxant (morphine? heroin?), falls to the ground and "still kneeling, [...] lay face downward on the corrugated metal floor, like a man salaaming" (200).⁷¹ In this simple gesture, Finney captures what Seed describes as the "evocation of the alien [... which] depends for much of its effect on an interplay between extremes of familiarity and strangeness, an uncertainty in the focalisers of scenes, and on the gradual erosion of any safe areas, whether emotional or geographical" (166).

Contrasting the ending of Finney's novel, in which the pods are forced off Earth,

⁷¹In a post-September 11, 2001 climate, this passing description would undoubtedly receive more critical attention. In 1954, however, it merely functions to underscore alien's exoticness, and quite possibly a degree of anxiety over Muslim immigrants suddenly and regularly gracing America's points of entry—especially after the Asian barred zone is lifted.

with the ending of Siegel's film, in which a phone call to the Federal Bureau of Investigation finally concedes that "Yes, it's an emergency!" (Mainwaring 109), pinpoints two divergent viewpoints concerning immigration. According to Seed, "Finney's evident desire [is] to restore the town, to halt its entropic drift towards death, an issue which was largely ignored by the movie adaptations" (160). The expulsion of the aliens in the novel may well point to the "sharply increased" efforts to deport subversive aliens, whereas the FBI's involvement at the end of the film may point to the ensuing problem created by the "refusal of Communist countries to accept their citizens [Americans] try to deport" (Bennett 220). Although both texts call for the extermination of the alien (be it by expulsion, deportation, or segregation of the remaining aliens until their [un]timely death), there is a marked difference in ending one text in a state of war and ending the other in a state of national emergency. This subtle difference points to the complex political backdrop that informs each text. Denying writing "an allegory of any kind," Finney contends that when he wrote *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* he "was not thinking of McCarthy, or Communism, fascism, or anything but writing pure entertainment [...]" (in Seed 161). As "pure entertainment," Finney's novel adheres to a traditional happy ending in which Earth is saved and the hero gets the girl, as Steffen-Fluhr observes: "Becky and Miles conquer the aliens, and love conquers all. We leave them happily settling into married life. The pod duplicates still exist, but they are a dying breed; and slowly the old town is resurging. The hearty Bennell-Driscoll genes, not the green genes, will inherit the Earth" (148). The restoration of the town—the "empty houses are filling

quickly—it's a crowded county and state—and there are new people, most of them young and with children, in town" (Finney 215)—and of love imply a restoration of an America in which one town (Mill Valley) "will be no different" from "any other small town" (216). Finney's fairy tale vision of America therefore lies in small town uniformity. It is precisely the emphasis on sameness and small close-knit community, curiously the very notions that threaten individualism, that are proposed as national unity; indeed, as *the* (only) all-American identity.

The expulsion of the aliens in the novel's end, however, holds more political ramifications than the exaltation of small town America. Rendering the threatening aliens no more than pestering bugs, Miles follows their "gaze" and sees the sky "peppered with dots. More than dots; a great awesome *swarm* of dark, circular blobs drifted, ascending slowly and steadily into the sky. [... W]e watched *the great swarm*, slowly diminishing in size, never touching or bumping, climbing steadily higher and higher into the sky and the spaces beyond it" (Finney 212; emphasis mine). Forced off and out of America, the bug-like aliens continue on their diasporic quest in "the spaces beyond" America. Proudly, Miles asserts: "Quite simply, the great pods were leaving a fierce and inhospitable planet" (213). "Fierce" and "inhospitable" are hardly the adjectives associated with a youthful, growing country in which all neighbours know each other, thereby revealing a nationalist as quasi-racist sentiment that informs "true" American identity. The fearful element of American identity is further suggested in Miles's joyous victory not necessarily over the expulsion of the aliens but over his own role in this saga, as his following statements

make clear:

a wave of exultation so violent it left me trembling swept through my body; because I knew Becky and I had played our part in what was now happening. We hadn't, and couldn't possibly have been—I saw this now—the only souls who had stumbled and blundered onto what had been happening in Mill Valley. There'd been others, of course, individuals, and little groups, who had done what we had—who had simply refused to give up. Many had lost, but some of us who had not been caught and trapped without a chance had fought implacably, and a fragment of a wartime speech moved through my mind: *We shall fight them in the fields, and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.* True then for one people, it was true always for the whole human race, and now I felt that nothing in the whole vast universe could ever defeat us. (213-14)

Evoking Churchill's famous speech after the battle of Dunkirk in 1940, Miles equates the American natives with the British and the aliens with the German Nazis—a comparison that has already been made in the novel when Miles feels like “a condemned man futilely holding his last breath in a gas chamber, [...] struggling and hoping even when there was no possible hope left” (180). Rendering the invading aliens synonymous with Nazis undermines any sympathetic representations of the alien offered earlier in the novel, and even the amorphous characteristics that dehumanize but significantly do not demonize the *swarm* of aliens. In paralleling the aliens with the Nazis, the aliens are characterized as

the incarnation of evil. In demonizing the aliens at the end, Finney allows Miles and Becky to emerge as poster children for community-oriented radicals of individual action. Hope, therefore, lies in the hands of those individuals and “little groups” who refuse to give up their ideal of an alien-free America—hardly a comforting thought with white supremacist groups gaining popularity at a time that America is facing a “state of emergency.”

The alternative offered by Siegel’s film—that the individual refuse to give up but contact the national authorities and let them handle the emergency—is no more satisfying. What is interesting about the film’s end—and the film’s frame—is the seemingly contradictory need to rally the individual into action while positioning the national institutions, not the local individual, as the ultimate authority and saviour. The threat to the aliens, unlike Finney’s novel, is not a declaration of war that will result in their expulsion or segregation and eventual death in an “inhospitable planet.” In fact, the response to the aliens’ presence and rapid invasion of California (and presumably the rest of the country) is left to the audience’s imagination. For believers in the FBI, the “problem” has found its solution. For paranoid viewers who mistrust the FBI (and other governmental agencies), the “problem” is only beginning. While we cannot foresee what action will be taken to solve the alien problem, we can analyze the competing political ideologies that inform the film’s frame and narrative. LaValley explains that although “Siegel and Mainwaring were content with the film they had shot; [the Producer Walter] Wanger, for a variety of reasons, was not.... The differences among the film’s

creators—and between them and the studio [Allied Artists]—plagued the film in postproduction, causing extensive cuts and eventually the addition of a framing story and voice-over narration by the principal character” (3). The effect that Siegel’s, Mainwaring’s, Wanger’s, and the studio’s differences has on the film problematize the reading of this film: “Throughout its history but especially in postproduction, the film became a locus of conflicts of authorship, genre, aesthetics, political ideology, and B-movie studio practice. It has been read at one end of the ideological spectrum as a paranoid parable of invasion by Soviet totalitarianism, fueled by the Red Scare and McCarthyism; and at the other end of the spectrum as an indictment of America conformity and the loss of individualism that the Cold War fostered” (4).

That the film lends itself to these various readings is a sign of the multiple and often contradictory political beliefs of its creators, but also of the lingering effect that the HUAC hearings and the Hollywood Ten convictions had on Mainwaring, Siegel and Wanger. Disowning any responsibility or claim for the film’s political dimensions, in an interview with Guy Braucourt, when asked if seeing the film as a “parable about the spread of fascism” was “too farfetched an interpretation,” Siegel maintains that as a director, he “found it much more exciting, instead of seeing the story as a fascist plot, to show how a very ordinary state of mind could start out in a very quiet small town and spread to a whole country. But it’s certainly possible to make the interpretation you mean; I’ve no objection to it at all” (159). Siegel’s answer is congruent with Finney’s over the entertainment value, rather than the political value, of his text. Moreover, in emphasizing

his role as director, not writer, of the film, Siegel suggests a look at Mainwaring's script to decode any intentional political commentary. According to LaValley, "Mainwaring's despair is the despair of a one time strong leftist over the America of the fifties" that understood the effects of a blacklist as the coercion "to sign a podlike loyalty oath to prove they were good Americans and not subversives.... Risk was no longer acceptable; perhaps serious social subjects could be approached only in disguised form through the crime and science fiction genres" (6). Exactly how disguised is the film's political commentary is uncertain, particularly when considering that the "Cold War brought more ideological changes to Wanger than it did to Siegel and Mainwaring" (12).

While Wanger "was anticommunist, he was no conservative. Although he supported the industry's unacknowledged blacklist, he continued to speak out for individualism and free speech against censorship. He did not feel it was un-American to be critical of American institutions; it was right to expose their weaknesses in order to correct them" (13). If the film is internal rather than external (for "Wanger it is never the Communists who are the major threat" [13]), we must question *which* American institutions the film is critiquing in order to "correct" them. In other words, what is the film identifying as *the* disease afflicting America and, more importantly, what solution does it offer? Wanger's political ambivalence may be a result of the internal politics of his time. According to LaValley,

[t]he Cold War brought more ideological changes to Wanger than it did to Siegel and Mainwaring. Wanger had long counted himself a friend to the

Left and was a strong antagonist of attempts by the Right, particularly Sam Wood's right-wing Motion Picture Alliance, to bring HUAC to Hollywood. Before the investigation took place, he wrote articles attacking the Right and the MPA and defending Hollywood. After HUAC, however, he changed his tune, conceding that the Right was partly correct about subversion in the industry. He was one of the four moguls who drafted the Waldorf statement in November 1947 that initiated the blacklist in Hollywood (the others were Dore Schary, Louis B. Mayer, and Joseph Schenck). Like Schary and other Hollywood liberals, he was later appalled at the impact of the blacklist on those who refused to sign the loyalty oath. (12-13)

Wanger's political position, like Miles and Becky in the film, points to a kind of inversion in that he is paralleled with the aliens who are struggling to survive. The film is therefore about survival—political, native, or alien. As such, there is no fundamental or essential difference between the alien and the native since both are struggling and fighting to survive. Indeed, it is the conditions in which both must survive that are critiqued. In the space of a town where there is no room for multiple beliefs, only one group can survive. But the film does not suggest an alternative—a pluralist melting pot or else independent ethnic communities or ghettos coexisting in the same space.

Localizing the problem as an internal conflict, the film proposes that a federal institution be brought in to investigate, which positions the federal agency on the outside.

The called-for action, unlike Finney's novel, is not to declare war or to resolve the situation, but to acknowledge the problem and call *in* the authorities whose business it is to investigate and house important information. But the FBI's lack of action is in itself important. It is a psychiatrist (Dr. Hill) who, after verifying the existence of the alien pods, believes Miles's story and then makes the emergency phone call to the FBI. No men in black visit Miles, nor are the pods marked for (non-)investigation in an X-Files cabinet. Instead, it is the absence of the FBI that grants the agency its authority. Such a conservative view of the federal institutions may be attributed to the studio's voice:

Here it is not the politics per se that is so much in question, but the film's generic status and its bleakness. And that bleakness, of course, implies an ideological position. One cannot be that negative about America; one must show that Miles got through. Consequently the studio insisted on a framing story in which Miles gets his message out—just the action Wanger also wanted to stress and could not, even with the altered ending on the bridge with Miles talking to the camera. A framing story and a fantasylike coda were added to soften the impact, to bring the movie back into more conventional mainstream social and political terms. (LaValley 15)

The resolution to Miles's anxiety is not action as much as belief. He can only relax after Dr. Hill, a patriarchal and rational authority figure, believes his story without dismissing it as a paranoid delusion. Yet, although the film may not betray a pluralist sentiment, in

allowing—indeed, inviting—multiple readings, the film’s various ideological beliefs are disguised to form a singular, totalitarian and oppressive ideology that is taking over. Political ambiguity as a means of housing multiplicity is therefore the strongest message unconsciously advocated by the film. Perhaps ironically, as a collaboration made up of various ideological pulls, it is a testimony of the survival of democracy in America.

PART II

3.4 The Canadian Alie(N)ation

To recapitulate, two of the most striking characteristics about immigration issues and narratives in America during the 1950s include the masking and displacement of immigrant narratives in the science fiction and horror genres of the Hollywood B-movie because of the social and political paranoia propagated by the Red Scares, and the symptomatic alienation that occurs as a result of the conflation of the immigrant with the Communist in official discourses exemplified by the infamous Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952. Considering Canada's wartime participation on the side of the allies, its geographical and cultural proximity to the United States, and its similar external pressure to alleviate the crisis of Displaced Persons by the war in Europe, it stands to reason that a similar pattern, both cultural and political, ought to be discernible in postwar Canada. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that Canada, like the United States, faces similar domestic and external pressures that led to its metamorphosis from an immigrant nation (albeit a much more selective one than the United States) into an alie(n)ation. This apparent change manifests itself in the emphasis on national security that responds to the threat (real or perceived) of alien invasions during the Cold War. This hypothesis is also based on the following two axioms: 1) Canadian culture has been (and is) generally influenced by American culture, and 2) Canadian immigration policy has followed a similar pattern of exclusions (rather than inclusions) as that of its American counterpart. For example, a leading political scientist on Canadian immigration policy,

Reg Whitaker, notes that in the postwar period, to “some degree, Canada had to enact similar controls over immigration and travel simply because the Americans were doing so. There was the world’s longest undefended border to consider, and the Americans would not allow persons to whom they had denied direct entry to slip across their northern border without visas” (*Double* 21). But the trend to follow the American lead is because “Canadian officials held the same world-view as the Americans and were just as determined to bar all bearers of the ‘germs’ of Communism as they were to bar the carriers of communicable diseases from these shores” (*Double* 21-2). Hence, since the immigration narratives that touched on social ideals and anxieties surfaced in obscure places in abstracted or displaced forms in the American imagination, a similar eruption ought to have emerged within the Canadian imagination.

Yet, in 1956, the same year in which Don Siegel’s *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is released, Adele Wiseman’s *The Sacrifice*, a novel about a Ukrainian Jewish immigrant family, wins the Governor General’s Award for Fiction as well as the Beta Sigma Phi Award. Wiseman’s explicit rather than implicit account of the immigrant experience in Canada is hailed by historian Bernard L. Vigod as “the best known portrayal of the Jewish immigrant experience” (18). Because of the similar political position of both countries during the 1950s, and the revisions and implementations of new immigration policies in 1952 (the INA in the United States and The Immigration Act in Canada), the marked difference in the representation of the immigrant experience or anxieties over immigration produced during the same time period raises key questions: Why does

Canada produce and artistically recognize Wiseman's *The Sacrifice* at a time when racist and anti-Semitic immigration policy dictated that less rather than more Jewish immigrants—and refugees—be admitted into Canada? What is the difference between the American and the Canadian Immigration Acts of 1952 that allows for an explicit immigrant narrative to succeed in Canada at a time in which displaced immigrant narratives and assimilation narratives gained popularity in America? To address these questions, it is necessary first to contextualize Wiseman's novel in the social and political climate surrounding the implementation of the Canadian Immigration Act, which is largely characterized by Canada's response to the Cold War. Doing so will lead to analysis of the various literary and political strategies that Wiseman uses to address her contemporary immigration issues—specifically those concerning Jewish European immigrants and refugees.

3.5 Canada and the Cold War: the Political Climate and The Immigration Act of 1952

1952 marks a new phase in immigration policy in both the United States and Canada as both countries rewrite and replace their policies of 1917 and 1910 (and their subsequent amendments) respectively. Although both policies maintain a similar outlook in their exclusions of unwanted immigrants—as in, for example, the exclusion of aliens who are deemed insane or likely to become a public charge—the differences between the two point to the issues that contributed to the remaking of each country's policy. In 1950,

for example, the United States passes the Subversive Activities Control Act, which is then followed by the Emergency Detention Act. Conversely, in 1950 and again in 1951, Canada amends its Canadian Citizenship Act (passed only four years earlier in 1946). While the United States' legislation points to fears of alien invasions and the need—or desire—for increased national security, Canadian legislation reveals the growing need—or desire—for a national identity that is based on citizenship. As Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock note, the amended Canadian Citizenship Act “marked the first time that a Commonwealth nation had created its own class of citizenship separate from that of Britain. Prior to this time, the highest status that immigrants could attain was British-subject status, which was conferred by naturalization” (314). Unlike the United States, Canada's anxiety over its national security puts the emphasis on “national” rather than on “defence.”

Canada's reevaluation of its position on immigration has less to do with the actual issues of the time and more with the business of allocating and institutionalizing a mechanism to deal with these issues. According to Kelley and Trebilcock, immigration “rarely attracted serious parliamentary debate and did not play an important role in any of the federal elections that occurred during” the “Postwar Boom” of 1946 to 1962 (313).⁷² However, in 1950, “a separate Department of Citizenship and Immigration” was created

⁷²In fact, the extent to which “immigration policy was not the focus of extensive debates in the House of Commons” is evident in 1955 when members of the Opposition noted that “the Department of Citizenship and Immigration had a habit of producing the annual immigration figures and estimates on the last day of a parliamentary session, thereby avoiding debate altogether” (Kelley and Trebilcock 319).

to replace the Immigration Branch that had been previously housed in the Department of Mines and Resources (314). For the first time, there was “a minister whose primary responsibility was immigration, although he or she was also responsible for citizenship and Indian affairs” (323).⁷³ These changes may suggest an increased immediacy regarding immigration but the new legislation “mostly codified existing executive practices and included provisions which maintained the broad discretionary powers of the Cabinet” (314-15). Therefore, although both American and Canadian policies indicate both countries’ inward gaze, each country’s competing needs also indicate the disparate positions from which both enter homegrown debates regarding the similar problems about immigration, namely displaced persons and the regulation of national security.

⁷³The lumping together of Immigration and Indian affairs is rather interesting in that it establishes certain assumptions about First Nations peoples and immigrants that emphasize the similarities between the two different groups. By regulating these two marginalized peoples in one governmental department, the relationship is drawn between the First Nation peoples and the immigrants as a quasi-unified force that is pitted against the imperial center (the government). Of course, both groups have had competing interests (e.g., land claims) and histories. The centre’s perspective is to gloss over these differences and promote instead the similarities of both groups’ needs and issues, particularly over status and citizenship. From the immigrants’ perspective, the similarity between both groups is also manifested in such narratives as Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan* and Jane Urquhart’s *Away*. In these narratives, the Japanese-Canadians who are interned during the Second World War and the Irish-Catholic immigrant-settlers who arrive in Upper Canada during the nineteenth century are paralleled with Canada’s aboriginal peoples (the Ojibway in *Away*) to legitimize the discriminatory treatment of the immigrants in Canada at the hands of the English-Canadian government. In doing so, these immigrant texts use indigenization to construct the immigrant as a moral or spiritual native to Canada. This parallel is also made by Margaret Laurence in *The Diviners* from a more central position that seeks to understand the relationship between the Scottish immigrant-settlers and the Métis in Manitoba. I have yet to come across to an aboriginal perspective that draws a similar parallel or establishes any similarities between the two groups. This absence locates the parallel of immigrants and aboriginals, be it from the centre or its margins, as clearly not an aboriginal strategy. For this reason, this parallel must be reassessed and contested.

Canada's preoccupation is with its centre. Maintaining central control rather than displaying anxieties over alien invasions is what is disguised in the making of new policy and in the creation of a separate government department.

Unlike the American INA of 1952, the Canadian Immigration Act, according to Walter Harris (then Liberal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration), "entailed no significant changes to immigration policy" (Kelley and Trebilcock 324). Harris states:

In the light of experience it would be unrealistic to say that immigrants who have spent the greater part of their life in tropical or sub-tropical countries become readily adapted to the Canadian mode of life which, to no small extent, is determined by climactic conditions. It is a matter of record ... that natives of such countries are more apt to break down in health than immigrants from countries where the climate is more akin to that of Canada. It is equally true that, generally speaking, persons from tropical or sub-tropical countries find it more difficult to succeed in the highly competitive Canadian economy. (in Kelley and Trebilcock 325)

Implicit in his rationale for racial exclusions is also the assumption that non-white immigrants, or even certain white-skinned immigrants, pose a threat to themselves and to the Canadian economy because of their apparent inability to survive in a social-democratic—dare we call it capitalist?—climate. Knowing that Communists most ardently opposed capitalism, Harris' legitimization of Canadian racist immigration policy and procedure makes the Canadian position on Communists and other anti-capitalist

immigrants quite clear: exclusion. What is interesting here is that unlike the overt antagonism toward Communists in the United States, the targeting of Communists in Canada is diluted in the racist rhetoric of exclusion of non-“Nordic” aliens. The paradox that exclusions based on race are permitted and warranted but exclusions based on political ideology are not gives the impression that Canada holds a quasi-sacred view of political freedom and equality; the Communist Party in Canada, while under surveillance, was not outlawed as it was in the United States. In spite of such advocacy for ideological freedom, however, political “deviancy” was highly policed.⁷⁴ In 1956, for example, a Security Panel was created that consisted of “a group of senior civil servants, RCMP, and military officers who oversaw RCMP operations and advised the government on internal security policy. The panel was successful in convincing Cabinet of the necessity for stringent security measures, such as the time-consuming RCMP screening of prospective immigrants in overseas visa offices” (342). The Security Panel, though highly influential behind closed doors, operated outside the public scope. It is unclear whether public

⁷⁴There is an interesting exclusion added in the Immigration Act which Whitaker reads as a decoy for Communist exclusions—the “discrimination against homosexuals on the grounds, among others, that sexual ‘deviants’ constituted a security risk to the state” (*Double 37*). Apparently, if Philip Girard is correct,

the pressure appears to have come from the RCMP and, indirectly, from the American security establishment, which had decisively linked Communism and homosexuality in its collective mind as part of a complex of Cold War subversion. The clause prohibiting homosexuals was rushed through Parliament with no discussion whatsoever and, it would appear, to little or no effect in the administration of the immigration program. It was certainly unclear just what criteria security officers were to employ in detecting homosexuals among the applicants for entry. (Whitaker, *Double 37*)

opinion would have sanctioned the Security Panel's methods and decisions.

The underlying difference in the American and Canadian approaches to national security has less to do with governmental policy and more with the appearance of governmental practice. Whitaker makes this distinction perfectly clear:

In Canada uncontrolled public hysteria was much less in evidence. The Canadian way was to keep the fight against Communism more strictly within the confines of the state. Under the aegis of the federal government, purges were indeed carried out, and the apparatus for surveillance and intimidation of dissent was created, or refined where it already existed. The defining characteristic of Canadian Cold War on the home front was secrecy. The Americans played out their dramas in front of klieg lights and television cameras; Canadians were scarcely aware of what was happening here, for their government acted quietly, under the shelter of administrative discretion, even shielding its security operations from parliamentary scrutiny as much as possible. In America, the House Un-American Activities Committee held circus-like hearings in Hollywood to root out the "Commies" in the movie industry: the daily images of the Hollywood stars naming names or shouting defiance before the public inquisition became part of American folklore. Most Canadians were not even aware that a Red-hunting purge was being carried out in Canada's National Film Board around the same time; even today some of the details

of this purge are still unclear, such was the secrecy in which it was shrouded. (*Double 18*)

Although opposite in their approaches to the Cold War, both the American public dramatization and the Canadian secret policing achieved similar ends—stringent regulation of who was to be kept out and who was to be feared.

The extensively detailed definitions of political subversives—and subversive activity and its institutions—in the American INA prohibit entry on the basis that an alien who has contact (however minor or unintentional) with any facet of a red-marked institution has been contaminated and is therefore a contagious “germ” that could infect and destroy the American nation. Conversely, in the section of “Prohibited Classes” of persons—not aliens—in the Canadian Immigration Act there are only three subparagraphs (l, m, and n), which are considerably shorter and much less detailed, outlining the political exclusions. Two other subparagraphs (q and r) exclude persons on the basis of political involvement leading to treason and espionage *during* the Second World War. These five subparagraphs, while institutionalizing exclusions based on political ideology and affiliation, are considerably vaguer and seemingly open (see Appendix D.1).⁷⁵ Such openness and vagueness, however, is as tyrannical and as regulated as the more explicit and detailed American exclusions. What effectively makes

⁷⁵An exception is the exclusion of “advocates of the violent overthrow of government” (Kelley and Trebilcock 343) which appears in the Act of 1910 and was used to exclude or deport the “known Communists seeking admission to Canada for the purpose of engaging in subversive propaganda” (in Kelley and Trebilcock 343).

the Canadian Immigration Act as politically restrictive as the American INA is, as Kelley and Trebilcock argue, the immense discretionary power allotted to the Special Inquiry Officers (326). In granting this power to a few officials, “the Canadian government did not have to pass regulations which blatantly discriminated against non-preferred immigrants. This reduced the potential for embarrassment in international relations, and explains the adoption, at least on paper, of the apparently more expansive regulations first passed in 1950” (326). Whitaker similarly argues that the “considerable scope for discretion on the part of the state” in regard to immigration and naturalization procedures “was used to apply the political and ideological criteria of the Cold War to the selection and rejection of immigrants, to the processing of citizenship applications, to deportation on political grounds, to denaturalization, and to controls over travellers visiting Canada or leaving it. It was a massive operation, pursued largely in the secrecy guaranteed by the magic formula of ‘national security’” (*Double* 20).

These political exclusions derive, in part, from the continued belief that immigrants be regarded as a selected elite class rather than as a mass of refugees. This distinction is evident in the competing drives for immigration during the postwar period. As a result of the Depression and the Second World War, Canada faced numerous skilled and unskilled labour shortages. Hence, “[b]usiness interests pressed hard for an expansionary immigration policy, including contract labour schemes. While labour interests opposed such schemes, they adopted a sharply more supportive attitude to increased immigration generally than in previous periods. Labour groups were largely

persuaded that immigration was an important ingredient of domestic economic growth” (Kelley and Trebilcock 318). Selling the idea of immigration, on the one hand, as a necessary ingredient for a healthy economy, those regulating the intake of immigrants kept out those believed to be in opposition to the Canadian market on the other. At the same time that Canada sought to attract numerous skilled (and unskilled) labourers, existing immigrant groups as well as religious and community groups lobbied for “more humanitarian immigration policies, especially with respect to refugees. Broad, albeit belated, public awareness of the horrors of Naziism and its racist implications led to increasing receptiveness to these humanitarian views” (318-19). These groups’ interests were in keeping with external pressure from the allies “to assist with the resettlement of displaced persons and other refugees in Europe,” of which Jews comprised only ten per cent (313).

These competing pulls resonate in Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s address to the House of Commons on May 1st, 1947:

I wish to make it quite clear that Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a “fundamental human right” of any alien to enter Canada. It is a privilege. It is a matter of domestic policy ...[.] The people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population ...[.] Any considerable Oriental immigration would ... be certain to give rise to social and economic problems ...[.] (in

Here, Mackenzie King reiterates the racist vision of a homogeneously Nordic Canadian people in the exclusion of “Oriental immigration.” This discrimination corresponds to one of the most significant changes in immigration legislation during the postwar period—the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1947. However, Asian immigration continued to be discouraged and regulated by the new expansive laws that privileged family members of Canadian citizens as long as these would sponsor their relatives. Given the relatively low numbers of Asian Canadians, an influx of Asian immigration could be easily prevented under the guise of the expansive and less racist new policy. Furthermore, admission of Chinese (or other Asian groups) proved all too daring in a climate which saw the Communist rule of Mao Tse Tung and the rise of Communism in other Asian countries. In his speech, Mackenzie King also differentiates between a “refugee” and an “immigrant” insofar as he maintains Canada’s right to choose its immigrants over the refugee’s human right to enter Canada. In this assumption, although the refugee is presumed to have some humanitarian rights as granted by the U.N.’s International Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees—apparently somewhat debatable at the time—whereas the immigrant appears to have no rights at all. It is the host country, rather than the immigrant, who has the right to chose, accept, reject, or expel. In rendering refugees “immigrants,” Mackenzie King further voices the favouritism of domestic policy over international dictums, and naturalizes Canada’s selection—rather than allocation—of displaced persons.

Canada's refusal to "adopt the U.N.'s International Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" in 1951 "because the RCMP believed it would restrict Canada's right to deport refugees on security grounds [...] reflected the government's suspicion that organizations such as the U.N.'s International Refugee Organization (IRO) were infiltrated by Communists" (339). Couched in Red Scare rhetoric, the rejection of refugees was enmeshed with other exclusions as well as deportations of immigrants suspected of having Communist sympathies or affiliations (314). Ironically, "this antipathy to perceived Communist sympathizers led to lax admission policies toward Fascist or Nazi sympathizers, a number of whom, it subsequently transpired, were war criminals" (314). Canada's approach to the refugee issue reinforces Mackenzie King's vision of Canada's position on immigration more generally. Forced to accept refugees, Whitaker notes that

Canada was highly selective in choosing from among the displaced persons. They were in effect skimming the cream of the camps in view of Canada's economic needs. [...] But the selectivity did not end with the potential value of the immigrant to the Canadian economy. Ethnic discrimination was central to the process. The exercise of prejudice against Jews, the worst victims of the Fascists, was matched by a favourable attitude towards certain more "Nordic" ethnic groups. And in the security screening process, with its notable right-wing bias, a record of discrimination on political and ideological grounds can be found. (*Double*

Canada's anti-Semitic sentiments and practices during and after the Second World War coincide with the Red Scare that "swept Canada" (Kelley and Trebilcock 343). The prejudice against and exclusion of Jews and Communists points to the perception that socialism was "imported from western Europe by Jewish intellectuals after the 1860s" (Vigod 10), which rhetorically renders all Jews Communists. Because a large number of Jewish workers have been unionists, socialists, and communists who have been involved in labour disputes and strikes since the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917, and because a large number of Jewish refugees came from what became Soviet regions, anti-Semitic and anti-Communist sentiments could easily fuse the two into a single category. As Whitaker notes, the image of the "dangerous foreigner" was that of "the alien as Red revolutionary, radical anarchist, or labour agitator. This image was not entirely distinguishable from that of the racially or culturally undesirable immigrant" (*Double* 13).

3.6 “We must dance to the tune of the stranger”: Adele Wiseman’s *The Sacrifice*

Always and at all frontiers have I been the Jew
Shunted and shuttled, been the Hebrew tricked
Examining
A passport of a polyglot decision
(To esperanto from the earliest rune)
Where cancellation frowned away permission,
Man turning in despair
To seek him his visa from the consul of the moon.

For they have all been shut, and barred, and triple-locked,
The gates of refuge, the asylum doors;
And in no place beneath the sun may I,
Who’ve tugged at the latch of all the longitudes,
Sit down to rest my bones, and count my sores, —
[...]
No home nor haven is for us;
All doors are exodus.

—A.M. Klein, from “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage”
[Version 2] (lines 8-25)

A native-born Canadian, Adele Wiseman is a respected literary figure who, although relatively unprolific, has nevertheless been an influential presence in several literary and creative writing circles. Her friendship with Canadian literary pillar Margaret Laurence and their epistolary exchange, for example, has been the focus of critical inquiry. *The Sacrifice* is Wiseman’s first novel and entry into the Canadian literary scene. Because it appears to be a biblical allegory, supports an “authoritative, monological, and patriarchal representation of the world” (Mack 134). Wiseman thus stands as a relatively conservative literary figure who maintains the status quo—especially when compared to her Jewish-Canadian male contemporaries, A. M. Klein, Mordecai Richler and Irving

Layton. Klein and Richler, in particular, were much more active as journalists, vocalizing in their editorials and letters their political position on such (inter)national issues as anti-Semitism, assimilation, or federalism. Artistically, all three exhibit much more radical signs that are meant to shock or challenge the Jewish and Gentile reader alike—whether by drawing on the bawdy and the vulgar (particularly bodily functions and waste in Layton’s poems and Richler’s novels) or in the intellectual pursuit of an intertextual quasi-liturgical literature (in Klein’s poems and *The Second Scroll*). In contrast, Wiseman, as a feminist writer, transgresses literary and social boundaries in her comparatively less acclaimed second novel, *Crackpot* (winner of the J. I. Segal award), published two decades after *The Sacrifice*, in 1974. Given Wiseman’s more subversive style and taboo subject matter in *Crackpot*, her relative acquiescence in *The Sacrifice* is highly suggestive. I am less concerned here with her texts’ stylistic and thematic differences, and more with the social and political pressures that seep into *The Sacrifice*’s narrative—namely, the Cold War tension that manifests itself as a pull between socialist and capitalist ideologies under the guise of a biblical fable.

Writing her first novel during the Cold War (Michael Greenstein states that it took “several years of revision” prior to its publication in 1956 [“Adele” 242]), and having grown up in the immigrant world of Northern Winnipeg, it is intriguing that Wiseman does not represent a socialist ideology or lack thereof. In his historical overview, Vigod states that

Jewish immigration after 1900 was especially significant not only because

of its volume, but also because the most recent arrivals, particularly the Russian Jews who left following the Revolution of 1905, carried with them the latest ideological and cultural developments in the Pale. Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg all acquired the entire spectrum of Jewish political radicalism. The Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle), a North American working class Jewish fraternal organization, housed Marxist internationalists or "Bundists", Labour Zionists (Poale Zion) and even anarchists. (10)

Wiseman's parents, Peter and Clara Waisman, "emigrated in the early 1920s from the Ukraine to Winnipeg" (Greenstein "Adele" 241), shortly after the General Strike in 1919. While it is unclear whether or not her parents belonged to any facet of the Arbeiter Ring, or whether they espoused domestic socialist ideals, it is certain that Wiseman was exposed to and familiar with various radical ideologies since these prevailed in her childhood world. Her silencing these radical pulls by not inscribing the anarchist, the subversive or the Marxist in her narrative therefore reflects the same paranoia that is evident in the United States. But does silencing the radical voices erase their message? Alternatively, is the message here that not all Jews are Reds?

Writing against Northrop Frye's assertion that Canadians do not know who they are since they cannot answer where they are, a notion that was popularized by Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), Wiseman writes: "All my young life I knew perfectly well who I was. I was a North Winnipeg kid of

Ukrainian Jewish immigrant parents, living among immigrants of about twenty-eight other nationalities, all immigrants of about one to four or five generations back, except for the original immigrant Indians. And I was building Canada, helping to hammer out a country out of conflict and stress and poverty and cooperation and hope” (“Writer” 83). In her young understanding of herself and the space she inhabited, Wiseman reveals a naive idealism that betrays a socialist sensitivity. In an interview with Mervin Butovsky, however, she makes her political stance quite clear: “Remember I wasn’t in the Zionist movement—I was sort of peripheral—just as I wasn’t a Communist” (10). *The Sacrifice’s* politics are not as definitive as Wiseman’s. Although not in the Zionist movement, Wiseman nevertheless ends her novel with the promise of a Jewish State, when the next generation aspires to transform Palestine into the State of Israel:

“There’s a war on in Palestine.” Aaron looked straight ahead.

Moses whistled softly, eyeing him with tentative respect. They walked for a while again in silence.

“We’ll start a new country,” Aaron went on finally. “Start new, build new, clean, get rid of all the dirt—”

“I don’t know,” said Moses. “We’ve had a country before. Remember what happened?”

“In those days the people were still pretty wild,” Aaron pointed out. “They didn’t have our modern forms of government. They knew a lot, but we’ve been around since. We won’t make the same mistakes.” (339)

Unlike Klein's unabashed support of the State of Israel, Wiseman hides behind the veils of juvenile idealism (Aaron and Moses are teenagers) and cynicism to divert any evidence of a pro- or anti- stance.⁷⁶

The biblical imagery is so pervasive that the allegorical dimension of the novel suffuses the tension between a socialist sensitivity and an upward mobility that celebrates free-market capitalism. Wiseman's depiction of the surnameless immigrant family (Abraham, Sarah and Isaac) is a realistic portrayal of the immigrant experience in the early twentieth century, as is the portrayal of a complex insular community whose economy depends and thrives on the division of wealth across the different class lines of its members. Commenting on similar divisions in the urban Jewish communities in Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg, Vigod notes that the majority of Jewish immigrants "were extremely poor; men, women and children were mercilessly exploited in the 'sweat shop' industries and most lived in slum conditions. Tragically, their employers were usually Jewish [...]" (7). These urban Jewish communities, because of their coerced insularity, needed immigration to sustain their localized growing economies. The destitute greenhorn immigrant who did not speak English furnished the bulk of the proletariat labour force. Of course, in lobbying for more Jewish immigration and establishing services to aid Jewish immigrants enter and survive in Canada, the Jewish

⁷⁶For Klein, M.W. Steinberg argues, Zionism represented the answer to the unification of an increasingly cosmopolitan and transnational diasporic Jewry. The "ideal [...] vision of an Israel restored to its homeland, as a spiritual center" became a more urgent necessity "in terms of rescue and freedom from [Nazi] persecution" (xiv).

Canadian communities also participated in the aiding of persecuted Jews across Europe. Humanitarian means thus meet capitalist ends.

If Wiseman addresses the exploitation of the immigrant labourer in her novel she does so through Isaac's complex character. It is the surviving son who wants to become something more than "just a plain immigrant boy who worked in a factory and studied by himself at night" (82), and who chooses to work in the sweat shops instead of going to school to help provide for his family. In the shadow of his murdered prodigy brothers, Moses and Jacob, Isaac battles with his father's expectations that he, like his brothers, become a Great Jew. His ability to learn the English language, find work as a "tailor" in the sweatshops, and tutor boys for their Bar Mitzvahs are evidence, in Abraham's mind, of Isaac's great potential and ability. His eventual marriage to Ruth, "an educated girl—a native, too. It was not often that the native girls paid much attention to an immigrant boy—as though their parents hadn't been immigrants themselves" (75-6), and the birth of their son, Moses, guarantees Abraham's lineage. Metaphorically, Isaac's success ensures the survival and proliferation of the Jews in the New World. But it is Isaac's "sacrifice," his rushing into the burning synagogue and saving one of the Torahs when he proclaims to be an atheist, that, at least for his father, marks his "true" success. This pivotal episode in the novel, however, highlights yet again the complex intertwining of economic and humanitarian forces that characterize the Jewish community. Reflecting on the irony of his action, Isaac tells Abraham: "According to our friend Mrs. Plopler, that Torah that I brought out was the one that our first millionaire here in the city, our big what's-his-

name, donated as his conscience money. You know who I mean, that mortgageer, that real-estatenik who first elbowed his way onto the heights; that champion of ethnic rights, except where they concerned the real-estate developments that he was promoting” (215). Ironically, then, the defining moment of Isaac’s heroism is marred by what is saved—a sacred relic bought with the Jewish immigrants’ sweat money that celebrates not tradition and religion but the material and social success of one capitalist man.

The novel asks us to consider whether or not Isaac is truly successful—by Abraham’s standards or our own—by providing a detailed account of a single incident in the sweatshop where Isaac works. Fearing that he will “end up like old Rusen [...] who sat across from him, glued to the machine, his hands trembling when the foreman shouted for more speed and he tried to hurry” (82), Isaac’s individual plight drives him to action. In the sweatshop scene, two of the overworked female workers fight each other in what appears to be a scene right out of Bizet’s *Carmen* or Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg’s *Les Misérables*. The foreman intervenes and is yelled at by the owner who has convinced himself that his exploitative practice is an act of charity. Isaac, a philosophical if not a moral person, considers the structure of the sweatshop and recalls the time when he

had gone on strike with the rest of them and had stood as a picket outside the shut-down shop. The boss had gone to California on a holiday until the workers came to their senses. The strike had a bad effect on his nerves. And when his nerves were bad he got carbuncles or something. Isaac had

greatly admired the way Ned Strom had spoken to the workers, had urged them to hold fast. What would he himself not have given to have had a golden voice, a dauntless courage then? When the workers finally filed back into the shop again Ned had not been with them. He was in jail for uttering threats. He himself had been a coward, Isaac knew, to feel secretly relieved that he hadn't uttered his threats loudly enough. The thought of his own cowardice filled him even now with shame. (82-3)

Isaac's self-consciousness and social ineptness marks his conflicting views. Wanting to be part of a social force that can effect change, he is terrified at the consequences that await such actions which, aside from self-preservation, also point to a desire to assimilate and succeed. In this sense, "the nativist and assimilationist forces that impinged—and impinge yet—upon the immigrant in Canada" are revealed (Thacker 26).

Isaac's dismissal from the sweatshop is therefore characterized as a result of his humanitarian rather than his social(ist) motivation. When the enraged foreman takes out his frustration on old Rusen, with whom Isaac has already identified, Isaac yells at the foreman to leave Rusen alone (85). Without ceremony, and without legal consequences, we are simply told that when Isaac "left the shop he was without a job" (85). Inwardly, however, Isaac "had wanted to stop the foreman. He had wanted to change things" (85), but what these changes are remains ambiguous. How far would Isaac have gone had he not been a "coward"? Does the text criticize or applaud Isaac's political passivity? Neutralizing the impact of Isaac's action, the novel celebrates Isaac's choice to act

outside the organized strike by rendering him, in quasi-biblical terms, a champion of justice. It is in Abraham's recounting of the event to his friend Chaim that Isaac emerges as a heroic figure and defender of human and workers' rights: "'Take your job, take your miserable pay.' Abraham made up the words as he went along. 'Do you think we're your slaves here, that you can bully a man who's nearly old enough to be your father?'" (85). Immediately after suggesting the possibility that Isaac's outburst is primarily an outcry against the workers' exploitation, Abraham's retelling of the event quickly positions Isaac within a patriarchal rhetoric in which his self-sacrificing becomes a moral stand on the horrific treatment of an older man who is also a father-figure. Rhetorically, then, Isaac's action, his standing up for old Rusen, is a metaphorical standing up for his own father. But Abraham's oppressors, unlike the sweatshop foreman and boss, are invisible. These invisible oppressive forces allude to the conditions faced by an immigrant. As Robert Thacker notes, although "the tension between old-world man's spiritual values and the crass materialism of North America serves as the novel's point of departure, *The Sacrifice* ultimately subsumes that sociological phenomenon in an evocative statement on the sacrifices required by life" (30). In other words, immigration is represented here as a sacrifice of spiritual values as well as of material goods. In Abraham's appropriation of Isaac's action, Isaac comes out as the defender of the immigrants who are treated as a class of dehumanized slaves by the unseen taskmaster and boss—the Canadian government.

Aside from the single sweatshop episode, little attention is paid to the exploitation

of the immigrant labour force. Instead, the immigrants' poverty is subtly alluded to in the description of the family's dwelling. When Abraham is able to move his family from the rented room in Mrs. Plopler's (the local busybody's) house, he can only afford a rental in a worse neighbourhood. Their new home is "an old semi-detached gray wood bungalow with a small open veranda, two feet of front lawn, a bedroom for himself and his wife, a living room that could be partly curtained off to make a bedroom for Isaac, and a kitchen," which he rents from a bootlegger (43). The local mixing of poverty and crime is undermined by the poetic descriptions of the industrial part of the nameless city: "The flats scooped down toward the edge of the brown river with a sort of lilting quality, as though the earth had lifted a shoulder and the houses had slid closer together and the factories had slipped and jostled one another to the river bank" (12). The immigrants' poverty is further undermined by the biblical discourse that aggrandizes their experiences and living conditions to mythological proportions: Abraham knows that his "part was to accept, to rebuild, and to wait. It was no use to dwell too much on those memories that came at a man unawares, with bitterness. The main outlines were clear. Nowhere was it said that it would be a honeyed life—not here, in these *alien* lands" (23 emphasis mine). Celebrating the immigrant's plight of survival in "these alien lands," the novel equally celebrates the Wandering Jew's diasporic survival in what is, rhetorically, yet another "alien land." Here, the alien is synonymous with an unwelcoming and threatening hostile land that merely tolerates (at best) its immigrant Jewish charge. In calling attention to the historical atrocities that have occurred in other adoptive lands, Wiseman's novel aptly

raises the question—or warning—that could Canada become yet another site for genocide.

The alienation of the immigrant in the “alien lands” is occasioned by other immigrant groups rather than by the native, thereby contextualizing alienation within the old immigration versus new immigration binary. Doing so allows the novel to skirt the issue of openly charging Canada with anti-Semitism, since the old world conflict and prejudice appears to be simply transplanted into the new world. As the Gentile world of the Ukraine, and Europe by extension, alienates the diasporic Jewish immigrant, becoming a hostile, alien land, the Canadian response to Jews inside and outside its borders becomes much more ambiguous. In answer to Butovsky’s question of what the “outside world—the world of gentiles, of non-Jews” was like (8), Wiseman responds:

Winnipeg had at least 28 different ethnic groups all living in little capsules all over town, and the outside world that we knew was the world of the White or Red Ukrainians, some of whom were our enemies, some of whom were our friends, potentially; the Poles, largely enemies; the Germans, on the periphery, but with Hitler. I remember Hitler being talked about when I was a small child, and always with a curse, so I always knew that Hitler was out to get me. The Scots and other Anglo-Saxons, all of whom we kind of vaguely lumped as the *Englische* were teachers whose ill-disguised antipathy made the attitudes of the outside world very clear. We knew where the power was; we were made to know where the power

was. We were also made to know that we were usurping—our pushiness, etc.—was about to usurp this hard-won territory. It took a while to figure out—but not too long—that here they had just managed to get a foothold themselves, they had just managed to take something away from someone, and here we were threatening to take something away from them—to their minds. But the fact was that whereas they had this generalized antipathy toward all immigrants, we knew perfectly well that there was a specific antipathy that they shared with the other immigrants towards us.

(Interview 8)

This broader world and its prejudices is only alluded to in the novel when Moses, Isaac and Ruth's son, begins to socialize with the other neighbourhood children. Whereas the Gentile world of the Ukraine is explicitly rendered dangerous, the Canadian Gentile world, in which only the other immigrant presences are visible, poses a different threat. In the episode when the children hold a pissing contest on the grounds of the burned synagogue (Wiseman, *Sacrifice* 205), the novel calls attention to what makes this event possible. Sacrilege aside, it is the changing neighbourhood that allows such an event to occur. The burned synagogue was the “old white” synagogue that Abraham, the more recent immigrant, attended. In contrast, the majority of the more established immigrants, described as “the more fashionable,” attend the “new brick synagogue” (50). The insular community disintegrates as its members begin to assimilate. In the industrial section that Abraham's family still inhabits, the bootlegger remains invisible but the neighbours

suddenly appear. The boys' names—Dmitri and his sister Junie, Donald Gregory McNeill, blue-eyed Tony and Michael—reveal the presence of Russian (or Ukrainian), Irish and Northern Italian immigrants. Notwithstanding the differences between these other groups, in the neighbourhood clan the boys are brought together by their common anti-Semitism. Moses, wanting to belong to this group, becomes a self-hating Jew. It is through his assimilation that the prevalent anti-Semitism is evident. Moses's experiences therefore caution against assimilation, and because assimilation occurs as a result of upward mobility, the novel implicitly challenges the glory of capitalist success. Although certainly not a Communist—or even a socialist—text, *The Sacrifice* does not clearly advocate capitalism. Its politics remain obscured by the multiple perceptions which are diluted in biblical allegory.

A second example that warns against assimilation is evident in the friendship between Laiah and Jenny, a *goy* (or *shiksa*) who is fascinated by Laiah's "exoticness." After Laiah's murder, however, Jenny's friendship is undermined when the barber comments in Polsky's butcher shop that Jenny capitalized on the media coverage of the murder: "Getting her mug into all the papers, smiling like a priest at a pogrom" (321). In spite of the various political, religious, and economic splits within the Jewish community, the characters maintain an insularity against the anti-Semitism around them. In this sense, Wiseman's views on assimilation appear to be congruent with Klein's, which is evident in his response to an article published in "the women's page" of *Le Canada*, "a page usually reserved for questions of cooking and coiffure," in which Mlle. Odette Oligny

discusses “the hatred of Jews,” particularly that “the Jews are hated because they refuse to assimilate” (“Sambation” 250). Klein points out that “Mlle. Oligny does not define what she means by assimilation, but she does give an example—how familiar this technique is—of a Jew whom she does not hate. This particular person apparently recommended himself to her affection, first because he turned Catholic, and secondly, because he was killed in battle. Using this piece of personal reminiscence as a criterion we must come to the conclusion that for Miss Oligny an acceptable Jew is one who has changed his faith and is moreover no longer alive” (25). Klein skillfully shifts the question of ethnic assimilation onto the federalist versus separatist paradigm; noting that Mlle. Oligny has forgotten that *Le Canada* is a liberal, French-Canadian paper, he then observes that “the most rabid baiters of French Canada, use precisely this argument of non-assimilation against the citizens of the Province of Quebec. When, then, is assimilation a proper philosophy of life and when is it not?” (251).⁷⁷ Indeed, this question permeates

⁷⁷Assimilation, Klein might argue, is inconsequential since, for the world outside the insular Jewish community, the Jew remains an Other—an alien. In “Now We Will Suffer Loss of Memory [Version 2],” he emphasizes the pointlessness of assimilation:

Now we will suffer loss of memory;
We will forget the things we must eschew.
We will eat ham, despite our tribe’s tabu,
Ham buttered ... and on fast-days ... publicly ...
Null, then, and void, the kike nativity.
Our family albums we will hide from view.
Ourselves, we’ll do what all pretenders do,
And like the ethnics mightily strive to be.
Our recompense? ... Emancipation-day!
We will find friend where once we found but foe.
Impugning epithets will glance astray.
To gentile parties we will proudly go;
And Christians, anecdoting us, will say:

Wiseman's text. As her characters assimilate into the world outside the Jewish community, they become more susceptible to social disaster, like murder, thus suggesting (for the religious extremist) a kind of divine punishment. In contrast, as they assimilate into Canadian (or more modern) lifestyles, however, they become more spiritually flawed. At the very least, assimilation is used to map the generational gap dividing the members of the community as well as that of the more recently arrived immigrant and the assimilated immigrant.

One of Wiseman's strategies, as I have just suggested, is to demystify the Jewish immigrant labourer as a dangerous or conspiratorial radical Red. Instead, Wiseman's novel draws out the humanity of each of her three allegorical characters and emphasizes each one's individual plight—Abraham's patriarchal pride and duty, Sarah's matriarchal trauma and mourning, and Isaac's misguided idealism. Because the narration voices each character's perception, the reader is privy to the public and private dilemmas that each character faces. Interweaving the multiple viewpoints to dramatize tragic and comical

"Mr. and Mrs. Klein—the Jews, you know...." (1.169)

In this sonnet, Klein suggests that assimilation is akin to suicide as it entails the "loss of memory," or the loss of cultural identity and history. Notwithstanding that loss, the Jew cannot eschew the derogatory characterization as the "kike" when mimicking the Gentiles, since, for the Gentiles, the Jew remains just that—a Jew. For this reason, in light of the catastrophic effects of anti-Semitism in Europe, Klein advocates the unification of the "Jews of the lands of freedom" who must "meet the enemy with a battle-cry!" ("Issue" 61). Klein's assimilation within the Jewish community, if indeed it can be called that, is more akin to a spiritual and cultural unification, which for him was represented by Zionism. Somewhat paradoxically, it is after the creation of the State of Israel that Klein must renegotiate his belief in the diaspora (as a locus of creativity and spiritual identity) and mediate between the ideal and the reality of Israel (and his decision not to make *alliah*).

miscommunication among the characters, which marks for Marco P. LoVerso the brilliant illustration that “language itself, in being a system of verbal conventions, reflects [a communal] cooperative spirit” (183), Wiseman’s fictional microcosm places its emphasis on the personal (or private) rather than on the social (or public). Hence, Wiseman’s novel effectively personalizes public space. Settling in what George Woodcock terms one of Canada’s “invisible ghettos” (23), Wiseman’s immigrants, like the early immigrants, transplant their *shtetl* lifestyle into the Canadian landscape. It is fruitful to recall here Atwood’s characterization of the Canadian space. As “an unknown territory for the people who live in it” (18), for an immigrant the Canadian unknownness holds liminal possibilities. According to Atwood, “Canada is the background against which [the immigrants’ positive qualities] are displayed, the ‘grey desolation,’ the land of death. And in the land of death, simply staying genuinely alive—spiritual survival—is a kind of triumph” (154). Congruent with Atwood’s imagery, Wiseman’s experiences appear to have inscribed life into the death-like landscape. As Wiseman explains, “[w]hen we were strangers in the land we made our own welcome and warmed ourselves with our own laughter and created our own beginning” (“Old” 31). The importance of creating a home in the land of entry serves multiple purposes here: it calls attention to the humanness of the immigrant-as-refugee who needs warmth and who remembers how to laugh, and it creates a new genesis, a new mythology. What is contested here is not the “invisible ghetto,” which with all its pragmatic and moral problems functions as a place of safety from the outside world (old and new), but the unwelcoming alien country which

emphasizes the immigrants' alienation. The question remains whether Canada is merely a wasteland in which survival is "a triumph," or whether it is a kind of death camp in which survival is a political accomplishment.

The immigrant in Wiseman's novel serves to inscribe the unknowable "here," marking the psychic space of what becomes, paradoxically, a nativist Canadian national consciousness. For example, for the protagonists of *The Sacrifice*, an unidentified "here" (Winnipeg, Canada) symbolizes a space empty of national or cultural signification. In this context, Margaret Atwood's assessment of this Canadian sensibility in *Survival* is especially applicable. According to her, "Canada is an unknown [psychic] territory for the people who live in it" (18). Effectively, the natives for whom the homeland is unknown are paralleled with the immigrant who has no knowledge of the land s/he enters into. Atwood explains that "in Canada, as [Northrop] Frye suggests, the answer to the question 'Who am I?' is at least partly the same as the answer to another question: 'Where is here?' 'Who am I?' is a question appropriate in countries where the environment, the 'here,' is already well-defined, so well-defined in fact that it may threaten to overwhelm the individual" (17). If Canadian identity lacks self-knowledge as a result of its inability to know (or own) its psychic territory as the United States does, its function as an immigrant nation varies significantly from that of its American counterpart. When the immigrant enters an apparently self-defined nation s/he must negotiate, define, or appropriate a specific space within that nation that will allow her/him to eventually become part of the nation. But when the immigrant enters into a nation whose

relationship to its own territory is not unlike that of the immigrant's negotiation of space, the parallel between the nation and the immigrant is highly suggestive. At best, it offers the immigrant a unique opportunity to become part of the nation from its inception as it develops its history, identity, and even myths of origin.

For Atwood, the question "where is here" raises other key questions which are all too familiar to the immigrant:

"Where is here?" is a different kind of question. It is what a man asks when he finds himself in unknown territory, and it implies several other questions. Where is this place in relation to other places? How do I find my way around in it? If the man is really lost he may also wonder how he got "here" to begin with, hoping he may be able to find the right path or possibly the way out by retracing his steps. If he is unable to do this he will have to take stock of what "here" has to offer in the way of support for human life and decide how he should go about remaining alive. Whether he survives or not will depend partly on what "here" really contains—whether it is too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry for him—and partly on his own desires and skills—whether he can utilize the resources available, adapt to what he can't change, and keep from going crazy. There may be other people "here" already, natives who are cooperative, indifferent or hostile. There may be animals, to be tamed, killed and eaten, or avoided. If, however, there is too large a gap between our hero's

expectations and his environment he may develop culture shock or commit suicide. (17-18)

Inherent in Atwood's characterization of the Canadian national character is a mixture of a settler-invader and immigrant sensitivity that feels lost in the unknown—and unknowable—space. The desire to demarcate that space, to inscribe that space as a means of knowing (or owning) that space, characterizes this peculiar sensitivity. Establishing origin, or indigenization, is a first step in attempting to know and own the “here.” But because the territorial and psychic space is already a space of negotiation for the native, both the native and the immigrant must continually reestablish their presences with each other in relation to the unknowable or subliminal landscape. At worst, the immigrant's space within the nation is circumvented by the native's need and desire to first define her/his space in the nation. Canada thus appears to be an immigrant nation insofar as it embodies an immigrant sensitivity with which it constructs its national identity. The question, then, is what the immigrant can offer one such immigrant nation as a means of authenticating and developing its national identity. As we have seen, the immigrant is crucial in naturalizing two overriding principles in American identity, nativism and democracy. What function does the immigrant play in the development of a Canadian national identity that is stereotypically, like the landscape, unknowable?

The most political strategy that Wiseman employs in *The Sacrifice* is the positioning of the immigrant families as refugees fleeing ethnic and religious persecution: “Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac are exiles, fleeing a place of strife; they are in exodus

through a wilderness; this is the mythic journey of the Wandering Jew” (Michaels 381). Grounding their experiences in the personal and the historical, the novel appeals to the reader’s humanitarianism. Telling their story as a biblical allegory, the novel mythologizes Jewish identity. Politically, however, Wiseman’s novel points to Canada’s exclusions of Jewish war refugees during and after the Second World War. By the time of the novel’s publication, Canadians were well aware of the aftermath of Naziism and of Canadian passivity. One need only recall the turning away of the *St. Louis* in the Spring of 1939 as one of many examples.⁷⁸ However, Wiseman’s eschewing the issue directly provides an interesting contrast to her more vocal contemporaries. For example, adopting Jonathan Swift’s satirical “modest proposal” to make one of his own concerning the plight of Jewish refugees during the Second World War, Klein writes on July 14, 1939:

It appears that great numbers of the wanderers have willy-nilly taken to the high seas. The *St. Louis* floats upon the Atlantic for two

⁷⁸When the ocean liner *St Louis* departed from Germany to Cuba, slightly more than 900 refugees, mostly German Jews, were on board. Upon reaching Cuba, their visas were not honoured and they were prohibited entry. Appeals were made to several Central and South American countries without success, and a month later the *St Louis* was forced out of the Havana harbour. “The United States made it clear that the passengers would not be welcome in its harbours and, to underscore this fact, a gunboat was sent to monitor the ship as it made its way north. Despite appeals made by several leading Canadians, the Canadian government also refused to relax regular admission requirements. The last possibility of refuge having being extinguished, the *St Louis* was forced to return to Germany” (Kelley and Trebilcock 264). Although Canada was not alone in its refusal to accept these legitimate refugees, its “acceptance of fewer than 5,000 refugees during the war was one of the worst records of any democracy in providing assistance to the beleaguered Jews of Europe” (256). For a comprehensive account of Canada’s anti-Semitic policies, see Irving Abella & Harold Troper’s *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*.

months, freighted with unhappy human cargo. Another ship leaves some Greek port, and arrives in Palestine only to see its passengers interned in a concentration camp. But a little while ago there came to the shores of Erez Israel a ship which Jews in Danzig had bought and manned, and directed to the Holy Land; when they arrived at the Port of Haifa they were towed out of the harbour and left floating along the sea-coast.

Here then is the opportunity for some grim humorist to win himself a place in immortality beside Dean Swift. Let him suggest a homeland for Jews upon the face of the waters!

If there was room for a “Jewish Territorial Movement,” perhaps a Hebrew Oceanic Society can be organized! (“A Modest” 56)

In contrast, Wiseman skillfully sets her novel at a time prior to the Second World War as a means of legitimizing the Jewish immigrants as refugees. In fact, *The Sacrifice* only mentions the onslaught of the Holocaust in passing. In setting the novel in the early twentieth century, Wiseman draws on the history of the early Jewish immigrants, which points to her own familial history, the “early refugees” fleeing the pogroms and whose numbers totaled a population of 1,300 in Winnipeg by 1901 (Vigod 7). The novel provides the details of the pogrom from the survivor’s perspective, thereby making Abraham a sympathetic victim. Abraham confesses to Chaim that when he first saw his two hanged sons, he “was mad” and all he “wanted was to move, to run run run. [His] body screamed to wear out all its movements in violence and to drop down in a heap,

unfeeling, somewhere, anywhere” (59). Explaining not only the psychological trauma and loss of his sons but the economic hardship that the surviving family must endure when the peasants take their possessions, which delays their escape, Abraham explicitly renders his family “refugees” by the United Nation’s definition. However, because the novel is set prior to the United Nations International Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Abraham’s escape is only possible by conventional means. In spite of psychological trauma, lethal persecution and economic hardship, Abraham’s family must go through the necessary immigration bureaucracy in order to escape the terror of the pogroms.

Bitterly describing the process of immigration, Abraham relates how the Hasidic Jews of Poland “help” his family to escape: “Pious Jews with long sideburns and black frocks—they made a living of it. Big business. They stole the very stockings from the legs of my wife. Everything they saw they took” (69). As a business, immigration appears to benefit all but the immigrant. The immigrant’s reward is only the possibility of entering the new land. Abraham’s comments work to further personalize the otherwise blank faces arriving at the Canadian ports, seeking entry. To ascribe Abraham a synecdochical function of personalizing a history of oppression and struggle is no small task but achieves the desired effect—reconsideration of the undesirable immigrant because of her/his determination to survive. Hence, Abraham’s knowing about the “things [that] go on in the world” render him a more worldly astute being who rhetorically challenges anti-Semitic exclusions: “Countries want you, countries don’t. Who wants a Jew? This is our life, to hammer on doors” (70). Rhetorically, his question, not unlike Shakespeare’s

Shylock's, positions the diasporic Jew as world- (or perpetual) victim and refugee.⁷⁹

Wiseman calls attention to the worldwide historical persecution, expulsion, and attempted extermination of a people, and uses this history to further entrench Abraham's family in what ought to be refugee status.

Abraham's explanation of the immigration process is a historically accurate account that deserves consideration, especially since it is only one of two moments in the text when the narrative locates the nameless city specifically in Canada. Abraham states: "Here they wanted only farmers. So, I am a farmer. I started to make papers to go with my family as farmers. In the meantime I went to work. Papers cost money, and what I had left that I had saved from the various thieves was needed for papers and for the journey" (70). The transaction of becoming a farmer in order to be eligible for immigration points to the loopholes in the existing policy that make legal immigration possible. With the onslaught of his son's unforeseen illness, which postpones their voyage, Abraham must recommence the process all over again, only by this point new legislation dictates other conditions:

⁷⁹Klein's 1940 collection of poems entitled *Hath Not A Jew...*, inspired in part by *The Merchant of Venice*, much more forcefully challenge the reader to reconsider the victimization of the Jew. In "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" [Version 2] an allusion to Lord Byron's epic poem, the speaker rhetorically targets the institutionalized anti-Semitic desire to see a "good" Jew only in a dead Jew:

Stranger and enemy, I have read your wish!
My blood! Shall I, then, sever a vein,
Drain off an artery, open the valves
Of my much too-Semitic heart, and be
That blond cadaver pleasing to your eye? (102-106)

Notice also that Klein redefines the "stranger" here, so that the Jew is not a stranger nor an "enemy" but a human being who is victimized.

“By the time the boy was well enough to travel, our papers were no longer any good. Now the Canadian government wanted something else. We had to make new papers. We waited for months. Now I wanted to hurry because I was impatient to begin again, to send down our roots, somewhere. I was worried about the boy, you know. It left him with a touch of the heart—all he’d gone through” (72). In Abraham’s desire to settle in a new land, to set roots, lies an immigrant rather than a refugee or a diasporic sensibility, although his desire to settle down “somewhere” leaves in that ambiguity the resonance of a diasporic mentality. Greenstein reads in the plant metaphor that sets down roots and sees plants unrooted a displaced biblical promise: “In place of the promised generations numerous as stars or grains of sand, Abraham envisions the past and future organically in the plant metaphor, the natural cycle reflecting the human” (“Movement” 23-24). Similarly, Mack argues that “Abraham, the protagonist of *The Sacrifice*, became the representative immigrant to Canada, the quintessential Promised Land” (134). Unlike the biblical Abraham, however, Wiseman’s Abraham does not multiply. His two eldest sons are murdered in a pogrom and his third remaining son dies of heart failure after the struggle of immigrating and settling in the new land. Even his grandson experiences a kind of spiritual or religious death when he becomes a self-loathing Jew, although the potential for his reconciliation to his religious, cultural, and familial roots is suggested in the end of the novel by Moses’s acceptance of Abraham and his friendship with Aaron, Chaim’s grandson. In his madness, Abraham aligns his life with death (or the devil) rather than with life (or god) and reads in his impulsive visit to Laiah, the Eve-like barren

temptress, his own desire for suicide—which he morally accomplishes. Hence, Abraham as the “representative immigrant” promises only (self-) destruction, and Canada as the “quintessential Promised Land” leaves much to be desired. As Donna Bennett notes, “Abraham in *The Sacrifice* immigrates to Canada, not to the Holy Land, and there he became a father not to a new nation but to a son he neglects rather than favours” (70). In keeping with the biblical imagery, the end of the novel sees Moses’s reconciliation to his grandfather (who represents his faith) and Aaron’s decision to fight in Palestine for the State of Israel. Like the biblical Moses, Wiseman’s Moses is left wandering, which renders Canada not the Promised Land but the diasporic desert.

Desert-like and death-like, the Canadian landscape offers other strategies to the immigrant narrative. In her afterword to the new edition of *The Sacrifice*, Anne Michaels comments that there “is no need to tell us even the time and place of the story. The city is anonymous, the name makes no difference since there is only one destination, the wheels of nemesis are moving the train” (381-82). Indeed, the anonymity of the Canadian landscape informs the alienation of the immigrant within the Canadian space, and in doing so offers a defamiliarized image to the Canadian reader that facilitates empathy for the immigrant-refugees in motion. Having satisfied the details of immigration procedures, the novel’s depiction of the immigrant’s journey thrives in the symbolic language of movement. Abraham concludes his story of their arrival as follows: “Somehow, at last, we were on the ship. Then we were on the train. We had been running, moving, for so long, I no longer knew how to stop. It was as though the wheels below had taken control

of our lives. On and on we rode. It's strange how we came to this city. All of a sudden I knew, as though I had received a message, that it was time to stop. And so I gathered them up, my own ones, and we came away. The wheels moved off without us" (72). Given the geographical expanse, the immediacy of shifting from ship to train, from Halifax to Winnipeg, is an almost romanticized condensing of space that makes Canada more tangible, more knowable.

Echoing the aimless physical movement, the opening passage of the novel epitomizes the sense of foreignness, alienation, and displacement. Waking up to the harsh movement of the train, Abraham wants to name the city where the train suddenly stops. Unable to communicate with the train conductor, his frustration wins over his desire to know—to name—the alien space. Mack, drawing on Atwood, argues that immigrants “are forced to ask the question that all Canadians plague themselves with, ‘Where is here?’” (147). Yet Abraham’s inability to know, or comprehend, where is “here” is less paralyzing than the Canadian condition suggests. Unable to control movement, Abraham is able to exert some control over the nameless and ambiguous space. Having decided to get off the train, to get off the current of movement, Abraham responds to Isaac’s objection that they will not reach their initial destination: “Who awaits us” (4). Isaac realizes that it “did not really matter whether they stopped here, blindly, or went blindly on to the other city for which they had bought the tickets” (4-5). Symbolically, after Abraham makes the decision to stop, the conductor calls out the name of the city in English (5). To the immigrant ears, the name remains anonymous. It is the reader,

positioned as the immigrant, who is kept in the dark. What is interesting here is that after establishing the immigrants' inability to communicate with the English-speaking Canadians, Wiseman's novel closely follows the movement of adaptation that sees the immigrant family en route to the "immigration barracks—to sleep, at last, without the artificial pulse of engines to remind them even in sleep that they were wanderers. Then, with the new day, to settle themselves gingerly on the crust of the city, perhaps someday even to send down a few roots—these roots, pre-numbered and shallow, of the often uprooted. But strong" (6). Soon after, the novel follows the family to the Plopler's house where Mrs. Plopler instructs Sarah on survival in the new land.

Of course, although written in English, the majority of the communication of the text is actually in Yiddish. It is easy to forget that these immigrants do not speak English largely because there are few instances when the characters speak English to outsiders. In fact, aside from the initial defamiliarization of the landscape and the language, there is little evidence of physical and linguistic alienation. Hence, the stereotypical Canadian blankness that greets the immigrant family suggests the possibility of inscribing that blankness and, in doing so, transforms that blankness into something familiar. This is most evident in the novel when Abraham attempts to learn English through Isaac's regurgitation of his studies at the English school:

Isaac pointed at objects, enunciating carefully the English names.

"Tree. Sky. Cloud. House. Mountain."

Abraham would repeat, fingering the syllables clumsily with his

tongue, but with immense satisfaction listening to the sound of his son's apparently adroit mastery. When they parted, the young voice continued to repeat itself in his head, raised, clear, ardent, for to Abraham his son's voice must be ardent. Nothing grows but by desire.

Sky. Houz. He stopped in front of a tree, frowning at it demandingly. Now what did he call this?

His beard jutted out in vexation, and his eyes traveled up the trunk in search of a clue.

Boim. Isaac's voice, speaking cheerfully in Yiddish, came to his mind.

"*Boim,*" said Abraham out loud to the tree with satisfaction and proceeded toward the busy avenue. (10-11)

Like Adam in Eden, Abraham walks through the landscape, assessing its objects, and in naming its objects claims them as his own. His mispronunciation of English effectively functions to (re)appropriate the unknown landscape, as does his renaming a tree *boim*. Through his practice of renaming his "paradise" (I am, of course, being ironic here), Abraham appears to exert control over the alien landscape, claiming it as familiar—his own. Yet, as the opening episode with the conductor suggests, this appropriation is only illusionary. The conductor's incomprehension of Abraham's questions in Ukrainian, Yiddish, Polish, and German alienate the immigrant, not the conductor. As Clara Thomas argues, "because [Abraham] does not know English he is humiliated and dismissed as a

foreigner” (52). Abraham’s awareness of his own alienation is first articulated when, a few days after calling a tree *boim*, he suddenly remembers: “‘Tree.’ It came to him suddenly, out loud. Tree. This means *boim* in Canada” (Wiseman *Sacrifice* 19). Finally, Abraham understands the doubleness of the immigrant experience. It is not the speech act of naming objects that makes the landscape more accessible to him, nor is it the realization that his not knowing English alienates him which drives him to synthesize his presence within this alien landscape. The words *boim* and tree co-exist simultaneously, but one is intelligible and the other is not. Power is housed in knowing which word has currency in which landscape, which contextualizes the immigrant’s alienation. It is the power of language that gives meaning to the otherwise blank landscape. Symbolically, Abraham does not state that tree means *boim* in English. Rather, he realizes that its English meaning is *the* meaning in this space which he is then able to name—Canada. Because Canada is only mentioned by name twice in the novel, both instances in which this naming, or this revelation, occurs are highly symbolic. Naming the landscape, however, is not the same as owning the landscape. At best, Abraham comes to understand his alienation, his place in Canada, and his double-consciousness that he shares only with those members of the immigrant community who share his own world view. Hence, the novel underscores the individual’s alienation by calling attention to the various levels it takes—national, generational, cultural, linguistic, spatial, political, and even fictional. But Abraham, we must remember, is not a rational or sane immigrant. His institutionalization therefore undermines him by discrediting his mind, his logic. Deeply affected by the

abuse he suffers at the hands of a corrupt butcher, by his religious (mis)interpretations he uses to make sense of his world, and by the traumatic events of the pogroms, it is the alien landscape, as embodied by the alien Other (Laiah), that ultimately seduces and claims him. Foreshadowing his madness is the focal point in the otherwise indiscernible landscape, Mad Mountain, the ironic symbol that satirizes Moses's ascent to receive the word not of God but of a mad prophet.

4

Multicultural Nations

“The Immigrants”

The New World, like the afterlife, was the Old World, but heightened: oak-shaded gardens, windows open over endless breeze-fragrant fields. Many believed this and spent their lives learning to weigh their hearts against a feather, and be found true. When they died, they died interred in their homes. A token of wood to build a boat; cherries, some fruit for their journey.

—Carmine Starnino, *Credo*

In the preceding sections I have investigated the image of Canada and the United States as “immigrant nations,” and have suggested that the counter side of the immigrant nation can be termed an “alie(n)ation.” Described as a nation of immigrants, the immigrant nation places the immigrant at the centre of nation-building and national myth-making. Conversely, the emphasis on the systematic alienation of the nation’s immigrants or aliens defines the character of the alie(n)ation. No longer central, the alien and immigrant are scapegoated and used to propagate internal pulls. I began the analysis of the “immigrant nation” by examining the much-debated American “melting pot” model during the mass European immigration that culminated during the 1920s. Until the early 1960s, Canadian immigration policy, comparatively, had no distinctive features. Since the mid-1960s, however, any comparison between the United States and Canada as

immigrant nations demands a contrast between the American melting pot and the Canadian “multicultural mosaic.” Indeed, this has been one of the driving forces behind this study. In this concluding chapter, I will contextualize this contrast by examining both countries’ approach to, and implementation of, multiculturalism. Clearly, the overlying difference between Canada and the United States is that Canada has adopted multiculturalism as official policy and, as such, has been used as a mechanism for the making of a (or solidifying or changing of its former) national identity. Philosophically and culturally, however, multiculturalism is not particular to Canada. With the onset of globalization, most countries, whether they be immigrant nations or not, are in some way affected, and in turn defined, by multiculturalism. From an immigrant perspective, however, the overlying question is whether the emerging multicultural nation offers the same double-sided sword as does the immigrant nation.

A contemporary comparison of the multicultural mosaic and melting pot models points to Bharati Mukherjee’s fiction. In the introduction to her collection of short stories entitled *Darkness* (1985), Mukherjee writes: “In my fiction, and in my Canadian experience, ‘immigrants’ were lost souls , put upon and pathetic. Expatriates, on the other hand, knew all too well who and what they were, and what foul fate had befallen them” (1-2). Rejecting the immigrant label, Mukherjee identifies herself as an expatriate in Canada but feels transformed when immigrating to the United States. She writes: “I had moved from being a ‘visible minority,’ against whom the nation had officially incited its less-visible citizens to react, to being just another immigrant” (2). Having lived in Canada

from 1966 until 1980, precisely during the period in which multiculturalism began to take cultural and official form and immigration laws began to relax and came open to non-European immigrants, Mukherjee challenges the meaning of the multicultural mosaic. Implicitly, her perceptions also question whether the melting pot has stopped melting. Her advocacy of the United States over Canada asks us to reconsider the very premises on which the Canadian multicultural mosaic is based. Unlike Frederick Philip Grove's choice to return to Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century, and to promote Canada as the "true" America, Mukherjee's choice condemns a multicultural Canada and celebrates the United States as the "true" immigrant nation. Considering that Canada has increasingly come to see and promote itself as a multicultural nation, and has forged a national identity that is dependent on the image of the multicultural mosaic, a contrast between a multicultural nation and an immigrant nation is not only warranted but needed. It is therefore fruitful to first examine two competing versions of multiculturalism in Canada. Michael Ondaatje's acclaimed novel, *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987), celebrates the ideal of the mosaic whereas Austin Clarke's poignant collection of short stories, *Nine Men Who Laughed* (1986), challenges the inclusiveness, indeed the very existence, of the mosaic. Whether celebrating Canadian multiculturalism or calling attention to its fallacy, both Ondaatje and Clarke work within the very system they write about. Mukherjee, in contrast, rejects Canadian multiculturalism altogether and Canada by extension. Beginning with an examination of the 1976 Immigration Act and the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act, I will then compare Ondaatje's and Clarke's vision of the mosaic as

it conforms to their representation of Toronto as the Canadian multicultural city. An examination of Mukherjee's *Jasmine* will follow, and will be situated within philosophical discourses of multiculturalism in America.

PART I

4.1 Canada's Metamorphosis: Toward New Policy (A Brief History)

You come telling me you going to Canada as a' immigrant?
To be a stranger? Where Canada is? What is Canada?

— Austin Clarke's "Canadian Experience," *Nine Men Who Laughed*

The economic boom and activist movements of the 1960s contributed to the relaxation of immigration restrictions. The most significant changes to immigration policy during the 1963-1976 period began in 1967 with the adoption of the "points system" that was designed, in part, to allow diverse immigration patterns. Although, as Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock note, "the 1967 regulations finally removed all explicit traces of racial discrimination from Canada's immigration laws," the "emphasis on skills and education disqualified most immigrants from developing countries. The government's decision as to where to locate its overseas visa offices also meant that it was practically very difficult for even skilled immigrants in most developing countries to apply for admission to Canada" (351). Perhaps the most telling aspect of the new points system is its integrating of immigration and labour concerns, which was most explicitly evident in the creation of yet another department, the Department of Manpower and Immigration, which merged the Departments of Citizenship and Immigration and Labour.

Like the 1967 Act that was largely influenced by the White Paper commissioned by the Liberal government, and which led to the Joint Senate-House of Commons

Committee hearings in 1967 to debate the opposing pulls between favoring independent or economic immigrants over family-sponsored immigrants, the 1976 Immigration Act comes out of the infamous Green Paper, commissioned in 1972 by then Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Robert Andras. Kelley and Trebilcock write:

According to the Green Paper, since Canada's population was not increasing without immigration, and all the problems described were caused by a growing population, it was appropriate to conclude that immigrants were the cause of these problems. In addition, the Green Paper went on to detail the increase in racial tensions that accompanied the changing ethnic composition of Canada as a direct result of the 1962 and 1967 changes to immigration policy. (372)

Emphasizing that immigration should be tied to "labour-market needs," the Green Paper also suggested that immigrants be "steer[ed]" to "designated areas of Canada outside large urban centres" (372).⁸⁰ The Green Paper provoked a nation-wide antagonistic

⁸⁰Absent from this discussion is the Green Paper's recommendation that refugees be recognized as a separate category. Indeed, one of the distinguishing features of the 1976 Immigration Act is its detailed provisions for refugees. The focus of this dissertation is on immigrant identity, and although some attention has been given to displaced persons and the representation of immigrants as refugees in the preceding chapter, a substantial analysis of refugees is beyond the scope of this work. It is necessary to formulate a similar analysis of refugee writing in Canada and the United States, and to analyze the relationship between the literary representations of the refugee and the legislative literature that defines the refugee and regulates her/his activities and future in the country of refuge/entry. It is worth noting that the Green Paper "implicitly rejected any suggestion that the definition of refugees in the U.N. Protocol of 1967 be adopted in the new Immigration Act. Although Canada acceded to the protocol in 1969, the authors of the Green Paper were concerned about giving the U.N. definition the status of domestic law in Canada" (Kelley and Trebilcock 373). As aforementioned, the 1976

response that led to public debates concerning immigration and future policy.

Spokespeople for already established immigrant groups were quick to respond and promote each group's interests. As a result of public debate generated by the Green Paper, a joint committee between the Liberal caucus and the Opposition MPs, co-chaired by Senator Maurice Riel and former minister of Labour Martin O'Connell, was formed (374). Unlike its predecessor, this Joint Senate-House of Commons Committee "produced a comprehensive final report which was to become the basis of the new Immigration Act in 1976" (374). The new Immigration Act "was passed in 1976 with scarcely a dissenting vote in Parliament" (349). It was "proclaimed in 1977 with near unanimous support from politicians of all parties and with the broad support of private and public interest groups, academics, and the media" (380).

The consensus over the new Immigration Act, which "was a significant departure from its predecessors" (390), calls attention to the changes in policy-making on the one hand and to the changing socio-cultural climate on the other. Noting that the process became "much more democratic with the publication of the White (1966) and Green

Immigration Act specifically provides for refugees and marks a new direction in Canadian immigration policy. Although acceptance practices show that inherent discretionary decisions are still in play, the shift toward becoming a refugee haven in the latter part of the twentieth century re-positions Canada's construction as an immigrant nation and renders its image more akin to that of the United States in the early part of the twentieth century. One of the overlying differences between the two is that while the United States's Democratic vision of itself supported immigration as a moral duty, essentially as a provision for refugees, the entering immigrants did not partake of the rights and privileges afforded to refugees. Contemporary Canadian policy, conversely, allows for refugee status and all its rights and privileges, thereby making it possible for destitute "immigrants" who qualify and fit the refugee label to more readily adapt and succeed in the land of entry.

(1974) Papers” that led to the appointment “of the two Joint Senate-House of Commons Committees to undertake a broad public consultation process” (380), Kelley and Trebilcock allude to the cultural and political consensus over the promotion of multiculturalism as official policy. However, they also point out that under the new legislation individual provinces could have a much greater role to play in the promotion and selection of individual immigrants. As they note, it is during this time that Quebec emerges “as a key participant in immigration policy,” as it begins “to develop an active and independent presence in the immigration field” (362): “In October 1975, the Andras-Bienvenue agreement was signed between Québec and the federal Department of Manpower and Immigration, under which Québec immigration officers were given a greater role in recruiting and counselling immigrants, reflecting Québec’s concerns regarding the impact of English-speaking immigrants in the province” (362). It is telling that this new legislation, which appears to promote national unity and consensus, also allocates discretionary power to the individual provinces, thereby making federal policy increasingly provincial. As such, it appears to have more in common with earlier American immigration policy, which granted more power to the individual State. However, since the eventual push in the United States was to regulate immigration by centralizing it in the federal government, the Canadian shift in the opposite direction raises questions about the effectiveness and development of said policy. Rather than suggest a unified multicultural mosaic, this shift emphasizes the individual mosaic within each province, which demographic studies show greatly differs from province to province

as seen, in particular, from urban centre to urban centre.

4.2 The 1976 Immigration Act: A Multicultural Policy?

The 1976 Immigration Act's objectives outline the new direction toward a de-racialized immigration process. At the same time, however, the Act's objectives maintain the discretionary grounds for exclusion. For example, the second objective listed is "to enrich and strengthen the cultural and social fabric of Canada, taking into account the federal and bilingual character of Canada" (number 3 (b)). Although the word "multicultural" is not used to describe the Canadian cultural and social fabric, the governmental push to promote multiculturalism as its official understanding of Canadian identity is certainly implied in this objective, particularly with the explicit reference to the federal and bilingual character of the nation. The provision for the protection of the English-French historical claim and heritage points to the growing concern over the multicultural movement that could otherwise render English and French two of its many characteristics. The Act's sixth objective, "to ensure that any person who seeks admission to Canada on either a permanent or temporary basis is subject to standards of admission that do not discriminate in a manner inconsistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms" (number 3 (f)), functions to ensure the anti-racist and anti-sexist evaluation of immigrants and visitors. Similarly, the seventh objective, "to fulfill Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees and to uphold its humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and the persecuted" (number 3 (g)), makes clear the

change in Canada's position toward internationally displaced persons and refugees (as defined by the U.N.'s Protocol).

Given Canada's less than enthusiastic reception of a small number of Chilean refugees seeking entry during the Chilean crisis, however, it is evident that in spite of the Immigration Act's explicit language against prejudicial treatment there remained discretionary interpretative power in the hands of governmental officials.⁸¹ As Kelley and Trebilcock note, it is not a coincidence that Canada's reaction was in keeping with the United States' support of General Pinochet's new right-wing regime over the former "democratically elected Marxist government of Salvador Allende on 11 September 1973" (365). This response can also be explained by the broadness of the last two objectives:

- (i) to maintain and protect the health, safety and good order of Canadian society; and

⁸¹Allende's democratically elected Marxist government was overthrown by a military coup led by General Pinochet, whose new regime hunted down former Allende government supporters. Although a dictator, Pinochet gained American support. Many Allende supporters fled to other South American countries or sought asylum at various embassies. Support for admitting Allende supporters into Canada as political refugees was largely rallied by church organizations, which prompted more public awareness of the coup and its aftermath. In October 1974, a delegation representing Amnesty International, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the Canadian University Service, and Anglican, Lutheran, United and Presbyterian churches met with the minister of External Affairs, Allan MacEachen, and the Manpower and Immigration minister, Robert Andras. The delegation presented a brief detailing the crisis, but this had little or no effect. Despite pressure from church, labour, and Latino groups, the Canadian government was slow to react out of a desire to avoid antagonizing the United States, which supported the new government, and because of concerns over the possible implications of permitting hundreds of alleged Marxists into Canada. (Kelley and Trebilcock 365)

(j) to promote international order and justice by denying the use of Canadian territory to persons who are likely to engage in criminal activity.

(Number 3)

Depicting the potential “criminal activity” of the Chilean Marxist refugees in Canada is sufficient grounds to refuse entry. That the nation must protect its citizens from health hazards or criminal activity is not in question here. What is in question is the continued use of ambiguous language to exclude potential immigrants on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, country of origin, political affiliation, and/or religion. Using the ambiguous language to refuse entry for other reasons, in this case complying with American democratic and capitalist preferences, also points to the puppetry of official policy. Granted, additional provisions in the Act make it more difficult to utilize the generalized language for immoral reasons. For example, under the “Examinations” section of the Act, all immigrants must “undergo a medical examination by a medical officer” (number 11 (1)), including “a mental examination, a physical examination and a medical assessment of records respecting a person” (number 11 (3)). Presumably, expulsions or denied entries based on health reasons are legitimate and health hazards are no longer used as a means of excluding undesirable immigrants. Similarly, “criminal activity” can be simply determined by consulting the Canadian criminal code. Existing legislation prohibiting activity to overthrow the government or commit espionage also maintains exclusions within the law. “Safety” and “good order,” in contrast, are broad categories for which there are no medical and legal codes. As such, they warrant largely discretionary, and

therefore problematic, decisions that could be based on perceptions rather than facts.

Moreover, given the racist reputation of some immigrant groups for having a propensity toward criminal activity, especially those who are visibly different, these categories can be applied to prevent, or at least restrict the number of, these undesirable immigrants from entering.

4.3 “Official” Multiculturalism: The Canadian Multiculturalism Act

Regardless of Canada’s new image and promotion of itself as a multicultural nation, there is no evidence in the statutes that it advocates a more proactive role in recruiting a multicultural immigrant body. Rather, previous bans and restrictions against specific groups are lifted and anti-discriminatory new policies for selection of immigrants are implemented. Because multiculturalism advocates the celebration of a person’s origins, there is an inclination toward equating multiculturalism with immigration. Certainly, immigration is a key factor in multiculturalism. However, multiculturalism need not be nor mean “immigrant.” It is therefore necessary to examine the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, passed on July 21, 1988, as it articulates the official definition of multiculturalism, and to contrast some of its premises with those of the 1976 Immigration Act. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act draws on the Constitution of Canada, which grants every individual regardless of race and/or sex the guarantee of “freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association” as well as the “benefit of the law without discrimination” (Stat. 35-36-37,

Chapter 31). The Immigration Act of 1976, however, continues to deny entry to

(e) persons who there are reasonable grounds to believe

(i) will engage in acts of espionage or subversion against democratic government, institutions or processes, as they are understood in Canada,

(ii) will, while in Canada, engage in or instigate the subversion by force of any government,

(iii) will engage in terrorism, or

(iv) are members of an organization that there are reasonable grounds to believe will

(A) engage in acts of espionage or subversion against democratic government, institutions or processes, as they are understood in Canada,

(B) engage in or instigate the subversion by force of any government, or

C) engage in terrorism; (number 19, “Inadmissible

Classes”)

Presumably, immigrants allowed into the country maintain the “thoughts, beliefs, opinions and expressions” that are not in opposition to the established government of Canada. Hence, while multiculturalism embraces diversity, diversity in Canada is selective. Political variety, if any, is presumed to be a variation of the existing dominant

ideology. Opposition to that ideology is, as the Immigration Act makes clear, inadmissible.

Like the Immigration Act of 1976, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act draws on the Constitution of Canada's recognition of "the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians" as well as the continued recognition that "English and French are the official languages of Canada and neither abrogates or derogates from any rights or privileges acquired or enjoyed with respect to any other language" (Stat. 35-36-37, Chap. 31). The continued emphasis on origins clearly positions English and French heritages at the centre of the mosaic, implicitly creating a centre versus margins model. Because the Canadian Multicultural Act promotes "the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origin" (Stat. 35-36-37, Chap. 31), the centre versus margins model is largely diffused as the focus shifts from the relationship between the centre and its margins to that of the existing relationships within the margins. Appearing to eliminate the centre by concentrating instead on the Other(s), and promoting the inclusion rather than exclusion of all Canadians and landed immigrants into every cultural, linguistic, social, political and economic facet of Canadian society, multiculturalism functions as a buffer zone between the English-French centre and the multicultural peripheries—especially when it is used to create the illusion that it is multiculturalism that is at the centre of Canadian national ideology. Moreover, because one of the underlying functions of multiculturalism is "to promote the understanding that

multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future" (Stat. 35-36-37, Chap. 31), the new direction seeks to rewrite Canada's national history in order to write its future. Hence, multiculturalism does more than guarantee the rights and freedoms of all Canadian citizens, or "strengthening" the autonomy of English and French by preserving and enhancing "the use of language other than English and French" (Stat. 35-36-37, Chap. 31). Multiculturalism values the diverse cultural heritage and works to ensure that such diversity continues to exist, thereby discouraging assimilation altogether. Paradoxically, because the multicultural mosaic is promoted as the new Canadian identity, assimilation into the mosaic is only possible if incoming groups maintain, or else assimilate into, institutionalized difference.

Consider, for example, Neil Bissoondath's controversial book, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (1994). Bissoondath comments on the difficulty of critiquing multiculturalism in Canada since doing so marks the critic a racist (or a member of the Reform Party). To speak out against multiculturalism, then, is to speak out against immigrants and descendants of immigrants who are or have been members of a racial minority. In the case that it is the immigrant, the ethnic, or the multicultural subject (in other words the "person of colour") who speaks out against multiculturalism, s/he is rendered—as Bissoondath concedes he has—a "'sell out,' 'traitor' and 'Uncle Tom' from 'ethnic' defenders with a stake in the system and from mainstream defenders who expect a little more gratitude. Many are they in this country who fear a serious examination of

multiculturalism, its policies, and its consequences. Many are they who will resort to a chorus of vilification to protect their sacred turf” (5). This attitude contradicts, for Bissoondath, the foundations of Canada and the Canadian people as an immigrant nation. He recalls sensing that Canadians were “a people at ease with themselves, in charge of their own destiny, a land of immigrants and descendents of immigrants given another chance by history and determined to construct a new and fruitful tomorrow” (19). Instead, Bissoondath argues that the cult of multiculturalism offers Canadians a superficial sense of self that is only an illusion: “all the colourful ethnics bowing and smiling in mechanical greeting at the tourists, themselves mostly other ethnics, passing by. They look like the real thing, but their smell is synthetic. They have no bite. They are safe. Culture Disneyfied” (83). Bissoondath’s critique of multiculturalism as a cult is that it provides its followers with the illusion of a Disneyfied, consumable and commercial identity—a less far cry from what Bissoondath’s perceptions of Canada and Canadian identity were, much less from what multiculturalism, if taken to task, could become.

4.4 Literary Representations of Multiculturalism: The Multicultural City

One way of analyzing Canadian multiculturalism is to turn to the fiction that deals primarily with the advocacy or criticism of the mosaic. As the 1976 Immigration Act stipulates, the increasing discretion granted to each province and the conglomeration of immigrants in the urban centres posits that a study of any Canadian multicultural metropolis can serve as a microcosm of the national whole. Granted, regional diversity and disputes stipulate that one urban centre, like Vancouver, cannot possibly represent another specific centre, like Montreal. However, Toronto's revamped image from the "dullest city on earth" (Garreau D1) into the "the world's most multicultural city" (Doucet) in the last thirty years allows for this kind of generalized discussion. While the immigrant groups featured in the following texts are specific to Toronto, it is the multicultural model rather than the individual immigrant groups that are being theorized here. In choosing Toronto, I am not adhering to the perception that Toronto (or Ontario) operates as Canada's centre, although this perception would underscore the applicability of Toronto's metonymy.

Toronto's new image is largely indebted to the contributions that its considerable immigrant population has made. Ondaatje's and Clarke's literary representations of immigrant life in Toronto certainly underscore this sexier image and challenge traditional literary representations which, as John Clement Ball notes, depict Toronto as "a white city" (9). There is, however, a marked difference in the literary representations of Toronto as an immigrant city and the public representations that market Toronto as a multicultural

city. In a recent pamphlet, for example, Tourism Toronto promotes its city as follows:

When we call ourselves “The World Within a City,” we’re referring *in part* to Toronto’s amazing mosaic of cultures. Within our *many distinct neighbourhoods*, you’ll find colourful features representing every part of the globe. However, there’s more to this world than great *ethnic dining and shopping*. The countless things that make world travel fascinating—museums, galleries, major-league sports, prime hotels, natural wonders, history and so many other features—come together here in one tremendously accommodating city. It’s no surprise that more than a million business and convention visitors choose to attend functions in Toronto each year. (Tourism Toronto; emphasis mine)

Drawing on what Stanley Fish aptly terms “boutique multiculturalism” as an exotic lure to attract visiting consumers, this promotional material quickly emphasizes other aspects that make Toronto a great city—aspects that have nothing at all to do with multiculturalism. Conversely, the literary representations of the immigrant city, as we shall see, tend to focus primarily on the “distinct neighbourhoods” rather than on the convention centres, and present these exotic locations not as tourist traps but as sites of everyday cultural negotiation.

Tourism Toronto’s privileging of boutique multiculturalism points to the continued disregard for the city’s immigrants that is prevalent, albeit quite differently, in Ondaatje’s and Clarke’s texts. As Fish explains, in spite of their approval, appreciation

and even sympathy for “the traditions of cultures not their own, [...] boutique multiculturalists will always stop short of approving other cultures at a point where some value at their center generates an act that offends against the canons of civilized decency as they have been either declared or assumed” (378). Hence, the superficial celebration of diversity maintains cultural difference; the “many distinct neighbourhoods” (or ghettos) are at once accessible to the local or foreign tourist/consumer in search of the safe exotic experience yet easily circumvented by those who prefer to keep the Other at bay but who nevertheless want to partake of the city. Similarly, the literary reader as boutique multiculturalist can enter the “distinct neighbourhoods,” both contemporary and historical, without ever having to live in them. Mapped as such, Toronto, *the* immigrant city, appears to be made up of peripheral neighbourhoods which, although they are an integral part of the city and are used to draw real and literary tourism, do not constitute the city itself.

Debunking the urban legend that it was the United Nations which externally, thereby authoritatively, crowned Toronto with the coveted title of “the world’s most multicultural city,” Michael J. Doucet rightly questions how it is even possible to determine such a claim, and asks if such a decision would be “based on a simple count of the number of different ethnic, racial, and linguistic groups living in a given space?” (Doucet). If the difficulty—if not impossibility—of designating the most multicultural urban centre stems from the problems in defining what a multicultural city is, then it follows that, as Fish suggests, a distinction first needs to be made “between

multiculturalism as a philosophical problem and multiculturalism as a demographic fact” (385). It is unclear, however, how such a distinction can be made when the subject in question, Toronto as *the* Canadian multicultural city, exemplifies both a demographic reality and the philosophical ideal of a nation. One possible definition is offered by the 1998 “report produced by the Access and Equity Centre of the City of Toronto for Mayor Mel Lastman,” entitled *Together We Are One: A Summary Paper on Diversity in Toronto* (Doucet). In this report, an observation is made “that ‘no other city in the world has a higher proportion who are foreign-born than Toronto’” (in Doucet). Laying claim to the validity of the urban legend, this observation effectively renders the “multicultural city” the “immigrant city.” While it is unclear what legal status these foreign-born residents have (e.g., landed immigrant, illegal alien, Canadian citizen, non-immigrant, etc.), the marker of multicultural difference is rather simply located in the residents’ birthplace. This gross over-simplification makes synonymous the terms “multicultural” and “immigrant,” and in doing so marks those who are born in Canada, regardless of race, ethnicity and/or religion, as “Canadian” whereas those who are born outside of Canada, regardless of legal or national status, are branded “multicultural.” Illogically, this premise suggests that “Canadian” and “multicultural” are two opposing categories, a rather problematic distinction considering the official propagation of Canadian identity as multicultural since the implementation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988 and the popular propagation of Canadian identity as multiculturally hyphenated.

Even if the terms “multicultural” and “immigrant” are interchangeable, what an

“immigrant city” is and the representation of Toronto as *the* Canadian immigrant city need further critical inquiry. Ondaate’s *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987) and Clarke’s collection of short stories, *Nine Men Who Laughed* (1986), are two pivotal literary representations of the immigrant city that address these questions. *In the Skin of a Lion* has become one of the most important and canonical literary representations of the Canadian immigrant city. It conforms to the mythologization of the invisible immigrant labour that literally builds Toronto. *Nine Men Who Laughed*, in contrast, deromanticizes the immigrant city by raising, albeit implicitly, several questions: if the immigrant city is defined, as Ondaatje’s novel suggests, by the immigrant labour that builds the city, does it cease to be an immigrant city once it has been built? What place, if any, do newer, incoming immigrants have in the already-made, and therefore already defined, immigrant city? Clarke’s immigrants are, as Stella Algoo-Baksh argues, “condemned [...] to becoming hollow men” (164). Unlike the immigrants in Ondaatje’s novel, many of Clarke’s later immigrants can either find no employment, however demeaning and low-paying it may be, or else are relegated to cleaning and maintaining the appearance of the city that rejects them. Hence, Clarke’s

stories illustrate how the “definitions” [namely “immigrant”] of the dominant race have destroyed the black newcomer. Labeling and stereotyping have effectively locked him mentally and physically into specific roles and behaviours. As a member of a minority, the immigrant is powerless to initiate significant change in the dominant social attitudes

toward him [... Thus,] the newcomer adapts to the system at the cost of identity, self-respect, and moral integrity. (164)

Whereas immigrant labour is retrospectively valorized in Ondaatje's novel to the point of being heroic, there is nothing heroic about the labour that Clarke's immigrants perform. Merely surviving in the city, Clarke's "immigrant[s are] merely *living*" (Introduction 6). Although several of Clarke's immigrants seek economic and social advancement, their experience in the immigrant city suggest that Toronto remains a "white city" that segregates, ghettoizes, and ultimately expels the unwanted and all-too-visible immigrants.

In the Skin of a Lion, as Frank Davey notes, "is built around three major Toronto historical events: the disappearance of theatre entrepreneur Ambrose Small in 1919, and the building, under city commissioner Rowland Harris, of the Bloor Street Viaduct in 1917 and of a new city waterworks in the early 1930s" (141). By focusing on these three events, Ondaatje's novel not only reconstructs the city but positions Toronto, as Sergio Perosa suggests, "at the centre of the story" (185). From the outset, Ondaatje's immigrant city is characterized by the early immigrants and their direct or indirect relationship to these three events. Connected to the world of theatre, they learn "English from recorded songs or, until the talkies came, through mimicking actors on stage" (Ondaatje, *Skin* 47). The immigrants mimic the actors linguistically as well metaphorically; it is through their staged puppet shows that they enact their revolutionary politics. Described as a "dangerous new country," their stage is a metaphor for the multicultural New World mitigated by the less threatening "blend of several nations" that is represented by the

actors' costumes (116). The perceived threat of the multicultural new country incurs a new rule in the city, imposed by Police Chief Draper, forbidding "public meetings by foreigners. So if they speak this way in public, in *any* language other than English, they will be jailed" (133). As puppets, they re-enact the mistreatment of immigrants at the hands of the English-Canadian authorities, and in so doing solidify as a unified immigrant body politic that threatens to disrupt the English-speaking hegemony. Mimicry as an assimilation strategy produces a powerful new discourse that uses the native's own means, the theatre, as a vehicle of destruction. Mimicry, as Christian Bök explains, becomes a symptomatic manifestation of resistance: "Non-verbal aggression becomes the only apparent recourse for the immigrant worker who wishes to speak in anger without succumbing to the ruling-class language" (21).

Early in the novel, Patrick Lewis, the native-born Canadian protagonist, is naturalized as an immigrant. His description is not unlike that of Nicholas Temelcoff, a fictional representation of the historical Macedonian immigrant whose work on the Bloor Street Viaduct is legendary. In the novel, Temelcoff, upon arriving to "Upper America" (46), has "no passport, [and ...] could not speak a word of English. He had ten napoleons which he showed them to explain he wouldn't be dependent. They let him through" (46). Like him, Patrick arrives passport-less at Union Station from the Ontario rural country: "He owned nothing, had scarcely any money. There was a piece of feldspar in his pocket that his fingers had stumbled over during the train journey. He was an immigrant to the city" (53). A native English-speaker, Patrick's choice to reside in the multilingual

southeastern section of the city inhabited by immigrants emphasizes, like Temelcoff's, his dislocation: "he walked everywhere not hearing any language he knew, deliriously anonymous. The people on the street, the Macedonians and Bulgarians, were his only mirror. He worked in the tunnels with them" (112). Although his eventual inclusion into the immigrant community is relative—"he was their alien" (113)—it renders Patrick one of the many national representatives that make up the multicultural community. His inclusion is also the necessary vehicle for his becoming its spokesperson. The political force of the revolutionary immigrant is thus transferred to the English voice that has been naturalized as an immigrant by virtue of his choice of urban residence and employment—however mitigated the circumstances of those choices may be. According to Davey, however, "very close behind Patrick 'speaks' and names the signator of the novel, Michael Ondaatje, immigrant from Sri Lanka, canonical Canadian poet, university professor, younger brother to financier Christopher Ondaatje" (145). Patrick's authorial voice, as Davey suggests, is a ventriloquist performance, masking the "authentic" assimilated immigrant who hails from Sri Lanka via England to become the poetic voice of the early Macedonian, Greek, Finnish, Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, and Bulgarian immigrants. In emphasizing the cultural and political unity of all immigrants, Ondaatje is able to use multiculturalism as a means of legitimizing his metonymic voice. Multiculturalism also endorses his vision of the immigrant city as a "fairy tale" (Ondaatje, *Skin* 39). Interviewer Eleanor Wachtel, for example, concedes that the novel "transforms the city into an exotic, almost mythological place" (Ondaatje, "An Interview" 250-51). As

cultural mythology, multiculturalism offers a useful universalization that allows one immigrant, regardless of racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, and/or class privilege, to speak for all others, especially those who are underprivileged, voiceless, or already dead.

Unlike his fictional front, Ondaatje's role in the building of Toronto has nothing to do with manual labour but with the memorialization of that labour. It is not coincidental that Patrick's interest in the building of the bridge stems from his coming across a photograph of "a group of men working on the Bloor Street Viaduct" in which he recognizes Temelcoff's face (139). At the Riverdale Library, Patrick "read up on everything—survey arguments, the scandals, the deaths of workers fleetingly mentioned" (143-44). But the novel is more concerned with what Patrick does not find:

There were no photographers like Lewis Hine, who in the United States was photographing child labour everywhere—trapper boys in coal mines, seven-year old doffer girls in New England mills. [...] Hine's photographs betray official history and put together another family. [...] His photographs are rooms one can step into—cavernous buildings where a man turns a wrench the size of his body, or caves of iron where the white faces give the young children working there the terrible look of ghosts. But Patrick would never see the great photographs of Hine. (145)

Ondaatje's tribute to Hine's "compassionate vision" (Rosenblum 11) touches on the conflicting pulls of his immigrant city. The allusion to Hine's work for the National Child Labour Committee (NCLC) in this passage positions Hine as an ethical, sociological

photographer who documented the evils of capitalist industrialism (or urbanism).

Curiously absent in this passage is a specific reference to his early photographs of the immigrants in Ellis Island which, Walter Rosenblum argues, “became the crucible that formed Hine, gave him direction, and schooled him for what was to follow” (11).

Certainly, the mention of these photographs would make the parallel between Ondaatje and Hine more explicit. Focusing instead on Hine’s images from *Men At Work* (1932), the emphasis begins to shift from the images that reveal the exploitative labour of immigrants and children to the heroic image of the male worker. Hine’s study valorizes the men who built, and the building of, the Empire State Building. As Alan Trachtenberg notes, in these series “the subject matched the ideology—the creative contribution of labour” (136).

In his introduction to *Men At Work*, Hine writes: “Cities do not build themselves, machines cannot make machines, [since in the] back of them all are the brains and toil of men. [...] Then the more you see of modern machines, the more may you, too, respect the men who make them and manipulate them” (5). These sentiments equally apply to *In the Skin of a Lion*. As Josef Pesch puts it, “Temelcoff and his fellow bridge builders are part of the Bloor Street Viaduct now, and no one can look at the waterworks without thinking of the immigrants watching Alice’s puppet show or Patrick and the tunnel workers. *In the Skin of a Lion* has inscribed the immigrant workers into the cityscape (102). Behind the camera, and behind the pen, Hine and Ondaatje also inscribe themselves into their respective urban histories. Hine’s “often quoted statement, [...] ‘There are two things I

wanted to do. I wanted to show the things that had to be corrected. I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated”” (Doherty 2), epitomizes Ondaatje’s position in *In the Skin of a Lion*. Ondaatje’s sentimentalized photographic images mesh with those more popular and nostalgic images of the building of New York that the allusion to Hine’s photography evokes. Juxtaposing these famous photographs with similar images set in Toronto, the novel transposes the connotations of New York as an immigrant city to the Canadian urban landscape. The transposition is also made possible in part because of the novel’s representation of Canada “as an unnamed and undefined space, a vacuum and a void” (Jannetta 94). Nodding to Arthur Goss, who worked for the city of Toronto for 48 years, the novel acknowledges the presence of its appointed photographer. According to Ralph Greenhill and Andrew Birrell, the “photographs of Jacob A. Riis [who is absent in Ondaatje’s novel] in the slums of New York, and Lewis W. Hine’s pictures of child labour in the United States are well known, but the work of [Arthur Scott] Goss in Toronto has received little recognition” (146). Goss photographed the “housing conditions in the poverty-stricken core of the city and of sewer construction [.... His] photographs[,] taken for the Engineer’s and Health Departments[,] are unforgettable documents of how the other half lived in Toronto” (146).⁸² His cameo in Ondaatje’s novel, however, leaves much to be desired:

In the tunnel under Lake Ontario two men shake hands on an incline of

⁸² Another 1931 image by Goss is used as the cover of *In the Skin of a Lion* in the Vintage 1996 edition.

mud. Beside them a pickaxe and a lamp, their dirt-streaked faces pivoting to look towards the camera. For a moment, while the film receives the image, everything is still, the other tunnel workers silent. Then Arthur Goss the city photographer packs up his tripod and glass plates, unhooks the cord of lights that creates a vista of open tunnel behind the two men, walks with his equipment the fifty yards to the ladder, and climbs out into sunlight.

Work continues. The grunt into hard clay. The wet slap. Men burning rock and shattering it wherever they come across it. (105)

Unlike Hine's testimony of the reality of the working conditions, the official city photographer in this passage betrays the worker's cause by betraying their reality. The trick of light is as equivocal as the workers taking a break, shaking hands. The novel further distances Goss from the workers by having him do what the workers cannot—climb out of the tunnel and into the sunlight. Metaphorically, few climb upwardly and out of economic darkness. Unlike Hine's photographs that provide an entry, Goss walks out of the darkened room.

Ondaatje as photographer privileges the vision of how the city ought to be memorized and historicized. For this reason, the novel is not as critical of Commissioner Harris. It is Harris's vision of the city, rather than Pomphrey's, the English architect, that is glorified: "Before the real city could be seen it had to be imagined" (29). Harris seeks to make Toronto a world-class city that is recognized for the beauty of its utility. When,

during their confrontation, Patrick condemns Harris's installation of the "goddamn herringbone tiles in the toilets [that] cost more than half [their] salaries put together" (236), Harris's response is futuristic: "in fifty years they're going to come here and gape at the herringbone and the copper roofs. We need excess, something to live up to" (236). Rather coincidentally, around the time of *In the Skin of a Lion*'s publication, it is the multicultural city rather than the waterworks' herringbone tiles that the ambiguous "they" are coming to see. It is precisely the multicultural excess that is celebrated and used as promotional material, which in turn promotes the city as the most multicultural city in the world—something to live up to. Harris's failure, which Ondaatje seeks to right, is his failure to see the real beauty of his buildings—the immigrant labour that builds them. Ondaatje's novel makes clear that the anonymous lives of these workers are the real beauty of the city's structures. Ghost-like, the constructed features of the city come to life. In fact, as Susan Spearey argues, "the city assumes almost human proportions; it too is a character that wears many skins, acts and is acted upon" (57).

The city, personified as a unified immigrant body, is infused with certain characteristics. Superficially, the allocation of the immigrants into one section provides the visible and audible traits that mark the immigrants' presence in the city. But because, as Perosa suggests, the novel focuses on buildings that emphasize movement like the bridge and tunnel, the city is characterized as a space of constant motion and flow rather than as a space imposing boundaries and limits as cities have traditionally done. The Viaduct and waterworks "are intended to link rather than separate, to unite rather than

divide, to allow for conditions of roaming, ranging, wandering: *in* the cities themselves, and *from* them into the countryside or the wilderness” (185). Privileging movement, the novel also focuses on the one key landmark that serves as the city’s Ellis Island (or Pier 21), Union Station. Returning to the city after his incarceration, Union Station is, for Patrick, a “cathedral-like space [that is] the nexus of his life” (Ondaatje, *Skin* 209). Centralizing the immigrant in Union Station locates ‘home’ not in the immigrant communities but at—and in—the border. For the transient paranoid immigrant whom Patrick sees upon his first arrival to the city, the border is the only safe haven: The “man with three suitcases, [was] well-dressed, shouting out in another language. [...] Two days later Patrick returned to pick up his luggage from a locker. He saw the man again, still unable to move from his safe zone, in a different suit, as if one step away was the quicksand of the new world” (54). The paranoid immigrant’s choosing to reside within the boundary itself, within the place of constant flux and transition, calls attention to the architectural structure that houses and mirrors the boundary. Somewhat paradoxically, the immigrant, like Union Station, is simultaneously static and mobile, inside yet outside the city. Unlike the other immigrants in the novel, there is little that is known about the paranoid immigrant: his language is “another;” his clothing is described as “a different suit.” Given the detail ascribed to other characters’ languages and clothing, the lack of specificity marks this immigrant as being truly different from the rest. Like his, Patrick’s attraction to Union Station marks his difference from the others. For him, Union Station represents a sanctuary. Outside the station, “standing in front of strangers, studying the

new fashions,” he feels “invisible” (210). Inside the comfort of Temelcoff’s Geranium Bakery, he is embraced by multiculturalism; Temelcoff’s embrace feels like the “grip of the world” (210). The boundary offers what no other place in the city can: a meeting point between these two extremes.

By the time that Clarke’s immigrants in *Nine Men Who Laughed* come to inhabit Toronto, as early as two decades after the construction of the waterworks, the immigrant city changes considerably. Shifting the focus from the East end to the West end of the city, Clarke’s stories, not unlike Ondaatje’s novel, emphasize the peripheral immigrant ghetto. It is worth noting that the East end immigrant ghetto does make an appearance in “A Man.” As Joshua Miller-Corbaine rushes “west along Bloor Street,” he curses “the East end and the young teacher and all the cautious cars slipping into his path, maligning in his native dialect the European immigrants who congregated in this ghetto of the city as they walked across the street. He thought they used the street with a disregard for traffic familiar to those accustomed to inhabiting large fields and farms” (129-30). Because Clarke does not deal with European immigrants, it is not known whether his are newly arrived or whether they are descendants of earlier immigrants. Apparently unaccustomed to the movement of urban traffic, the suggestion is that they are new arrivals. The German mechanic’s thick accent supports this presumption. But their arrival date is inconsequential; the East end of the city, as in Ondaatje’s novel, is still the European ghetto. That Clarke’s West Indian immigrants occupy a different section of the city rather than enter, as Patrick does, the already existing immigrant ghetto calls

attention to the segregation between white and black immigrants that is symptomatic of the racial discrimination against West Indian immigrants for housing and employment (Walker 18). Clarke's immigrants are coerced into a ghetto of their own, thereby revealing a rupture in the universalized multicultural body propagated in Ondaatje's novel.

Describing the West Indian ghetto in the West end of the city in "Doing Right," the narrator off-handedly remarks that "Wessindians accustom to parking in the middle o' the road, or on the wrong side, back home. And nobody don't trouble them nor touch their cars. And since they come here, many o' these Wessindians haven't tek-on a change in attitude in regards to who own the public road and who own the motto-cars" (57). The West Indian immigrants claim the street by imposing a rural (equated here with native-soil) use of space. However, an ambitious West Indian green hornet looking for financial and career advancement imposes the Canadian urban order and tickets their illegally parked cars. Curiously, a similar transposition occurs at the beginning of *In the Skin of a Lion*. Patrick's first encounter with the immigrant Other is seen when he sees the group of foreign loggers that he often saw with his father skating at night on the river with lit cattails. At the sight, "Patrick was transfixed. Skating the river at night, each of them moving like a wedge in the blackness magically revealing the grey bushes of the shore, *his* shore, *his* river" (21). Patrick, however, does not own the river. In fact, neither he nor his father own the land they work on "as the owner of the cows does" (7). The episode in the river is photographed into Patrick's memory and indicates his first acquiescence of the

immigrants' natural right to (or ownership of) his native land. In this episode, it is his realization that the Finnish loggers have a deeper understanding of the landscape than he does, and their utilizing the frozen river in ways he had not thought possible that naturalize their claim on the land. Symbolically, the river is transposed into the urban landscape when the immigrant workers tar the city's streets: "The smell of tar seeps through the porous body of their clothes. The black of it is permanent under the nails. They can feel the bricks under their kneecaps as they crawl backwards towards the bridge, their bodies almost horizontal over the viscous *black river*, their heads drunk within the fumes" (27-28; emphasis mine). Like the Finnish loggers, the "true" owners of the urban rivers (or streets) are the immigrant workers who make them. Naturalized as the "real" owners of the city's streets because it is their labour that makes these urban rivers possible, the immigrant in Ondaatje's novel retains only historical ownership. The newly arrived West Indian immigrants, in contrast, cannot lay claim to the already tarred urban streets. Unlike the Finnish loggers who use the already existing frozen river, the West Indians of Clarke's stories attempt to claim the urban landscape by imposing their own landscape. The urban landscape, however, imposes its own order on them, claiming their presence.

Dissent and disagreement over the rightful use of the urban space is one of the many tensions in the West Indian ghetto. Multicultural fissures also appear within the black community of the St Clair-Oakwood district. "Doing Right" challenges multiculturalism by questioning what happens when immigrant groups deemed similar by

the host country are coerced to co-inhabit the ghetto. In the story, when another West Indian green hornet tickets the expensive-looking car of an African-American man, stereotypically wearing flashy gold chains and rings, the African-American man picks up the green hornet and calls him “nigger.” The green hornet replies: “What you call me? I am no damn nigger. I am Indian. Legal immigrant. I just doing my job for the City of Toronto in Metropolitan Toronto. *You* are a blasted American negro!” (62).⁸³ Watching this altercation, the narrator exclaims: “Well, multiculturalism gone-out the window now! All the pamphlets and the television commercials that show people of all colours laughing together and saying, ‘We is Canadians,’ all them advertisements in *Saturday Night* and *Maclean’s*, all them speeches that ministers up in Ottawar make concerning the ‘different cultures that make up this great unified country of ours,’ all that lick-up now, and gone through the eddoes. One time. *Bram!*” (63). Waiting for the police to arrive and break up the fight since “the Police does-be up in this St Clair–Oakwood district like flies

⁸³The confrontation with what appear to be two hyperbolic characters here points to Daniel Coleman’s discussion of Clarke’s depiction of the inner-city hustler. According to him, Clarke’s stories, particularly “A Man” and “How He Does It,” “address not only the social codes for masculinity that [the Caribbean man] encounters in the Canadian metropolis, but also the ways the masculine codes he brings from the island and from contact with African-American urban culture displace and challenge these metropolitan ones” (30). Coleman identifies Clarke’s “figure of the inner-city hustler [which] represents an African-American performative tradition that has evolved in response to this consistent discrimination against African Americans in capitalist culture” (36). But Clarke’s hustler, Coleman reminds us, is itself a performative construct of African-American urban traditions *and* Caribbean island traditions. Clarke’s Joshua Miller-Corbaine’s “masquerade as lawyer-about-town is inflected by both island and metropolitan traditions, and, like them, [...] conveys both espousal of and dissatisfaction with metropolitan codes for masculine success. This duality allows Clarke to produce simultaneously a pathetic portrait of the man who ascribes to codes that are hostile to him and a critique of the racist logic that operates within those codes” (37).

around a crocus-bag o' sugar at the drop of a cloth-hat" (63), the narrator notes their conspicuous absence, thereby pointing to the inherent racism of Toronto's Police Department (which has already been alluded to when the ambitious green hornet cannot advance and become a "real policeman" in spite of his over-zealousness in ticketing illegally parked cars, especially those of West Indians). The narrator calls further attention to the authorities' duplicity when he states that "the big boys in Toronto don't particular' notice we unless um is Caribana weekend or when election-time coming and they looking for votes or when the *Star* doing a feature on racism and Wessindians and they want a quotation" (58). Unlike Ondaatje's novel in which the immigrants unite against the oppressive Canadian authority and a spokesperson speaks and acts for them (however problematic that voice may be), Clarke's stories identify varying degrees of difficulty within the multicultural system, revealing the inherent hierarchy that is racial and class based. If Ondaatje's immigrants occupy the bottom of the multicultural pyramid insofar as they constitute the exploited working class, many of Clarke's immigrants remain outside the pyramid altogether, especially if they are illegal immigrants.

In spite of the obvious multicultural growth depicted, in part, by the very presence of non-white immigrants in the literary urban landscape that is absent in Ondaatje's novel, Clarke's stories question whether the city's multicultural growth actually affects change in the otherwise "white city." In "Canadian Experience," for example, Bay Street houses "the business district of banks, brokerages and corporations" where the city centralizes its economic power (32). Surrounded by "tall office buildings" that "look like

steel,” George, the protagonist, who comes to the district for an interview at a bank, enters a building that is “built almost entirely out of glass” and “shimmers like gold” (42). For the black immigrant, however, there is no gold, no American Dream, to be attained. Ball argues that “the solid grip that Toronto’s white community has historically held over the city’s economy, institutions, culture, and self image” persists (9). According to him, although “Toronto’s non-white population has swelled from a small fraction to a sizable and visible collection of diversified communities, [...] white power has remained well entrenched” (9). In Clarke’s story, even the janitorial work is performed by “white” marginalized labour; it is “the Italians and the Greeks and the Portuguese” who clean the office building (49). It should be noted, however, that the unnamed protagonist does work illegally with the “Italians, Greeks and Portuguese, cleaning the offices of First Canadian Place, a building with at least fifty floors, made of glass, *near* [but significantly not *in*] Bay Street” (37 emphasis mine).

Fragmenting the already dispossessed black immigrant, the buildings’ reflecting surfaces keep him from seeing the centre; the reflection of the unnamed man’s body “tears him into strides and splatters his suit against four panels, and makes him disjointed” (42). Although he is able to enter the building, he is further deterred by the word “BANK written on the glass, cheerless and frightening” (43), and by the blue eyes of a woman that “are like ice-water” (44). The imagery of glass, mirror, and ice-water calls to mind a different kind of fairy tale in which the city is made of glass. But there is nothing magical or fragile about Clarke’s glass city. It obscures and refracts, casting

shadows and doubt. As his mirror, the city reflects back that it is the black immigrant, not the city, who is fragile. George tells Pat, an aspiring actress and fellow tenant in the rooming house, that the people at the bank “looked on [him] and at [him] and through [him], right through [him]. [He] was a piece of glass” (44-45). Unlike the city’s smoke-and-mirrors multicultural welcome, the black immigrant’s glass-like appearance not only reinforces his fragility but also marks him transparent, invisible. His fragmented image at the beginning of the story, like that in the building, beheads him; he “was cut off at the neck” (31). It is only at the end of the story that he sees himself reflected in another: “his own eyes, and the [subway] driver’s, makes four” (51). This flicker of recognition suggests that only another black immigrant can actually see George, effectively an unnamed man; only another black immigrant can see himself reflected in another black immigrant.

Clarke’s glass city is a nod to the white North, represented here by an urban rather than a rural landscape. The lonely immigrant is in danger not by a cold, white wilderness of sublime proportions as in, for example, *Maria Chapdelaine* (1914), but by an unnatural metallic coldness; a distorting mirror that dislocates and fragments him. The natural world is associated with the homeland, whereas the artificial world, itself a comment on the act of immigration, is associated with the host land. When, for example, George contrasts Canada and the Caribbean, he does so by contrasting the urban and the rural: “He thinks of the flowers and the glass in that office and of the flowers more violent in colour, growing in wild profusion, untended, round *Edgehill House*, where he was born in

a smiling field of comfortable pasture land” (47). The natural disorder of his Barbadian home is humanized, infused with passion. The unnatural, or urban, order of Toronto, in contrast, is rendered inhuman. The natural/artificial binary also informs the feminization of Clarke’s glass city. According to George Elliott Clarke, in “his short fiction, Clarke agrees, tacitly, with [Jean] Baudrillard [in *Seduction*] that women, whiteness, and hence, white women symbolize attractive, glistening surfaces that can entrap and destroy the unwary, meaning, for Clarke, black male immigrants. Thus, Clarke considers the psychological threat posed to self-conscious blackness by the omnipresence of white-supremacist imagery in North American society” (116). Toronto is portrayed, rather stereotypically, as an ice queen, unyielding, impenetrable and unforgiving. Clarke’s feminized city is rendered impenetrable, infertile, cold, dispassionate, and, above all, unnatural. Rather conservatively, the story’s sexual politics juxtapose the whore/nurturer dichotomy onto a white/black racial template, perpetuating “the split between the love of the Mother country—a nearly incestuous desire for that country—versus lust for the stepmother, the new country, a passion expressed in terms of desire for material gain at any price” (G.E. Clarke 120).

The city as stepmother/whore is neither nurturing nor seductive. “She” consumes then expels her black immigrant. When, for example, George gets ready for his interview, he enters the shared bathroom in the rooming house:

Mist floated out of the bathroom door, and he brushed through it as if he were a man seeking passage through thick, white underbush. And as he got

inside and could barely see his way to the toilet bowl, there she was, with one leg on the cover of the bowl, which she had painted black, bending down, wiping the smell of the soap from between her legs and then the red, rough dots of bruises on the bottom of her spine, which she insisted were cold sores. (38-9)

Enveloped in the suffocating whiteness, George is confronted by Pat's white body. He is not seduced by her; he is repulsed by her. Her "cold sores" suggest sexual infection and, as orifices, unsatisfied appetite. The unnamed protagonist's misogyny points to his fear of being devoured by the sexualized white female body. His repulsion is further evident in his reaction to the bank. Riding up in the elevator, symbolic of an erection, he cannot penetrate the glass entrance to the bank. Consequently, he loses his erection. He descends below ground, defeated, emasculated as if castrated. The imagery of the ice queen, in contrast, is asexual. "She" simply consumes, digests, and expels the intruder: he travels "through the bowels of that glassed-in building!" (50), and is excreted to the underground where he sees people "coming up out of the subway at greater speed as if they are fleeing the smell of something unwholesome" (40). His function in her body fulfilled, her waste is promptly expelled from her insides.

The ramifications of representing Toronto as an ultimately "white city" bring into question whether the value of multiculturalism for a white society is its superficial (or "boutique") front that screens or masks its practice of retaining control over its economic centre. Herein is the underlying difference between Ondaatje's and Clarke's

representations of the immigrant city. Unlike the unskilled labour available to early white immigrants, the already built city offers little, if any, employment to the newly arrived black immigrant. Arriving “as a non-landed immigrant,” George in “Canadian Experience” is forced to live “in and out of low-paying jobs given specifically to non-landed immigrants” while waiting for amnesty (36). Lacking “Canadian Experience,” meaning a Canadian education or employment, the unnamed man can aspire to obtain other low-paying jobs that have been traditionally “black” occupations like “porters, bellhops and maids” which prevail “stereotypes to service positions” (Walker 8). His economic prospects are largely informed by the immigration policies that restricted West Indian immigrants into two main categories: domestics, for single women between the ages of 18 and 35 who could apply for landed-immigrant status after at least a year of domestic service (Walker 10), and students who could apply for landed-immigrant status upon graduating (Walker 11). A third possibility, evident in various stories, is the illegal immigrant who must survive in the city long enough to be eligible for amnesty.

Illegal activity in Clarke’s stories is closely connected to immigration but, unlike in Ondaatje’s novel, it is neither romanticized nor is it offered as a revolutionary tactic. Disillusioned with the Canadian system that inhibits his social and economic advancement, the ambitious green hornet in “Doing Right” dreams up and implements illegal schemes that victimize illegal West Indian immigrants. Taking advantage of their inability to call on the Canadian authorities for protection, the green hornet exploits the illegal immigrants who are already marginalized in the work force. Unlike the honorable

cause of worker's rights that Ondaatje's immigrants strive to attain by then illegal means, there is nothing honourable or heroic about the green hornet's illegal schemes that seek to advance not the West Indian's community's standard of living or profile but his own economic gain. Implicit in the story, however, is a revolutionary voice that condemns what George Elliott Clarke calls "a polite, right, *white-iste* caste system" (111) that keeps the black immigrant from economic and social advancement.

Clarke's revolutionary voice is most explicitly unveiled in "Coll. SS. Trins. Ap. Toron.—A Fable," a story that depicts the two strains available to the West Indian male student. Virtually indistinguishable at the outset, Boy Sonny and Sonny Boy arrive "frightened and cold" in 1955 to Trinity College since it "was the nearest they could get to a men's college in Oxford and Cambridge" (177). Sonny's assimilation into the white system grants him economic and social power, especially when he acts to maintain white power. His opinion "would percolate up to the leaders in Ottawa, as when he pointed out the need to restrict the number of black immigrants into Canada" (201). Rich but alone, Sonny's economic achievement is undermined by Boy's success. Finding himself in a hostile environment that disagrees with his "radical black consciousness" (196), Boy's eventual return to the Caribbean allows him to flourish as an activist and succeed in local and international politics. When the successful but nostalgic Sonny calls up Boy in Barbados, he finds that Boy has become the Prime Minister and is at that moment in Ottawa. Pointedly, the receptionist asks Sonny: "Mr. Boy, do you happen to know if it is possible for you to reach Ottawa from where you are?" (204). Geography aside, this

question privileges the black consciousness activist who refuses to assimilate and buy into the white system where political and social advancement is relative. Moreover, this question underscores the black immigrant's position in Toronto. Unable to reach Ottawa as an immigrant, it is the Barbadian politician who has acquired "Canadian experience" that can make a positive difference.

Nodding to Clarke's own activism, Ball similarly reads into Clarke's stories "[s]omething of the activist's desire to oppose unjust hierarchies, and to rally those whose case he or she advocates into militant self-respect" (10). As a self-respecting activist and writer, Clarke writes that he detests "the use of the term 'immigrant' to define the presence of these [nine] men upon the landscape of Toronto [...]" (Introduction 6). Clarke's antagonism questions whether the immigrant city is a deflective image that masks the "real" city of which immigrants are truly not a part. Yet, like Ondaatje, Clarke also universalizes the immigrant and the immigrant city by writing that the nine men "could also be in London, Paris, New York or Moscow. They happen to be in Toronto" (1), and that they "could be aboriginals, maoris, coloured, native peoples" (2). According to Ball, in spite of his "universalizing gesture" and his "act of translating Toronto into New York or one immigrant's story into a racially different immigrant's story [...]" Clarke's critical frame retains a degree of particularity—the minority immigrant in a majority-white city [...]" (11). As such, there appears to be little fundamental difference between Ondaatje's and Clarke's texts—whereas one focuses on class, the other focuses on race, but both focus on the unjust treatment of the city's immigrant minorities.

Although critical of the marginalization and exploitation of the early immigrants, Ondaatje's novel is celebrated by the very city it poetically rewrites. Awarded the Toronto Book Award, the Trillium Book Award, and the Wang International Festival Prize (Jewinski 125), and more recently the "Canada Reads" award on CBC, *In the Skin of a Lion* is nationally recognized as a tribute to Toronto—the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* hails *In the Skin of a Lion* "A love story to a city" (Ins.12-3). Ondaatje's national and international acclaim legitimizes his vision of the immigrant city.

Clarke's critical reception, comparatively, underscores the very discrimination that his stories address. It is telling that prior to Ondaatje's famous "immigrant novel" Clarke published a trilogy of novels (*The Meeting Point* [1967], *Storm of Fortune* [1973], and *The Bigger Light* [1975]) depicting Toronto as an immigrant city. According to interviewer Frank Birbalsingh, Clarke's immigrant trilogy represents "the best rendition of this city in fiction" (89). Situating Clarke's trilogy in the context of other notable literary but white representations of Toronto, Birbalsingh tells Clarke: "Margaret Atwood, Morley Callaghan and Hugh Garner have all written about Toronto, but neither they nor any other writer has produced as comprehensive and as vivid a portrait of Toronto as you have done. Callaghan doesn't even mention the city by name because he did not believe that in the 1920s and 1930s it had an identity different from other North American cities" (Clarke, "Austin" 100). Responding to Birbalsingh, Clarke notes that his self-representation as a West Indian writer in Canada, rather than as an assimilated Canadian writer, has much to do with the reception of his literary vision. Clarke states: "there has

never been in this country a book written by a West Indian or black that was accepted in the sense of being placed among others to represent the variegated fabric of the community. I think the explanation for that is very simple. Even though there are posturings of acceptance and understanding, there really is no serious attempt to recognize, even in a negative sense, that the West Indian is by now a part of the fabric of society” (100). More than two decades later, has the West Indian writer been integrated into the Canadian mosaic? Why is the historical saga of earlier (and whiter) immigrant labour authenticated but the more contemporary social and economic tribulations of West Indian immigrants in the city easily dismissed? Can both visions be reconciled and if so, do they reveal the “real” Toronto, the immigrant city?

Both Ondaatje’s and Clarke’s texts locate the immigrant as being simultaneously inside and outside the city. Inside the city, the immigrant is subjected to discrimination as well as social and economic marginalization. Moreover, the immigrant is kept outside the city’s centralized power. Although, as Ondaatje’s novel suggests, Toronto is infused with the immigrant spirit that builds it and is therefore an immigrant city, Clarke’s stories call attention to the limitations that the white immigrant city holds for the more recently arrived black immigrant. In his stories, Toronto can be understood as an immigrant city insofar as it is made out of refractive glass.⁸⁴ The glassed buildings that house the city’s

⁸⁴The glass metaphor does not necessarily suggest that the glass city is “white.” In his study of globalization, Pico Iyer romanticizes the unity of the multicultural city as “uniting all the fragments in a stained-glass whole” (25). The city, as the lead that holds the different glass fragments, is rendered not a participant character (or glass) but a vehicle of construction. Considering the limited utility of a stained-glass window, its image promotes an aestheticizing

economic centre protect that centre from unwanted immigrants at the same time that they reflect back the image of the surrounding, and growing, immigrant ghettos or “distinct neighbourhoods.” The glass city also mirrors the city’s multicultural contribution and utilizes multiculturalism to preach inclusiveness and promote an idealized version of a unified immigrant community. Calling attention to the fragility of this image, Clarke’s stories, in particular, question the role that multiculturalism itself plays in the mythologization of Toronto as *the* immigrant city. As in Ondaatje’s novel, Clarke’s stories inscribe the marginalized immigrant into the urban Canadian landscape, perpetuating his or her presence in a literary discourse that, like nostalgic photographs, functions to legitimize, question, acknowledge and even celebrate the immigrant contribution that has now marked Toronto as *the* multicultural city.

“boutique multiculturalism” that remains superficial. Moreover, for the whole window to hold, and for the stained glass pattern to emerge, order must be imposed. Herein lies the city’s function not as the lead holding together the different fragments but as the lead that solidifies the imposed order that segregates one colour from the next for the *beauty*, or *compositional unity*, of the whole.

PART II

4.5 American Multiculturalism

Given the inherent pluralist tenets that both the Canadian multicultural mosaic and the American melting-pot models hold, the “mosaic versus melting pot” draw provides an alluring contrast that could, potentially, settle niggling questions regarding more subtle differences of how both nations see, regulate, implement, and use immigration as a vehicle for nationalist myth-making. Yet, contrasting these two ideological analogies can be misleading insofar as what is being contrasted are the political ideologies of early twentieth-century America with those of late twentieth-century Canada. To assume that the melting pot has remained a static concept, that no ideological shifts have informed on-going debates over assimilation since its inception, is to ignore the impact that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the Feminist Movement of the 1970s have had on the American consciousness generally, and on immigration discourses specifically. As British anthropologist C. W. Watson argues, these movements were catalysts for the governmental awareness of a multicultural theory and philosophy that would eventually make “liberal Americans gradually underst[and] the importance of allowing all American citizens the space and opportunity to build a foundation for their self-respect on the bedrock of their own cultural traditions” (5).

Any movement that condemns the oppression of an individual based on her/his identity, and calls for every person’s constitutional rights, cannot but influence the way in which America comes to see its immigrants (those who have already arrived as well as

those seeking admission). Multiculturalism, read as an ideological movement of minority protest, has the potential of transforming the alien into a “person” by enforcing the idea that every person be given the right to maintain and practice her/his native culture(s). Consequently, these same means reinforce the native-alien binary by once again privileging nativism. In this case, however, the nativism being privileged is the alien’s, not the nation’s. By privileging all native cultures rather than one, it becomes even more imperative to elevate the alien’s status to personhood in order to deflect the person (native) versus alien (immigrant) binary. A “person” is defined, in part, by her/his citizenship. The Bill of Rights and the Constitution, for example, grant American *citizens* social and political rights. Since a legal immigrant has been accepted with the understanding and expectation that s/he will become a naturalized citizen once s/he has met and fulfilled all the necessary stipulations, s/he is also granted certain—but not all—rights. Immigration, then, is as much a social contract as it is a legal one entered into freely by both immigrant and nation. Since immigration is thus regarded as the means to an end rather than the end itself, the social contract is really about citizenship, not immigration.

Questions over what rights the immigrant, as a citizen-in-the-making or not-quite-citizen, can claim or should have are part of the driving force behind the continual legislative changes. Multiculturalism rhetorically ensures that the immigrant be granted “cultural rights” by calling for the naturalized citizen’s freedom to retain and/or practice her/his native culture(s). Since the waiting period for citizenship eligibility has been

benchmarked as the key period in which the immigrant is meant to assimilate, thereby assuring officials of her/his citizenship candidacy, if the immigrant no longer needs to fully assimilate culturally in order to attain citizenship (although some degree of cultural, linguistic, and certainly political assimilation is obviously still required or preferred), then the immigrant is implicitly granted the right to practice and retain her/his native culture prior to, and after, becoming a citizen. Hence, multiculturalism implicitly makes the alien into a person by granting her/him “cultural rights” prior to her/his officially becoming a person (a citizen). Multiculturalism thus proposes that national citizenship need not be equated with the national culture. In other words, “cultural rights” emphasize the separation of citizenship and culture, two apparently inseparable concepts and inextricable elements of national identity.

A more useful contrast between contemporary pluralist Canada and pluralist America need not then focus on the mosaic versus the melting pot, but in the way in which multiculturalism, as it pertains to immigration, operates in both countries in the latter part of the twentieth century. In his introduction to the critical anthology *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*, David Theo Goldberg argues that the “multicultural condition [...] cannot be reductively defined” (1), although multiculturalism “has been reduced to one or other of the competing components in a set of distorting contrasts: political doctrine or pervasive discourse, intellectual paradigm or philosophical episteme, pedagogical framework or ivory tower academic rhetoric, newly emergent institutional(ized) orthodoxy or radical critique” (1). Part of the difficulty in defining

multiculturalism stems, Peter Caws argues, from reading the multicultural as an “ism,” which, Goldberg notes, “reduces [it] to a formal singularity, fixing it into a cemented condition, the ideology of ‘political correctness’” (1). Similarly, Watson calls attention to the problematic term “culture,” which impedes any clear understanding of the term “multicultural.” According to him, the “question of what precisely constitutes a culture is generally begged in this usage—though, if pressed, those who use the phrase would probably speak of cultures as referring to a common language, a shared history, a shared set of religious beliefs and moral values, and a shared geographical origin, all of which taken together define a sense of belonging to a specific group. It is not very satisfactory as a definition [...]” (1). Theorist Raymond Williams, in his seminal works on culture (*Culture and Society* and *Keywords*), certainly agrees.

Williams reminds us that “culture, while it is being lived, is always in part unknown, in part unrealized” (*Culture* 334). It is precisely in the unknown and unrealized elements of every culture that fusion of or dialogue between multiple cultures can create the appearance of a new national culture that is made up of multiple parts. Because each culture is not static and completely known but constantly in the process of realizing itself, each individual culture that forms part of the multicultural cluster is anything but finite or static. Thus, the emergent multi-culture is continuously redefining itself not only because new cultures also begin taking part, but because each existing culture is itself in a constant state of flux. Reading multiculturalism as a national(ist) singular ideological paradigm, like a cluster or overarching umbrella composed of multiple elements, raises

critical questions: Should the study of multiculturalism focus on the unifying process (the cluster or umbrella)? Should it focus on the individual cultures, or on the points of conflation and resistance between these? Should the multicultural be read as a singular culture made up of different elements whose difference is emphasized rather than effaced? Has the national culture of an immigrant nation become a multicultural culture that now defines the national? Or, does the multicultural exist in relation (and even opposition) to the national?

Evidently, the meaning of the term changes when we accentuate any of its three main components—the “multi-,” the “-cultural-,” or the “-ism.” Still, some generalizations help to define a working definition of multiculturalism. Competing notions centre, on the one hand, on multiculturalism as an inclusive movement that emphasizes unity and tolerance, and, on the other, as a reactionary, separatist movement that emphasizes diversity as a form of attaining power. The melting pot constitutes an earlier version of multiculturalism by its pluralist, unifying nature, as does the mosaic. Both models focus on the unifying process, differing in the way in which individual components appear within the greater whole—either invisibly or visibly. The melting pot, however, cannot be read as a multicultural model if multiculturalism is understood to be a separatist movement. As Bruce King, examining the relationship between multiculturalism and black American separatist movements, explains, contemporary “claims of national uniqueness are being undermined by claims for a multicultural nation which in some forms seems to mean a coalition of micro-separatist separatisms rather

than difference within assimilation” (17). According to King, there “are several possible reasons for an aggressive separatism. One is rejection; the rejected reethnicize. A second reason is that separatism provides a power base in ethnic or tribal politics. Separatism is also a kind of micro-nationalism which in some situations might find expression in a nation or region. A fourth reason is that as assimilation becomes successful it threatens identity and a sense of difference” (17). Not surprisingly, the melting pot is often dismissed as an antiquated notion that is no longer true or even desirable.

Symbolically, by the time of “the ‘multicultural decade’ of the 1980s in the United States” (Goldberg 29), the melting pot had already lost its currency. Watson calls attention to the emergent analogy of the “salad bowl,” seeking to replace the melting pot, and writes: “In the bowl different constituents retain their distinctive flavours and forms but the dish as a whole is recognizably *sui generis*, having its own distinctive character as a result of its unique blending. Culinary metaphors can, however, be taken too far, and there is a potentially disturbing dimension to the thought of social groups being tossed around like salad ingredients by governments simply concerned with flavours” (4). Unlike the melting pot analogy, which philosophically constructs a new, morally superior, national people and culture made up of the mass immigrant influx, the salad bowl, as defined by Watson, lacks philosophical depth. At best, it can be read as a unifying multicultural paradigm that celebrates the metaphorical colour and flavour of its various ingredients, tossed together to create the illusion of unity while granting individual autonomy; at worst, salad bowl multiculturalism has much in common with Stanley

Fish's understanding of "boutique multiculturalism," the multiculturalism of bourgeois consumption. If the multiple cultures are the ingredients, who eats the salad?

Multiculturalism in America is an amorphous concept that informs competing notions of immigrant identity. One of its most intriguing aspects, however, is its ability to make old arguments new. Rather than focusing on the "immigrant," multiculturalism focuses on the immigrant's "culture," a less threatening and more alluring concept that is equally (if not more) difficult to place, define, and understand. Amritjit Singh, for example, celebrates the "new models of assimilation and hybridization beyond the 'melting pot' metaphor that dominated the scene until the 1960s" (218), arguing that these

radically new approaches to immigration and ethnic diversity—suggested by the frequent use of such phrases as "mosaic," "descent" and "consent," "kaleidoscope," "salad bowl," "double consciousness," and "multiculturalism"—have opened new spaces for self-definition for most new Americans. Now that these approaches have become part of the public discourse in North America, it is no longer possible to insist on treating immigrants and the cultures they bring with them as inevitable sacrificial lambs on the altar of a real or illusory American Dream. (218-19)

As Singh's perceptions suggest, multiculturalism offers the incoming immigrant a vehicle with which to prove, as it were, her/his worth to America by virtue of contributing a new

culture. Rather than devaluing the immigrant's native culture(s), which Singh argues is the price, or sacrifice, of immigration, the celebration of that new culture and its inception suggests that the immigrant be seen as a valuable commodity entering the cultural market. Reading the immigrant as the provider of a valuable contribution that enables America to become continuously unique, and in the age of globalization increasingly cosmopolitan, is in keeping with earlier understandings of the desirable immigrant who, rather than leeching off the nation contributes to the remaking of the nation by feeding (into) the nation. This is hardly a "new" vision or understanding of who the immigrant is or what s/he ought to be. On the contrary, the earliest pro-immigration debates saw fit to recruit immigrants *because* they were seen as valuable necessities that could contribute to the making of the nation. Later competing pro-immigration arguments couched in the liberal or democratic rhetoric that America be seen as a haven for destitute people argued that it was America's moral obligation to aid said peoples, effectively altering the definition of the immigrant to that of a "refugee." While this proved to be an effective means of allowing undesirable immigrants in, and foregrounded a discourse with which to implement refugee policy, it also obscured the image of the immigrant as a vitally valuable necessity. In economic terms, the immigrant came to be seen as an abundant supply to a relatively small demand rather than as a desired supply to an overwhelming demand.

4.6 “Watch me reposition the stars”: Immigrant Agency in Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine*

The Clothesline

was the first they repaired. The Indian couple, recently arrived. The husband winched the rigging that sagged to the ground. Now each day they wash billows in its kaleidoscopic charm: yellow T-shirts, red blouses, white shorts and blue saris that banner like flags for their new life. The New World held together by an anachronism: a long looped cord bicycling two runneled wheels which honk whenever the line is launched. *Launched*. The word itself a reminder of a long voyage by steerage (clothes begrimed and foul from the stay belowdeck); or how yanking on a line surging with laundry is like luffing a recalcitrant sail to pocket the wind blowing westward; its sea-roar.

—Carmine Starnino, *Credo*

Bharati Mukherjee’s fiction and public comments on immigration and multiculturalism raise critical questions. Her advocacy of assimilation rather than separatism in her fiction appears to conform to the melting pot model of assimilation. Her use of multiculturalism in her fiction, however, suggests otherwise. If Mukherjee’s assimilation suggests a new model, it partially does so out of necessity. As Gönül Pultar questions, “now that the melting pot is not any more imperative, [is it] even feasible?” (52). For Pultar, “the key concept for immigrants, as well as any engagement with fiction on immigrants, will be the magical word ‘hybrid,’ not ‘melting pot’ or ‘assimilation’ anymore. Israel Zangwill’s play has become outdated” (54). Hence, it is not surprising

that when Mukherjee's fiction advocates assimilation as a desirable and viable option for her immigrants, she does not recreate the melting pot, which she sees as a "failed nineteenth-century model" ("Beyond" 459). Neither does she promote a version of the Canadian multicultural mosaic. As Susan Koshy notes, it "frequently appears as if Mukherjee's celebration of assimilation in the United States is written from her bitter disillusionment with the implied racism of the official Canadian multicultural policy of the mosaic" (144). Instead, Mukherjee envisions "a new *consensual* community of 'we'" ("Beyond" 458) that, unlike its predecessor, succeeds by "re-forming, transmogrifying [the now inclusive] 'we'" ("Beyond" 459). Geraldine Stoneham, however, argues that "Mukherjee fails to acknowledge the power of the pedagogic identity, 'the People', and the investment that there is within the discourse of nation in maintaining it" ("It's" 89). Yet, as she contends, the "freedom to appropriate the language of 'us' is the freedom of America" (90). Rather than imposing an assimilation model on America, Mukherjee draws on the language of American democracy to redefine "us," and therefore the "People." By partaking of the freedom to appropriate said language, she is reinscribing an assimilation strategy by operating within the centre's civic discourse and regulations. As Andrea Dlaska argues, the "American constitution and the mythology of the American Dream allow her to think of herself as an American, to settle in and to stake her claim in the United States" (7).

Like Zangwill's melting pot, Mukherjee's consensual community embodies a process of on-going transformation, as her following statement makes clear: "As a writer,

my literary agenda begins by acknowledging that America has transformed *me*. It does not end until I show that I (and the hundreds of thousands of recent immigrants like me) am minute by minute transforming America. The transformation is a two-way process; it affects both the individual and the national cultural identity. The end result of immigration, then, is this two-way transformation” (“Beyond” 461). Unlike Zangwill’s model, however, Mukherjee’s assimilation extends to, indeed focuses on, non-European immigrants previously deemed undesirable precisely because they were thought to be unassimilable. Her vision does not assume that there be an end when an ideal “American” emerges from the divine crucible. As Carmen Wickramagamage rightly notes, in “America, the process of Americanization is itself presented as a rebirth; the immigrant enters the crucible of American culture and reemerges a new person: the American. But it is a one-time conversion; the process leads to the formation of *the* ‘American.’ Jasmine, however, thinks of rebirth in multiple terms. Her Americanization appears as an unceasing transformation and her American subjectivity as amoeba-like entity able to reconstitute itself according to the demands of the situation she finds herself in” (81). For Mukherjee, the process, much like Williams’ living culture, never completes but is always in a state of becoming; there is no singular transformation but a process of ongoing transformations.

Nor does her vision require that Old World grievances and negative qualities evaporate during the melting process. Her concept of transformation does not need an ethical *raison d’être*, and should therefore not be read as a purification process. On the

contrary, as *Jasmine* suggests, even the immigrant's negative traits and undesirable cultural baggage are necessary, and, like it or not, part of what makes America the ever-changing nation it has come to be—even if it has been corrupted and differs from the idyllic wonderland the immigrant desires. But when has it not? The key difference in Mukherjee's vision is that hers is ultimately individualist rather than communally oriented—hence Stoneham's Marxist critique. Mukherjee grants her individual immigrants the power of transformation by endowing them with the power to choose—even if that choice privileges them over a community. Necessarily individualist, Mukherjee's championing of the individual over her alleged (native) community privileges the greater American consensual community over that of the insular, fragmentary, and often reactionary subgroups (or subcultures) within the greater whole. Granting her immigrants agency is the most subversive element of her vision. This is a political strategy. As Dlasaka notes, Mukherjee seeks “to look at the word immigrant in a new way, seeing it not as a sad little person” (14).⁸⁵ If the immigrant opts to accept what Mukherjee envisions as the inevitable transformation, she does so with knowledge and can therefore direct, to an extent, the process and even the outcome. Separately, this relationship suggests, neither America nor the immigrant is capable of transforming themselves. It is their interaction that makes both their transformations possible.

⁸⁵Mukherjee's statement is taken from her address at the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1988, which she won for *The Middleman and Other Stories*, the collection that includes her short story “Jasmine,” on which her novel is based. According to Dlasaka, Mukherjee “proudly referred to the huge reader response to the collection, which included calls from senators” who redefined their understanding of the term “immigrant” (14).

Mukherjee's fiction also demands that there be a unifying element that ultimately assimilates, or rather transforms, previously deemed non-assimilable immigrants into the American mainstream. For Mukherjee, that unifying eddy is not cultural but political. Drawing on the American Bill of Rights and the Constitution, which are available "to *all* its citizens[,]" she wants "nothing less than to invent a new vocabulary that demands, and obtains, an equitable power-sharing for all members of the American community" ("Beyond" 460). Couched in the rhetoric of minority-rights movements, Mukherjee's vision of assimilation challenges the ideology or limitations of the melting pot by proving, on the one hand, that Asian immigrants *can* and *should* assimilate, and, on the other, that assimilation is not an ethical act; it is a pragmatic necessity, an eventuality. Unlike Zangwill's vision of an idyllic New World, produced by the melting pot's alchemy, Mukherjee's consensual community celebrates neither past nor future but the ongoing transformations that make possible the immigrant's and the nation's continual self-inventions. Hers is not the desire nor the vision to produce a morally superior national race (and culture); hers is the desire and vision to maximize the power of transformation for its own creative sake.

Mukherjee's admonition of transformation is, at the very least, bicultural; it is "American" as much as it is "Indian." As Dijkstra notes, Mukherjee employs Walt Whitman's "pan-American ethos [...] in some of her theoretical writing" (9). In *Jasmine*, this ethos is evident in Jasmine's perception of America: "A sanctuary transformed into a

hotel; hell into paradise—to me this seems very American” (*Jasmine* 138).⁸⁶ Yet, as Daska also argues, the transformations of self that Jasmine undergoes are more in keeping with “the Hindu concept of reincarnation” (126). Jasmine is continuously transforming: from village-girl Jyoti to cosmopolitan wife Jasmine; from illegal naive alien to initiated, vengeful Kali; from adventurous and fun-loving Jase to dependable and plain Jane.⁸⁷ Her most significant transformation, however, is, as Pultar argues, from illegal to legal immigrant; her “self-development is to ‘become’ an immigrant in the United States” (47). As Stoneham notes, this transformation radicalizes Jasmine “from victim to agent” (“Dislocations” 242). The novel ends with a potential new self-transformation, but calls attention to Jasmine’s inability to shed any of her previous selves. Each transformation, therefore, embodies her multiple interconnected selves: “In the white lamplight, ghosts float toward me. Jane, Jasmine, Jyoti” (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 21). From the moment of her first transformation, from Jyoti into Jasmine, she “shuttle[s] between identities” (77); adapting to her new inter-connected identities, she feels “suspended between worlds” (76). Symbolically, although each identity appears to be cohesive, the movement in and out of each identity, as the relationship between identities, is fluid: “Jyoti of Hasnapur was not Jasmine, Duff’s day mummy and Taylor and Wylie’s

⁸⁶Conversely, Jasmine’s vision of America is, at times, more in keeping with T.S. Eliot’s wasteland: “In America, nothing lasts. [...] We arrive so eager to learn, to adjust, to participate, only to find the monuments are plastic, agreements are annulled. Nothing is forever, nothing is so terrible, or so wonderful, that it won’t disintegrate” (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 181).

⁸⁷Although, significantly, this is her one identity that, unlike the others, does not fully gel, as Jasmine states: “In Baden, I am Jane. Almost” (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 26).

au pair in Manhattan; *that* Jasmine isn't *this* Jane Ripplemeyer having lunch with Mary Webb at the University Club today. And which of us is the undetected murderer of a half-faced monster, which of us has held a dying husband, which of us was raped and raped and raped in boats and cars and motel rooms?" (127). Jasmine, as C.L. Chua notes, metonymically voices the immigrant condition: frequently, "the immigrant only ends up being exploited and victimized, deracinated and *dépaysé*, neither here nor there" (60). Hence, it is possible to read Jasmine as Deepika Bhari does; as "only the simulacrum of the migrant subject, endlessly replicated in the scores of boat people, stowaways, and legal and illegal immigrants" (145). Jasmine's schizophrenia (following Deleuze and Guattari) suggests that her identity be read as a model of deterritorialized multiplicity; beyond her being representative of *all* immigrants, she becomes a metaphor for immigrant multiculturalism. Although each individual self manifests itself as being different from the others, and thereby appears as a culturally different cohesive shell, the fluid movement in and out of her various identities is not meant to be interpreted as her loss of identity. Instead, her shifting in and out of old and new identities emphasizes the assimilation of all identities into one, undefinable, multiple self capable of showcasing a particular identity as well as of adopting and engineering new ones.⁸⁸

Mukherjee's use of multiculturalism in her immigrant fiction has much in common with her titular character, a single paradigm embodying multiple, seemingly

⁸⁸For the purpose of clarity, I will be referring to this character as Jasmine throughout this section, unless she is specifically identified in another identity (Jyoti, Jase, or Jane).

separate and distinct, inter-connected elements. As such, it appears to have much in common with the Canadian model, since the multicultural mosaic is most often conceived as a single canvas (or window) unifying the various inter-connected yet different tiles (or panes). Mukherjee's vision rejects the mosaic on the basis of its exclusiveness rather than inclusiveness as well as its official status which, she contends, institutionalizes racism. The newer immigrant cannot reach the already formed centre; s/he is relegated to the margins if s/he wants to join the already formed mosaic. The shape thus defines the place of the newer immigrants, making it impossible to redefine the centre (and therefore the whole as defined by the power relations between centre and margins). The most radical disruption, to replace the existing centre with a newer set of tiles, merely replicates the existent power-relations, thereby challenging the *who* rather than the system as a whole. "“Multiculturalism,”" Mukherjee argues, "implies a contiguity of self-sufficient, utterly distinct cultures. [... It] has come to imply the existence of a central culture, ringed by peripheral cultures. The sinister fallout of official multiculturalism and of professional multiculturalists is the establishment of one culture as the norm and the rest as aberrations" ("Beyond" 459). In her opinion, "Canada is a country that officially—and proudly—resists the policy and process of cultural fusion. For all its smug rhetoric about 'cultural mosaic,' Canada refuses to renovate its national self-image to include its changing complexion. It is a New World country with Old World concepts of a fixed, exclusivist national identity." ("Beyond" 457).

For Mukherjee, Canada's "Old World concepts" result from its history as part of

the Commonwealth. Unlike the United States, Mukherjee notes, throughout “the seventies when [she] lived there, [Canada] was a country without a Bill of Rights or its own Constitution” (“Beyond” 457). She sees herself as a “well-bred post-colonial [... in Canada], adrift in the new world, wondering if [she] would ever belong” (Introduction 2), but her immigrant experience is largely determined by her becoming a postcolonial subject. For her, the border between the United States and Canada is not inconsequential. She tells interviewer Beverly Byers-Pevitts that her “love of America is really [her] rebellion against British colonialism. It is a liberation from structure. Because we don’t have that same direct history between India and the U.S. as India does with Britain” (193). In contrast, in her interview with *The Iowa Review*, she explains that “moving to Canada was like going to England [where she attended school at age eight (9)], a step backward to an old world, a hierarchical society” (11). Her husband, fellow writer Clarke Blaise, concedes that his and Mukherjee’s move to Canada was his “imperialism, totally” (11), which she resisted. Recalling their immigration North, she states: “I would never have gone. I cried as I was crossing the border” (*Iowa* in Blaise 11). For Mukherjee, Canada *was* England.⁸⁹

Mukherjee’s experiences of immigration in Canada must therefore be situated within a postcolonial framework. Ironically, Peter Nazareth notes, Mukherjee became “a

⁸⁹It is not clear what Mukherjee’s perceptions of Canada are now, since her writings about differences between Canada and the United States deal specifically with the Canada she lived in during the 1970s. Her comments imply that not much has changed since then; that the mosaic continues to be an oppressive structure that emphasizes difference as a means of making, and retaining, multiple “visible minorities” in opposition to a colonial(ist) English mainstream.

Canadian citizen before her husband: the waiting period for Commonwealth citizens, which she was as an Indian, was shorter than for American citizens, which he was as somebody born in the U.S. though of [French-]Canadian parents” (184). In spite of her apparent privilege in Canada as a Commonwealth citizen, however, Mukherjee writes in her introduction to *Darkness*, that in “the years that [she] spent in Canada—1966 to 1980—[she] discovered that the country is hostile to its citizens who had been born in hot, moist continents like Asia” (Introduction 2). Five years later, in her interview with *The Iowa Review*, she elaborates: “You never got the benefit of the doubt, if you were a Canadian citizen of Indian or South Asian origin” (12). Over a decade after the publication of *Darkness*, writing about multiculturalism in America, Mukherjee reveals the political skepticism that used, rather than believed in, the mosaic. She recalls that in “private conversations, some Canadian ambassadors and External Affairs officials have admitted to [her] that the creation of the Ministry of Multiculturalism in the seventies was less an instrument for cultural tolerance, and more a vote-getting strategy to pacify ethnic European constituents who were alienated by the rise of Quebec separatism and the simultaneous increase of non-white immigrants” (“Beyond” 457). These revelations and experiences influenced Mukherjee and her writing; she writes that the “years of race-related harassments in Canada without a Constitution have politicized [her], and deepened [her] love of the ideals embedded in the American Bill of Rights” (“Beyond” 457). Her transformation from “the politicized, shrill, civil rights activist [she] was in Canada” into “the urgent writer that [she has] become in the last few years in the United

States” (Interview, *Iowa* 18), has been critically contextualized as her transformation from an expatriate in Canada into an immigrant in the United States—a transformation that she profiles in her introduction to *Darkness*.⁹⁰

For Mukherjee, “immigrants” in Canada were “lost souls, put upon and pathetic. Expatriates, on the other hand, knew all too well who and what they were, and what foul fate had befallen them” (Introduction 1-2). America, in contrast, “represented a kind of glitziness—as in *Jasmine*—a chance for romantic reincarnation” (Interview, *Iowa* 11). She tells Geoff Hancock that “[m]oving out of Canada gave [her] back [her] voice. The last seven years or so in Canada [she] felt [she] was constantly being forced to see [herself] as part of an unwanted ‘visible minority’” (42). No longer seeing herself as a postcolonial subject, as she did as an expatriate in Canada, and having comfortably accepted her Indianness as “a metaphor, a particular way of partially comprehending the world” (3), Mukherjee sees herself “as an American writer in the tradition of other American writers whose parents or grandparents had passed through Ellis Island” (3). Visualizing herself as part of an immigrant tradition in America of which other diasporas are also a part, she concludes that the book she dreams “of updating is no longer *A Passage to India*—it’s *Call It Sleep*” (3). Interestingly, Mukherjee positions *Jasmine* in

⁹⁰*Darkness* is undoubtedly Mukherjee’s pivotal collection of short stories. Although eight of the twelve stories were written in Atlanta, Georgia, four were written in Montreal and Toronto. Noting the effect that the change in place (and country) had on these stories and on her writing, she notes that the “purely ‘Canadian’ stories in this collection were difficult to write and even more painful to live through. They are uneasy stories about expatriation” (Introduction 2); whereas the stories written in (and about) America convey the “exuberance of immigration” (Introduction 3).

the European immigrant literary tradition by rhetorically rendering Jasmine an illegal alien whose necessary voyage from India to America must be the route “the least detected” (99). Jasmine’s illegal journey becomes an international odyssey of demarcation in which she becomes a disoriented, deterritorialized border-crosser: “What country? What continent? We pass through wars, through plagues. I am hungry for news, but the discarded papers are in characters or languages I cannot read. [...] I phantom my way through three continents” (101). Her phantom journey is poetically placeless and timeless. Allying herself with other ghost-like illegal immigrants, she states: “We are the outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks where we are roughly handled and taken to roped-off corners of waiting rooms where surly, barely wakened customs guards await their bribe” (101).⁹¹

Eventually, however, Jasmine identifies her arrival to Europe, naming first Hamburg then Amsterdam, from where she departs for America: “On the trawler out of Europe we slept in tiered bunks. In the New World, on a shrimper out of Grand Cayman called *The Gulf Shuttle*, four of us bound for the Gulf Coast of Florida slept under the tarp. You learn to roll with the waves and hold the vomit in” (104). From ambiguity to specificity, Jasmine’s transatlantic voyage is meant to be recognized as part of the

⁹¹It should be noted that these illegal immigrants, though nameless, are represented as a multicultural abstraction: “We are dressed in shreds of national costumes, out of season, the wilted plumage of intercontinental vagabondage. We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue” (101).

American literary consciousness. Consider, for example, the opening passage of *Call It Sleep*'s prologue:

The small white steamer, Peter Stuyvesant, that delivered the immigrants from the stench and throb of the steerage to the stench and throb of New York tenements, rolled slightly on the water beside the stone quay in the lee of the weathered barracks and new brick buildings of Ellis Island. Her skipper was waiting for the last of the officials, laborers and guards to embark upon her before he cast off and started for Manhattan. Since this was Saturday afternoon and this the last trip she would make for the weekend, those left behind might have to stay over till Monday. Her whistle bellowed its hoarse warning. A few figures in overalls sauntered from the high doors of the immigration quarters and down the grey pavement that led to the dock. (9)

Jasmine's journey may not take place aboard a steamer's steerage, but it certainly conforms to the tales of destitute immigrants seeking legal and illegal entry. She may be spared the official tribulations of legal entry, but is forced to endure those allowed by illegal trade. Although she is not left in limbo over the weekend, she is nevertheless abandoned in an equally desolate and isolated landscape. Her story, although different from those of the European immigrants, is therefore meant to be recognized; it is familiar.

Yet, as Stoneham notes, although "Mukherjee locates herself as a writer in the tradition of U.S. immigrant writing [...] she [also] explicitly sets herself apart from the

‘traditional’ immigrant” (“It’s” 84). Unlike the European immigrants, “rather crudely sketched as ‘the hollow-eyed and sunken cheeked’, ‘the black-scarfed babushkas’” (“It’s” 84), who arrived at Ellis Island, Jasmine’s arrival to America is almost inconsequential. As, rather stereotypically, “America carome[s] off the horizon” in the “pinkering black of pre-dawn” (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 107), Jasmine is greeted not by the Statue of Liberty but by the skyline of an industrial wasteland. Jasmine recalls:

The first thing I saw were the two cones of a nuclear plant, and smoke spreading from them in complicated but seemingly purposeful patterns, edges lit by the rising sun, like a gray, intricate map of an unexplored island continent, against the pale unscratched blue of the sky. I waded through Eden’s waste: plastic bottles, floating oranges, boards, sodden boxes, white and green plastic sacks tied shut but picked open by birds and pulled apart by crabs.

In a clearing by the cove, white men with sneering faces waited in panel trucks with engines running to transport us to points south and north.
(107)

Symbolically, Jasmine’s arrival places her at a moment before freedom and equality become American symbols. The “black pre-dawn” and the “unexplored island continent” paint America as a primitive land on the brim of becoming civilized.⁹² Contradictorily,

⁹²There is a nod here to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Rather than using the African continent as a metaphor for Britain, Mukherjee inverts the strategy by positioning

“Eden’s waste” suggests that the primitive, virginal land is in its post-dawn era; America has deteriorated and already had its golden age. Jasmine’s desire to arrive at the moment of the making of America is challenged by the disappointing reality. Nostalgic for the ‘authentic immigrant experience,’ she fears she has “come to America too late. [She] felt cheated” (139).

Even though Mukherjee positions herself as an American writer specifically writing in the tradition of earlier European immigrant writers in the United States, like Henry Roth, she tells Byers-Pevitts that, in 1985, when she was trying to publish *Darkness*, “it was too early in the history of U.S. publishing for a book about non-European communities, so the U.S. publishers said, ‘It was a marvelous book, but we are not going to be able to sell it because no one wants to read multi-cultural fiction’” (194). Equating multiculturalism with non-white immigrant minorities, the American publisher’s response is no different from the Canadian multiculturalism that Mukherjee, like Austin Clarke, responds to. More interesting still is the publisher’s reluctance to publish the collection because, as Mukherjee recalls in her interview with *The Iowa Review*, they wondered “who was going to read about immigrants? [...] The ‘I’ word was

instead the American continent as a metaphor for Asia. The substantial parallels between the Punjab and the United States facilitates her inversion. As Kristin Carter-Sanborn rightly notes, the “America [Jasmine] encounters is, in its endemic violence, not unlike the Punjab she left behind. Indeed, the latest influx of immigrants to the United States has transformed it” (574). Critics like Anindyo Roy, Alpana Sharma Knippling, Janet M. Powers, Anu Aneja, Suzanne Kehde, Wickramagamage, Stoneham, and Bhari have shown, *Jasmine* also lends itself to a postcolonial reading. Mukherjee’s “double consciousness” surfaces in various key moments, especially in her use of such allusions to English literature as Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*, and George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion*.

a bad word in 1984-85” (28). Given the centrality of the immigrant literary tradition in America that Mukherjee wants to be a part of, such dismissal points to two possibilities: either America is no longer concerned with immigration in the 1980s, or the publisher’s reluctance reveals racism. Clearly, Mukherjee acknowledges the latter when she asserts: “people did not want to know about this particular minority. There were fashionable minorities, and unfashionable minorities” (28). As Chua further notes, she is aware that America is ““violent, mindlessly macho, conformist, lawless.... No dark-skinned person has the right to feel comfortable inside American history. Yet I do”” (Mukherjee in Chua 56). It is therefore interesting that Mukherjee, who has so publicly and militantly challenged the racist exclusionism of the Canadian multicultural policy, appears to be much less critical of the American unofficial counterpart.

Mukherjee’s critique of American exclusion, as voiced in *Jasmine*, is much more subtle since it specifically targets the nation’s (mis)treatment of the illegal alien (particularly Mexicans)—an identity and experience that is truly alien to Mukherjee’s own. Crafting a compelling story about an individual illegal immigrant from Asia allows Mukherjee to critique America without directly engaging in on-going debates about “fashionable” illegals. For example, Jasmine’s arrival in America recreates the European immigrants’ transatlantic journey, but the location and circumstances of her arrival also suggest Cuban illegal immigrants seeking refuge on Florida shores. Given ardent anti-Cuban sentiments, the increase of Cuban refugees or “boat people” during the 1980s and 1990s, American xenophobia, and the general fear of illegal invasions since the 1950s, it

is not a stretch to think that American readers would not have been overly sympathetic to Jasmine had she been a Cuban illegal alien.⁹³ In Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, the illegal Asian girl who arrives on American soil is not seeking refuge, a better life, or even pursuing the American Dream. She simply seeks to complete her idyllic vision; as Wickramagamage puts it, "America appears reduced in Jasmine's eyes to the size of a cremation ground on which she would go through the motions of *sati puja* in order to signify the extent of her love and devotion to her husband" (72). This is hardly the image of a threatening or dangerous force.

Jasmine is a lone participant, powerless in the world of trafficking illegal aliens, who is victimized by the seedy underside of America. Jasmine can therefore offer a different perspective on America to Bud, who as Pultar argues, "becomes an invalid, an apt symbol for America" (53). Jasmine sees the "half-built, half-deserted cinder-block structures at the edge of town, with mud-spattered deserted cars parked in an uncleared lot, and [...] wonder[s], Who's inside? What are they doing? Who's hiding? Empty swimming pools and plywood panels in the window frames grip [her] guts. And Bud frowns because unproductive projects give him pain" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 109). By giving the individual illegal alien a voice and agency, Mukherjee challenges America to

⁹³Christina Garcia, in *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), carefully and skillfully interweaves the different political perspectives of her Cuban characters by granting her immigrant, Lourdes, the role of the assimilationist American patriot. In contrast, Celia, the ardent Fidelista matriarch, refuses to leave Cuba. Garcia's strategies are necessarily different from Mukherjee's, and use Pilar, Lourdes' daughter and Celia's granddaughter, as the vehicle with which to come to terms with both political extremes (in favour of America and immigration to America).

personalize the unseen masses of illegal aliens and give each a story not unlike Jasmine's. Pragmatically, Jasmine asks that America reconsider the contribution that each illegal alien can make. When, for example, she identifies the Mexican illegal aliens with whom America is all too well acquainted, she humourously calls attention to the illegal alien's paralysis. In Baden, Iowa, Jane and Bud's friends and neighbours, Gene and Carol Lutz, dine at a Mexican restaurant when Gene chokes "to death on a piece of Mexican food. He was so heavy Carol couldn't lift him to do the Heimlich maneuver. The waiters were all illegals who went into hiding as soon as the police were called" (8). For Jasmine, the illegal aliens' inability to act—to save a life—because of the consequences of being found is truly indicative of the American wasteland, of a disabled America. Later in the novel, Jasmine notes that humour is "the hardest thing to translate" (168). Indeed it may be, but in this case it is an effective strategy that challenges deeply rooted prejudices in order to effect social change. She is not humanizing the nameless, faceless waiters who run for cover; she is calling attention to the pragmatic nuisance that illegal-alien status poses on a daily basis.

Mukherjee more explicitly charges the American attitude toward its illegal aliens by introducing the figure of a "saviour," Lillian Gordon, "a kind Quaker lady who rescue[s Jasmine] from a dirt trail about three miles east of Fowlers Key, Florida" (127). Jasmine is dismayed when she hears that her saviour is "busted [...]" for harboring undocumented, *exploiting* them (the prosecution said) for free cooking, cleaning, and yard work" (136). More disappointing still is the crashing of Wylie's project, "a made-

for-TV movie” entitled “*An American Kind of Saint*, the Lillian Gordon story,” because of low demographics; “[p]eople were getting a little scared of immigrants and positively hostile to illegals” (137). Mukherjee’s personalizing of Lillian Gordon leads the reader to question the news headlines, to imagine the “real” story behind the anti-illegal alien stories covered in the media. Jasmine also challenges the reader to sympathize with the everyday difficulties of being an undocumented alien in America. Throughout the novel, Jasmine lives in fear of the INS, of being identified as an illegal alien to be deported. To her, “a green card was freedom” (149). Even in her safe haven in Baden she does not “get or send out much mail, [she] rip[s her]self free of the past. Why leave a paper trail for the INS to track?” (208). Jasmine’s sensitivity allows her to provide a testimonial commentary that runs parallel to other examples of illegal alien activity. When, for example, she watches a documentary on illegal aliens with her and Bud’s adopted Vietnamese son, Du Thien, she states:

There were only two Mexicans in the shed. They ducked behind a chaise lounge that was only half-webbed. One minute they were squatting on the floor webbing lawn furniture at some insane wage—I know, I’ve been there—and the next they were spread-eagled on the floor. The INS fellow wouldn’t uncuff him long enough for him to wipe the muck off his face.

I thought I heard Du mutter, “Asshole.” And I realized I didn’t know who were the assholes, the cowboys or the Indians.

A woman in a flowered dress said, “I don’t think they’re bad

people, you know. It's just that there's too many of them." (27)

Jasmine's response, "[w]ho's the victim here?" (27), is an attempt to force America to reevaluate its characterization and understanding of illegal aliens. By giving herself as an example, she debunks the myth that the "'border's like Swiss cheese and all the mice are squirming through the holes.' So they got two. Which meant that there had to be scores more who scampered away at the start of the raid" (28). As her illegal experience indicates, a cargo need not contain hordes of aliens but only four; moreover, these need not be Mexicans crossing the border but Asians, Caribbeans, and Belizeans arriving on shore. Ultimately, the relationship between America and the illegal alien need not be that of the frontier; it need not recreate the still ongoing Cowboys and Indians game.

The most interesting use of the illegal alien is to provide the helpless and victimized Jasmine with the means of defending herself. Not unlike Zangwill's play, in which David must confront the validity of his visionary crucible by loving the daughter of the butcher from the pogrom that kills his parents, Jasmine is confronted by the sudden appearance of her native enemy, Sukhwinder, the Sikh (Lion) terrorist whose bombing of "the fanciest sari shop in the bazaar" inadvertently kills Jasmine's husband, Prakash (92). Jasmine recalls that as "Sukkhie guns the motor," he shouts: "Prostitutes! Whores!" (93). The effect that these words has on Jasmine is as strong as the effect of Prakash's sudden death; Jasmine laments: "I failed you. I didn't get there soon enough. The bomb was meant for me, prostitute, whore" (93). Hence, when she sees Sukhwinder in a park in New York City, Jasmine fears that Sukhwinder will kill Taylor or Duff "to get at [her]"

(189). She feels “filthy, having been observed, tracked, by Sukhwinder” (189), and chooses to leave Taylor and Duff for Iowa, where she believes she will be safe from his grasp. Her choice is not random. Having identified Duff as the closet American that conforms to what her vision of the “real American” allows, it is not surprising that she naturalizes Iowa as the “real America.”⁹⁴

Prior to leaving New York, Jasmine tries to make Taylor understand the extent of her fear: “Don’t you see [...]? I’m illegal here, he knows that. I can’t come out and challenge him. I’m very exposed [...]” (189). Rhetorically, Jasmine intuitively understands that Sukhwinder shares her fear as she presumes that he, like her, is also in the United States illegally. Claiming that she does not “seek to forgive,” and she has “long let go of [her] plans for revenge,” she states: “I have even written an anonymous letter to the INS, suggesting that they look into the status of a certain Sukhwinder Singh, who pushes a hot-dog cart in New York City. Goodness and evil square off every moment. Forgiveness implies belief in an ultimate triumph. I dream only of neutralizing harm, not absolute and permanent conquest” (203). Choosing, like Zangwill’s David, not to perpetuate Old World grievances in America, she nevertheless uses the American

⁹⁴Extra-textually, however, Mukherjee’s choice calls attention to her personal relationship with Iowa, as her first taste of America. Attending creative writing school at the University of Iowa, falling in love and marrying Blaise, Iowa may be Mukherjee’s idyllic America. Iowa’s mid-west also fits with Mukherjee’s vision of herself: “I see myself as having very much affinity with the Eastern European immigrant women who went into the midwest” like Willa Cather and Flannery O’Connor (Interview with Byers-Pevitts 195). Although she states that she likes New York, she also sees it as “the Calcutta of the Americas” (Interview with Hancock 35).

system, the mechanism that deals primarily with illegal aliens, to fight, or ward off, her ongoing Old World conflicts. The irony here is that one powerless illegal alien who is running from the INS uses the INS to get back at her husband's murderer. In the context of Mukherjee's *oeuvre*, however, Jasmine's action is much more political if not heroic; it is a subtle action against an organized terrorist organization operating from New York City.⁹⁵ In their interview with *The Iowa Review*, Mukherjee and Blaise discuss their collaborative work, *The Sorrow and the Terror*, "an investigative report into the 1985 Air India bombing in which 323 people were killed" (7). Identifying that "the whole thing started in Vancouver. That's where the Khalistanis are" (13), Blaise also states that the "world Sikh organization, before they got kicked out, had its major offices in New York" (13). According to him, the "real bloody battlefield in Punjab is between the left-wing and the right-wing Sikhs. The Khalistanis were very right-wing, and the first people they went out and killed were Congress and Communist Sikhs" (14). As Mukherjee recalls, "once the book came out, and they discovered we were against terrorism, we were denounced from the pulpit of Sikh temples. It was really very frightening for a whole year" (14). In *Jasmine*, the insular conflict between Sikhs is manifested in the murder of Jasmine's English teacher, Masterji, "a pious Sikh" (85) who is first demeaned and later tortured and murdered by a gang of Sikh boys named "the Khalsa Lions," or the "Lions of

⁹⁵After September 11th, American critics are much more likely to applaud Jasmine's anti-terrorist actions, even if the terrorists in question are not Sikhs. Given America's war against terrorism, Mukherjee's position is undoubtedly celebrated as suitably American. Yet, Mukherjee's use of Sikh terrorism in *Jasmine* has little to do with concerns over the national security of America, and more with internal (or Old World) conspirators of issues.

Purity” (49). This same gang or organization, to which Sukhwinder belongs, is responsible for the bombing of the sari shop that kills Prakash and widows Jasmine.

Although necessary to situate Jasmine’s immigrant voyage in the tradition of the European migrations, subtly critiquing America’s (mis)treatment and perceptions of its illegal aliens, the stereotypical life of the illegal alien is hardly equal to Jasmine’s life in America. Contrary to her earlier assertion, she has not “been there,” save for her first night in America. Instead, Jasmine’s experience, because of Lillian Gordon, is that of a well-treated *au pair* for a wealthy, academic couple in Manhattan, Taylor and Wylie Hayes, whom Jasmine describes as odd collectors:

The apartment was stocked like a museum. Wylie and Taylor weren’t simple acquirers. [... T]hey bought useless things, silly things, ugly things—wooden ducks, two wooden Indians, a wood cutout of Carmen Miranda—and arranged them in clusters. Some of them seemed offensive to blacks or women or Red Indians. There were slave-auction posters from New Orleans in 1850, speaking of healthy wenches and strong bucks; old color prints celebrating the massacre of an entire Indian village down to the last baby; a poster of a naked woman with parts of her body labeled choice, prime, or chuck, as in a butcher shop. (174)

As intellectuals, the Hayeses collect kitch, seedy, and historical memorabilia that, to a comparatively uneducated cultural outsider, seem grotesque and odd decorations. Their adoption of Duff, a child born out of wedlock, is another lefty acquisition. Jasmine sees

Duff as the only “real” American. To her, Duff’s Aryan physique makes her look “perfectly American” (170). Moreover, she is “the only American, at the time, that [Jasmine] was capable of totally understanding. For her, [Jasmine] was a wise adult without an accent. For [Jasmine], she was an American friend whose language [she] understood and humor [she] could laugh at” (173). If we accept Jasmine’s naturalizing of Duff as a “real American,” who as such forms an integral part of the Hayeses’ collection, so, too, does Jasmine, the beautiful and exotic illegal alien whose knowledge of Asia, Indian food, and Punjabi languages make her an equally valuable and rare acquisition.

As a glorified “domestic,” Jasmine is exposed to the trials and tribulations of the other domestics in the building, who are mostly Caribbean women reminiscent of Austin Clarke’s characters. Jasmine describes the “other day mummies in the building”: “Letitia from Trinidad, and Jamaica from Barbados. Letitia was a grumbler and Jamaica was a snob” (178). Letitia wants to organize and unionize the “sorority that met in the laundry room and in the park” (178), once her “sponsorship come t’rough” (179). Jamaica complains “in her haughty Britishy voice, ‘Do I look like someone who guzzles vodka or steals pork chops? Do I look like a common person?’ [...] She wasn’t born to be a maid, that was her refrain. Her mummy and daddy’d die if they found out she was cleaning up dirt, especially white folks’ dirt, in America” (179).⁹⁶ Jasmine’s experience as a domestic

⁹⁶As Pultar notes, *Jasmine* develops and transforms the character initially introduced as a Trinidadian illegal immigrant who becomes a domestic in the United States and who “comes to love being in America. According to Fakrul Alam, [... Mukherjee] later developed the story’s plot so that it could make for ‘a more compelling work about inventing and re-inventing a self through immigration’” (in Pultar 56).

is significantly different from Jamaica's, particularly because she is not (mis)treated as "a common person." On the contrary, in their intellectual milieu, Jasmine's 'authentic' Indianness proves a viable commodity, particularly as exotic cook (another aspect of her role as nurturer) and later as translator. Although uneducated compared to Taylor and Wylie, Jasmine's worldly education (by virtue of having been born and grown up in Punjab, exposed to the illegal international world, and immigrating to America) places her as an equal colleague in their "democratic" household. One might wonder, however, if an equally uneducated girl from rural America (or another American urban centre) would have been offered the same "democratic kindness" offered Jasmine. Given the Hayeses' cultural collections, Jasmine offers the live-in, modern version of the Southern "mammy." Unlike Jamaica, Jasmine is only a "day mommy" in Manhattan for a short time, becoming what Bhari describes as an "eponymous heroine, a syncretic symbol of the global migrant now familiar in metropolitan postcolonial literature" (137). Jasmine's ability to move in and out of social situations, like the trap of domestic labour that enslaves Jamaica, is largely attributed to her capability and willingness to change and transform herself. Yet, as Koshy rightly points out, from the outset, "Jasmine's inherent aristocracy sets her apart and destines her for assimilation in mainstream America" (148). Noting that "white characters draw attention to and commend [Jasmine] with the term 'special' or 'heroic'" (148), Koshy further argues that Jasmine is the novel's "only example of a nonwhite woman who 'makes it' in a novel that celebrates 'making it', Jasmine is set apart from the others (the Kanjobal women, the migrant workers, the other

‘day-mommies’) who disappear into oblivion. By the same move she is also cast as superior to them. Jasmine’s success (financial independence, romance, mobility) is linked to her ability to exoticize some elements of her ethnicity while shedding others, at will” (148). Jasmine’s characterization as a fairy-tale heroine is in keeping with Mukherjee’s artistic creed: *Jasmine* is “not a realistic novel. It’s meant to be a fable” (Mukherjee, *Iowa* 8).

Jasmine’s transformations call attention to Mukherjee’s artistic agenda of transforming both herself and America through her fiction. That agenda has dictated that she write and publish works about multiculturalism in America; as she tells *The Iowa Review*: “I wanted a new world that was totally multi-cultural” (26). Such is the world represented in *Jasmine*. Initially, Jasmine laments entering a multicultural America; she “had been in America nearly a day and had yet to see an ‘American’ face” (129). Upon arriving in New York City, *the* fabled immigrant city, she notes: “On the streets I saw only more greed, more people like myself. New York was an archipelago of ghettos seething with aliens” (140). Recognizing herself in the American Other, the American ghettoized alien, Jasmine seeks to order her relationship to America by imposing a traditional us versus them binary which makes it necessary that she distance herself from the Other. She cannot conceive that the “real” (or native) Americans no longer exist, even beyond the multicultural metropolis. In his sense, she has much in common with earlier literary European immigrants, like Frederick Philip Grove’s Phil Branden and Anzia Yeziarska’s Sara Smolinski. Like them, Jasmine yearns and searches for the idyllic “real

America,” which she finally identifies in the mid-west farmland, the heartland of America that produces Duff, whose blond hair, blue eyes, and innocence epitomize what for Jasmine “real Americans” are or ought to be. Mukherjee’s use of Duff, the innocent child, as a parallel with Jasmine employs a common trope in immigrant literature. In Yeziarska’s novel, Sara Smolinsky is introduced as a child in order to disarm the reader and evoke a more sympathetic understanding of her plight to survive and succeed. Similarly, in *Call It Sleep*, Roth juxtaposes the immigrant’s and the child’s perspective in his protagonist, David Schearl, to underscore the condition of the immigrant as child in a new and hostile world. Like Yeziarska and Roth, Joy Kogawa provides Naomi with a quasi-alter ego, herself as a child named Nomi, who innocently retells the traumatic events of the Japanese-Canadians’ internment during the Second World War. Although Mukherjee’s Jasmine is not a child, and much is made of her use of her sexuality and femininity (even though she is not yet nineteen), her immediate identification with Duff highlights her child-like behaviour and understanding as an immigrant who, like a child, is learning (to participate in) American culture.

Simultaneously a child and a mother-figure, Jasmine’s perspective is often contradictory and complex: “Duff was my child; Taylor and Wylie were my parents, my teachers, my family” (165). Learning from Taylor and Wylie, the educated collectors of American ill-reputed history, she simultaneously instructs Duff, representative of the mythical “real America,” with her own cultural knowledge. As Jill Roberts puts it, with “five-year-old Duff, the bond is subtle but profound; both share an innocence about the

American family. Duff believes that her parents are genetic and whole, and Jasmine, trying to get a sense of life outside New York's Indian ghetto, celebrates this nuclear unit as truly 'American'" (90). When the novel repositions Jasmine in the central role as mother, or caregiver, of the American nuclear unit, Jasmine in turn instructs her charges with her cultural knowledge. At "the Hayeses' dinners," for example, where she "sat like a guest and only helped with the serving" she "increasingly, controlled the menu [...]" (174). Similarly, in Baden, she takes pride that people "are getting used to some of [her] concoctions, even if they make a show of fanning their mouths. They get disappointed if there's not *something* Indian on the table" (9). Taking "gobi aloo to the Lutheran Relief Fund craft fair [..., she is] subverting the taste buds of Elsa County" (19). Equally affected by American taste buds, she notes that "last night's matar panir [...] goes well with pork, believe me" (19). The child-mother figure emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between the immigrant and the nation by calling attention to their interchangeable roles. No longer adhering to the representation of the immigrant as a child and the nation as parent, Mukherjee suggests that both immigrant and nation are simultaneously child and parent. Each instructs and nurtures the other at the same time. The alchemical transformation, like Jasmine's culinary concoctions, not only emphasizes the cultural fusion taking place within her, but also the fusion that is taking place around her. Like America, the power of transformation is seen here as a simultaneously constructive and destructive force, as Jasmine's assertion reveals: "I still think of myself as caregiver, recipe giver, preserver. I can honestly say all I wanted was to serve, be allowed to join, but I have created

confusion and destruction wherever I go” (215). The power of transformation, both of the immigrant self and of the nation, is necessary though not necessarily pleasant: “There are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams” (29). Metaphorically, Jasmine’s painful reincarnations depict those of the nation as well.

The mutual transformations in *Jasmine* point to Mukherjee’s most subversive use of multiculturalism, using her cultural difference to transform herself. In a latent capitalist economy, the immigrant’s difference becomes not another commodity to be bought or exchanged, but currency with which to participate in the cultural economy of the nation. Jasmine makes several references to the various ways in which her difference is perceived. She notes, for example, that “[e]ducated people are interested in differences; they assume that [she’s] different from them but exempted from being one of ‘them,’ the knife-wielding undocumentededs hiding in basements webbing furniture” (33). In Taylor’s intellectual milieu, his friends “were strikingly accurate about most things, and always out to improve themselves. [...] For them, experience leads to knowledge, or else it is wasted” (33). In Baden, however, “the farmers are afraid to suggest [she’s] different. They’ve seen the aerograms [she] receive[s], the strange lettering [she] can decipher. To them, alien knowledge means intelligence. They want to make [her] familiar” (33). Jasmine’s ability to accentuate or “tone down” her difference reveals her malleability and willingness to use cultural (and sexual) difference as currency in the different communities. As Koshy argues, “when the darkness of the Indian subcontinent is

reconstituted as the darkness of the Indian woman's body, a liability is transformed into an asset for the immigrant. Exotic beauty becomes the passport to assimilation" (146-47). Jasmine's "assimilation," however, is two-fold. With Taylor and Bud, for example, Jasmine's difference is manifested in her exotic sexuality, but both men respond quite differently: "Taylor didn't want to change me. He didn't want to scour and sanitize the foreignness" (185). Bud, who "courts [her] because [she] is alien. [She] is darkness, mystery, inscrutability" (200), is frightened by her "genuine foreignness" (26). Taylor's and Bud's responses pinpoint the competing attitudes within the nation toward the immigrant's "assets," pointing to the fluctuating libidinal economy in which the value of the immigrant's difference is bound by a number of external, mitigating factors. Luckily for Jasmine, her arrival is congruent with a perceived demand for her kind of difference, which, the novel seems to suggest, Jasmine's transformative powers are able to reveal has been imperceptibly in demand.

Interestingly, Jasmine states that she changes "because [she] wanted to" despite Taylor's desire to keep her 'pure' (185), and that, like Bud, she is also frightened by her genuine foreignness (26). Jasmine's responses need to be contextualized as the immigrant's response to the nation's apparent dual reception of her foreignness: desiring her to remain authentically pure, authentically alien, on the one hand, and sanitizing her of genuine difference in favour of a less-threatening manufactured exoticness; on the other, this tenet is the "catch-22" for the immigrant. Yet, Mukherjee suggests, the choice is not simply to remain "visible," or separate, or to assimilate at the expense of cultural

difference. The choice points to the immigrant's need to exert control over her difference in order to maximize its profit. Jasmine's ability to do so is most explicitly manifested when she is offered a teaching section or tutoring in the "Indian Languages Department" that uses her "as a Punjabi reader ('Perfect Jullundhari!' The instructor beamed. He was making a linguistic atlas of the Punjab)" (180). Tutoring business executives who buy her flowers and take her to dinner, suggesting that her 'tutoring' is a kind of exotic platonic dating service, she is able to pay back Professorji Vadhera for the bought green card that cost him years of painfully earned income "in a single check" (180). Her enormous success counters his comparative failure, demanding investigation as to why Professorji Vadhera, once Prakash's esteemed intellectual hero, is reduced to a mockery of himself. As an educated man, why has *he* not found himself employed by the Indian Languages Department? Like Jasmine, he must also have "perfect Jullundhari." Similarly, Jasmine's off-hand comment early in the novel that she prefers Asian doctors, and that she has met "Kwant, Liu, Patel. [...] Poke around in a major medical facility and suddenly you're back in Asia, which I find very reassuring" (32), contradicts the taxi driver's position that America discriminates against Asian, or Indian, physicians: "In Kabul I was a doctor. We have to be here living like dogs because they've taken everything from us" (140).

The novel polarizes assimilated versus unassimilated immigrants in its depiction of the autonomous, free-moving Jasmine and the static, immovable Indian ghetto in Flushing, New York. Jasmine's individualist drive to survive and succeed, to adapt and change, is privileged over the communal drive to retain their native home within the new

host nation. Polarizing the individual versus the community and the assimilated versus the unassimilable, Gurleen Grewal calls attention to what she perceives to be the crux of the immigrant's conflict in the novel. According to her,

For the immigrant there are only two possibilities in *Jasmine*: either the ghetto where ethnic identity is tightly secured by a minimal interaction with the outer alien world—an option that has its obvious shortcomings—or assimilation into the dominant white culture, requiring nothing less than the radical rupture with the past. If expatriation is the great temptation and enemy of the “once-third-world” author, the preferred state of impatriation as it is described in *Jasmine* requires nothing less than the extinction of the “once-third-world” self. (182-83)

True, Jasmine appears to reject her Indianness insofar as that Indianness is maintained as a static, immutable identity. Intrigued “by the city and the land beyond the rivers” (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 145), Jasmine is frightened by “Flushing, with all its immigrant services at hand” (145). The Vadheras, who “had retired behind ghetto walls” (145), have “Indian-food stores in the block, Punjabi newspapers and Hindi film magazines at the corner newsstand, and a movie every night without having to dress up for it” (145-46). In spite of their generosity, Jasmine “was spiraling into depression behind the fortress of Punjabiness” (148). For her, “Flushing was a neighborhood in Jullundhar” (148). Her desire to become an immigrant once in America demands that she desire the American Dream: “If I had a green card, a job, a goal, *happiness* would appear out of the blue”

(149).

Grewal's understanding of *Jasmine*'s complicated politics of immigration is not unfounded; on the contrary, Jasmine's differentiation as an "immigrant" from the ghettoized immigrants, especially Professorji Vadhera who is "a ghost, hanging on" (154), resonates of Mukherjee's own conflicting immigrant identities as an exuberant immigrant in America or a lost-soul expatriate in Canada. Yet, her privileging Jasmine and her assimilation into what appears to be the American white mainstream is not necessarily a cultural shedding. As Dlasaka argues, "Mukherjee has pronounced interest in decentering western representations of the immigrant Other and demands a transcultural acknowledgment and valorization of difference" (12). She does so by questioning multiculturalism as a separatist movement that values difference by maintaining (or mummifying) that difference. Multiculturalism, in practice, privileges the group over the individual, especially when a group begins becoming visible. Multiculturalism thus encourages at best and coerces at worst individuals from the same region or country to band together and forge a visible community in the host country, producing a ghettoized culture. Mukherjee reads the ghettoized culture as ultimately entropic precisely because it no longer remains a *live* culture in part unknown and unrealized (following Williams). In recreating the native culture, and maintaining the perceived authenticity of that culture, the ghettoized culture does not take into account the on-going changes occurring within the live, native culture. The transplanted or recreated native culture is static, frozen at a specific time and place, and even though newer immigrants assimilate into that ghettoized

culture, they do not necessarily update or renew it. For the ghettoized immigrant, like Professorji Vadhera, the choice is to assimilate enough into the mainstream (he changes the pronunciation of his name from Devinder Vadhra to sound “like ‘David O’Hara” [Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 143]) without fully assimilating. For Jasmine, the choice is to assimilate more fully without entirely losing her Indianness.

Mukherjee reconsiders the relationship between the assimilated immigrant and the dominant host nation by placing the emphasis not on the immigrant but on the mainstream culture and its assimilation of, or into, the immigrant. She does so by contextualizing whiteness in the multicultural discourse of cultural difference. For example, Jasmine’s reaction to the America she sees is largely a result of her misconceptions of America. As she recalls, she “didn’t know what to think of America. [She’d] read only *Shane*, and seen only one movie” (81) dubbed in Hindi and re-titled “*Seven Village Girls Find Seven Boys to Marry*” (45). Contradictorily, however, when she and Prakash study the promotional brochure of the American college Prakash wants to attend, she comments that the America being represented “didn’t look anything like the America [she’d] read about” (90). By this point, she has already established that her knowledge of American culture, as represented by its film and literature, is far too limited. So too is her ability to *read* the literature promoting the American college: “Two young Indian or Pakistani men and two Chinese or Japanese women on the cover were standing under palm trees, smiling in their white shirts. Everyone on the cover and in the pictures inside was Indian or Chinese, with a couple of Africans” (90). Worried that her

husband will fall prey to “all those hot-blooded American girls” (91), Jasmine is reassured by Prakash’s humour: “‘Not here,’ he said. We had a big laugh. ‘I don’t think they let Americans in!’” (91).

Clearly, the discrepancy in Jasmine’s comments points to an underlying narrative strategy that uses multiculturalism as a vehicle with which to question the validity of the “real” America. The brochure indicates that the college is targeting foreign students, especially Indians since it goes so far as to advertise that “Indian food [is] readily available” (90). The American college is in keeping with current trends in American and Canadian colleges and universities seeking to attract foreign students whose considerably higher fees help to finance the institutions. The brochure’s images also correspond to contemporary trends in institutional representation meant to advertise racial and cultural diversity as a way of promoting political correctness. An example of self-conscious inclusive multiculturalism, the academic brochure is misread by the Indian couple who want pictures of their vision of the “real America.” Their racism, especially towards the Indian men and the Chinese women, is somewhat puzzling, and points to a postcolonial distancing strategy seeking to unmask the colonialist mimicry. Echoing Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s seminal work on mimicry and race, Mukherjee endows her Indian couple with the ability to read colonial doubleness, to unmask the foreign students “passing” for “real Americans,” unaware that they are happily participating in the very system that mocks them. That perception, however, risks undermining the assimilation discourse in the novel that challenges the perception that “real Americans” exist outside the American

college. Contributing to their misleading understanding of America is their inability to conceive of Indians and Chinese *as* Americans.

It is telling that, prior to even meeting Prakash, Jasmine felt “ready to leave [Hasnapur] for Germany, the States. It didn’t occur to [her] that Germans didn’t speak English” (69). Paradoxically, Jasmine wants to learn English since, to her, wanting English “was to want the world” (68). Although the English language offers her the world, Jasmine seeks an English-speaking America that will not deliver the whole world (of which she is a part). She does not want that multicultural or global village but a mythologized, homogeneous place that is different rather than similar to her own existing world. Inverting the Orientalist gaze, Jasmine seeks to find in America the unfamiliar lure of the exotic. Considering that Jasmine chooses Baden, Iowa, a German- and Scandinavian-American community, as the “real America,” her initial (mis)conception of what (or who) makes up America is far too coincidental. For Jasmine, America is equated with Aryanness; envisioning an America full of “American faces” is no less threatening than Hitler’s vision of a pure Germany. Mukherjee, however, undermines even the appearance of homogeneity in America by calling attention to the inherent multicultural differences that make up the long-established community: “Baden is what they call a basic German community. Even the Danes and Swedes are thought to be genetically unpredictable at times. I’ve heard the word ‘inscrutable.’ The inscrutable Swedes. The sneaky Dutch. They aren’t Amish, but they’re very fond of old ways of doing things. They’re conservative people with a worldly outlook” (11). Emphasizing the cultural and

ethnic differences that remain entrenched within the early Nordic immigrants to the United States, Jasmine further calls attention to the more visible changes in the Baden population when she describes how Asia transforms Bud, making “him reckless and emotional” (14). Somewhat ironically, Jasmine describes “the brave new world of Elsa County” in which “Bud Ripplemeyer has adopted a Vietnamese and is shackled up with a Punjabi girl. There’s a Vietnamese network. There are Hmong, with a church of their own, turning out quilts for Lutheran relief” (229). As Carmen Faymonville notes, in settling with Bud, Jasmine “creates a life that replicates that of earlier immigrants and their eventual assimilation” (53). However, Jasmine’s inception into this older, immigrant community does not change the town, as Faymonville suggests “from a monocultural enclave to a more multicultural place” (54); her inception calls attention to the fact that this immigrant community, unlike the ghetto, has been invisibly changing, has been and continues to be, increasingly visibly multicultural. Instead, the more radical transformative force is that of destruction. As Grewal notes, “this multiethnic American family [the Ripplemeyers] is short-lived” (186). Lest the multiethnic, multicultural nuclear family become static and immutable, it transforms itself, relocating its immigrants yet again.

Mukherjee’s fictional representation of a multicultural America emphasizes the malleability of cultural difference; although visible, such difference functions as currency to be used and exchanged in her fictional world. As such, it is the immigrant’s most valuable commodity. Hence, while Mukherjee’s texts emphasize cultural difference (and

specificity), they also advocate that said difference be used precisely as a tool with which to assimilate (both oneself and the nation). Critiquing the artificiality and immutability of a transplanted, ghettoized culture, she privileges instead the fluid mutability of an immigrant assimilationist who seeks to transform both herself and the nation. Jasmine's transformation, she argues, is "genetic" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 222). As Anu Aneja notes, Jasmine's "body is literally impregnated by that of the white man" (73). As nurturer, or caregiver, she feeds America, thereby transforming it as well from within. Du, in contrast, is "hyphenated [...] a hybrid, [...] a Vietnamese-American..." (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 222). Noting the difference between hyphenation and genetic transformation, Suzanne Kehde argues that Jasmine's "relationship to nationality cannot be the same as Du's not only because of their countries' different colonial histories, not only because the construction of *nationality* itself is specific to each nation, but also because of the difference of gender. Du has more to gain by maintaining his cultural and national identity" (75). Although supportive of Du's decision to join his sister in California, Jasmine is suspicious of his involvement with the local Vietnamese community and, more specifically, of his ability to maintain the separateness of his dual identity. For her, his hyphenation is his ability to be simultaneously "American" and "Vietnamese."

Unlike Du, Jasmine's inability to fragment into two, discernibly different selves, results from her transformation into multiple selves and identities prior to her immigration. The novel offers Du as an intermediary position between assimilationist Jasmine and ghettoized Vadhervas. Ultimately, however, the novel sides with Jasmine's

position by contextualizing her last transformation in the rhetoric of American democracy. *Jasmine* questions whether an individual has free will or whether her fate has been predestined. Complicating this philosophical conundrum is the fact that Mukherjee's simplification seems to equate Jasmine's native India with predestined fate and her immigration to America with the unknown world of possibility, symbolic of her autonomous free will. When Jasmine is caught between "the promise of America and old-world dutifulness" (240) at the end of the novel, her choice to pursue her personal happiness at the expense of cultural indoctrination appears to be a choice not between two men or two forged identities, but between an active or passive participant in the making, or unfolding, of her own fate. Mukherjee begins *Jasmine* with a fatalistic astrological prediction that marks her titular character; "under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur," an Indian astrologer foretells her "widowhood and exile" (3). He does not mention immigration, nor does he account for the fact that her family has already, to an extent, been exiled from Lahore, their homeland. Widowhood and exile are thus paralleled to suggest her survival of two deaths, her husband's and her nationality's. Earlier in the novel, lamenting her inability to talk about Hasnapur to Bud or his mother, Jasmine comments: "It's as though Hasnapur is an old husband or lover. Even memories are a sign of disloyalty" (231). The illicitness of a love affair is juxtaposed with the perceived illicitness of immigration; the immigrant's inability to remain truly loyal to her

adopted (or, Mukherjee contends, “chosen”) home.⁹⁷ Jasmine’s challenge is two-fold; she must accept her dual widowhood as much as America must accept her loyalty.

Symbolically, she falls in love with what Taylor represents; democratic America: “a professor who served biscuits to a servant, smiled at her, and admitted her to the broad democracy of his joking, even when she didn’t understand it. It seemed entirely American. [She] was curious about his life, not repulsed. [She] wanted to know the way such a man lives in this country. [She] wanted to watch, be a part of it” (167).

Simultaneously an observer and participant, Jasmine qualifies her role as an immigrant in American democracy. By executing what she observes to be the underlying qualities of Americanness, she can effectively become part of that same democracy. Her decision to leave Bud and go with Taylor and Duff to California, where Du has already relocated, is therefore not a personal pursuit of happiness, but a political one; it is the only democratic choice she can truly make. Her choice, moreover, places her in a long tradition of American pioneers, thereby reinscribing the immigrant with the adventurous spirit of the explorer. Jasmine continues to pursue “the frontier [that] is pushing indoors through uncaulked windows” (240). As Koshy notes, “Jasmine’s last incarnation transposes her into the tradition of American pioneers as she heads out West. Only now, the frontier signifies not land or gold, but the space where America is being remade in the collision and fusion of ethnicities” (149). The frontier beckons the immigrant to find America

⁹⁷See Pultar for an analysis of the illicit nature of Jasmine’s Americanization.

within its corrupted borders. The pioneering immigrant continues to search for the “real” America, suggesting that the ideal of America *is* the frontier. By executing “[a]dventure, risk, transformation [...]” (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 240), a fusion of American and Indian ideals, Jasmine can take control of her fate without denying her belief in a predetermined pattern. Given a choice, she chooses to act. She may “whisper” back to the astrologer, but she is really defying America: “Watch me re-position the stars” (240).

Afterword

We are at a historical impasse, characteristic of a turn-of-the-century era. We seem to be caught between what promises to be the final transmutation of the immigrant which might result, somewhat ironically, in the effacement of the immigrant—and what threatens to be a repetitive cycle in which the immigrant is condemned to remain an alien. At best, the immigrant could give way to a nomadic border-crosser free to roam or settle without the constraints of national borders and immigration laws. The end of the twentieth century certainly points in this direction, with the implementation of dual citizenship, multinational and transnational (im)migrant identities, and the effacement of national borders within multinational or transnational structures (like the EU). In other words, we appear to be moving toward the eradication of the nation and, by extension, of current conceptions of immigration law, thereby making the immigrant obsolete. This is not to say that the migrant would cease to exist. The question that remains is whether the migrant in a border-free world will still be stigmatized and labeled a stranger, foreigner, or alien. Given the tension between the local and the global, it is prudent to assume that the migrant's difference ensues even in the absence of immigration policies, official and unofficial. We need only recall John's Steinbeck's "Okies" as a historically based literary precedent.

At worst, the immigrant could remain entrenched in the derogatory category of alien. When the unthinkable happens, history often repeats itself. As a result of the

terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City on September 11th, 2001, as well as the ensuing wars on terrorism, the Taliban, and Iraq, patriotic defense of the nation has resurfaced. Even those in opposition to the war on Iraq ultimately dictate a vision of what the nation should be and how it should behave, thereby maintaining the nation as an autonomous entity. For those in favour of keeping America safe, the emphasis on national defense has focused primarily on the nation's borders. The fear of the alien outside the nation seeking to infiltrate is manifest, as is the fear of the alien already within who appears to have been assimilated. The dangerous alien lurking beneath the façade of an assimilated immigrant or naturalized citizen is a known threat; we need only recall the social paralysis that results from a paranoiac inability to distinguish the alien from the native in Jack Finney's and Don Siegel's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Recalling the restrictions on immigration of the 1950s, we should not be surprised when officials call for a renewal of more stringent immigration laws. Nor should we be surprised when proposals are made for the United States and Canada to share a single immigration policy, especially when it comes to exclusions and management of illegal aliens or known (and suspected) terrorists or criminals.

When specific immigrant groups, such as Arabs and Muslims in this case, are subjected to interrogation and suspicion, we are reminded of the paranoiac state of the 1950s over the threat of a Communist world-take-over and the effects of the Red Scares. What is important to recognize in this pattern is not who becomes seen as a threat or victim, but that the pattern has not changed much; in the event of dissent by a group of

people, immigrant groups will most often be typecasted and scapegoated. The result is the alienation and criminalization of the immigrant. The repetitive pattern therefore questions whether it is possible for the immigrant to evolve beyond this point. Must any act performed by immigrants, against the nation naturally result in the demonization of the immigrant? What happens when immigrants are criminally responsible for attacks on the nation, or when groups take advantage of a more liberal immigration system as a means of infiltrating with the intent to destroy the nation from within? Must the whole system of immigration become more stringent? Must the immigrant remain a marked and threatening figure? What options are open to the immigrant to contrast these negative characterizations? If the immigrant is not a threat, is the immigrant a victim? Must the immigrant maintain a subordinate position as a second-class citizen who must be eternally thankful for the opportunity of escaping racial, sexual, religious, and/or economic oppression elsewhere? Must the immigrant conform to being either inherently good or inherently evil?

Undoubtedly, new studies of the current immigration system in both Canada and the United States will be undertaken. Capital will be invested in the reevaluation of each nation's immigration system and policy, resulting in controversial reports to be followed by ardent debates and new policy making. I leave it to the political scientists to predict what such new policies will entail. My concern with the future of the Canadian and American immigration systems and legislation lies in how these changes will affect, once again, the meaning and construction of the immigrant. What does the new dawn of

immigration policy in the twenty-first century have in store for the immigrant? How will the new developments in North America and in the world at large contribute to and affect the construction and perception of the immigrant? Will the resurgence in nationalism keep globalization at bay? Will the renewed patriotic vigor redefine how we conceptualize the global and the local? Consequently, if the world does become a globalized border-free society, will such a system truly allow the migrant to evolve beyond its negative associations? If multiculturalism preempts globalization, will the multicultural nation continue to validate cultural and national diversity, thus maintaining the immigrant as a needed and useful commodity for the nation? Or will the multicultural nation's emphasis on diversity and racial, religious, and/or ethnic ghettoization (whether by choice or design) draw unwitting and unwanted attention to the immigrant (or, more specifically, to certain immigrant groups at certain given times)?

We are living in an age in which travel and immigration have become commonplace occurrences of everyday life. Yet, immigration issues become juicy news when there are outbreaks of non-native viruses and diseases, such as the West Nile Virus and, most recently, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The origins of viruses and diseases that are introduced into North America become suspect, as do its carriers. Immigrants, both newcomers and established immigrants or new citizens who have recently visited and returned from "home," are most often regarded as threatening contaminants. The threat of contagion, not unlike that of Communist "germs" or the Yellow Peril, positions the immigrant, once again, in the high-risk pollutant category that

threatens to destroy the health of the nation. The ensuing social paranoia over the recent viral outbreaks reveals that beneath the façade of tolerance often lurks a racist, anti-immigrant sensibility. The segregation and ghettoization of those believed to be contagious renews mistrust and fear of the visible Other who has originally entered the nation from somewhere else. Moreover, the emphasis on home rekindles that old and absolute binary between native and foreigner in which the native is a passive victim threatened by the malignant and malicious dirty foreigner.

Predicting the future of the immigrant is, perhaps, a futile exercise. Yet, the recent literary and critical trends that dismiss the immigrant altogether, thereby inviting us to reconsider the immigrant, suggest otherwise. It is the cultural production of the immigrant, both past and present, that we need to turn to for answers. As this dissertation has shown, the dialogic relationship between immigrant literature and its contemporary legislation produces a critical space in which immigration issues and perceptions can be challenged, reflected, and critiqued. Frederick Philip Grove charges the nation to take responsibility for its immigrants, and in doing so suggests an alternative to the question of whether immigration is a privilege or a right. Even more tellingly is the question of responsibility for the migrant in a globalized society. If Grove is right and the nation is responsible for its immigrants, who is responsible for the nomad, the diasporic, the exile, the border-crosser, or the migrant in a border-free, globalized society? Again, this question is, perhaps, best left to the sociologists and political scientists. For the literary critic, this question needs to be contextualized. Literature and literary criticism offer a

space of critical inquiry in which such questions point to the relationship between art and its contemporary social policy and climate. Anzia Yezierska's account of immigrant life in the ghettos of Manhattan's Lower East Side not only documents the immigrant urban experience of the 1920s but the way in which literature can be used as a vehicle or catalyst for effecting social and political change. The same is evident thirty years later in Canada with Adele Wiseman's *The Sacrifice*.

Immigrant literature, like the immigrant experience, is diverse and powerful. It has been used to reveal the hypocrisy of what appears to be benign policy, as Austin Clarke's stories show. Or else it poeticizes and reconstructs a historical past, as Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* does. Still, immigrant literature offers a space of transformation and investigation. Bharati Mukherjee takes this space to bring together past and present conceptualizations of the immigrant, and to produce a new model of assimilation that updates that of Israel Zangwill. It is precisely in this space that the differences between the immigrant and the diasporic, the expatriate, the exile, the border-crosser, and the deterritorialized schizophrenic need to be examined. As past immigrant narratives indicate, the immigrant and these other categories need not be oppositional. Nor is the immigrant synonymous with these other categories. The immigrant can be simultaneously an immigrant and a diasporic subject, an immigrant and an expatriate, an immigrant and an exile, an immigrant and a border-crosser, and an immigrant and a deterritorialized schizophrenic. Each of these categories informs and redefines the immigrant, and extends the boundaries of what an immigrant can and ought to be. Why,

then, suppress the immigrant? Have the immigrant's negative connotations been solidified to the point that the only way of empowering a non-criminalized immigrant is by rejecting the legal label? Or does the rejection of the term immigrant mean a rejection of the nation and/or its system of immigration? Is the literary and critical rejection of the term immigrant cultural, political, or both? These are crucial questions facing the study of immigrant literature in the twentieth-first century. To address these questions, we need to understand the immigrant's difference, the multifaceted definitions of the term, and to remember that the immigrant is in a constant state of flux. It is in the immigrant literature, and in the way in which we write about said literature, that the immigrant can be redefined and transformed. The immigrant is, in essence, a complex construct of potential and possibility. If the immigrant has become a stagnant political and public figure, then it is up to the literature to change the definition of the immigrant.

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Appendix A

1. Section 1 of the Act of March 3, 1891 identifies the following classes of excludable aliens:

That the following classes of aliens shall be excluded from admission into the United States, in accordance with the existing acts regulating immigration, other than those concerning Chinese laborers: All idiots, insane persons, paupers or persons likely to become a public charge, persons suffering from a loathsome or a dangerous contagious disease, persons who have been convicted of a felony or other infamous crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, polygamists, and also any person whose ticket or passage is paid for with the money of another or who is assisted by others to come, unless it is affirmatively and satisfactorily shown on special inquiry that such person does not belong to one of the foregoing excluded classes, or to the class of contract laborers excluded by the act of February twenty-sixth, eighteen hundred and eighty-five, but this section shall not be held to exclude persons living in the United States from sending for a relative or a friend who is not of the excluded classes under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe: *Provided*, That nothing in this act shall be construed to apply to or exclude persons convicted of a political offense, notwithstanding said political offense [...]. (26 Stat. 1084)

2. Section 2 of the Act of March 3, 1903 identifies the following classes of excludable aliens:

All idiots, insane persons, epileptics, and persons who have been insane within five years previous; persons who have had two or more attacks of insanity at any time previously; paupers; persons likely to become a public charge; professional beggars; persons afflicted with a loathsome or with a dangerous contagious disease; persons who have been convicted of a felony or other crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; polygamists, anarchists, or persons who believe in or advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of all government or of all forms of law, or the assassination of public officials; prostitutes, and persons who procure or attempt to bring in prostitutes or women for the purpose of prostitution; those who have been, within a year from the date of the application for admission to the United States, deported as being under offers, solicitations, promises or

agreements to perform labor or service of some kind therein; and also any person whose ticket or passage is paid for with the money of another, or who is assisted by others to come, unless it is affirmatively and satisfactorily shown that such person does not belong to one of the foregoing excluded classes; but this section shall not be held to prevent persons living in the United States from sending for a relative or friend who is not of the foregoing excluded classes [...]. (32 Stat. 1213)

Notice the increasing specifications regarding the insane and the economically destitute.

3. From Chapter I, General Provisions, Article 1, the full definition of the term “Refugee” is as follows:

A. For the purposes of the present Convention, the term ‘refugee’ shall apply to any person who:

(I) Has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926

and 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization;

Decisions of non-eligibility taken by the International Refugee Organization during the period of its activities shall not prevent the status of refugee being accorded to persons who fulfil the conditions of paragraph 2 of this section;

(2) [As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and] owing to a

well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence [as a result of such events], is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term ‘the country of his nationality’ shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of the countries of which he is a national. (Brownlie and Goodwin-Gill 113)

Note that paragraph A.1 draws from previous legislation that had previously defined the refugee. Although refugees existed long before WWII, they were not always treated as such. The 1951 definition gains currency largely because of the international dimension that the refugees of WWII posed; high-profile and exceedingly large numbers demanded that the refugee be taken seriously around the globe.

The second paragraph (A.2) is of particular interest as multiple citizenship can be used as a vehicle to redirect persons applying for refugee status.

4. An objection to the new immigration, however, reads as follows:

One-sixth of the Army during World War I was foreign-born. Mental tests given to all United States military personnel demonstrated that the new immigration was inferior mentally to the old immigration and to native-born Americans. Slavic and Mediterranean people thus represent an inferior racial contribution, measured by existing American standards. These people can never be expected to be adaptable to the requirements of citizenship in a country where the citizens govern. In the Army alone 360,000 men of foreign birth were tested. Forty-five percent had a mental age below 11 years of age. It was asked, "How can these offscourings of Europe assimilate our ideals, language and social customs?" (in Bennett 33)

In the context of Jewish-American immigrants, Melanie Levinson notes that "Jews were stereotypically constructed as physically unable to fight in the army, [because of what Sander Gilman has identified as a stereotyped flat-footedness,] unable to help defend their country, and therefore not citizens" (4-5). Similarly, in Mario Puzo's *The Fortunate Pilgrim*, the effects of the Second World War are felt differently in the Southern-Italian ghetto:

Natives of the south, Sicily, Naples, the Abruzzi, these Italians on Tenth Avenue did not concern themselves about Mussolini's winning the war. They had never loved their country of birth; it meant nothing to them. For centuries its government had been the most bitter enemy of their fathers and fathers' fathers before them. The rich had spat on the poor. Pimps of Rome and north had sucked their blood. What good fortune to be safe here in America. (Puzo 241-41)

Emphasizing that the immigrants' loyalty is to the country of their dreams and hopes and not the country of their origin, thereby redefining the immigrant's

conception of home, Puzo's narrative further contests the immigrant's apparent disloyalty by emphasizing that "there had been a military draft, but only one boy from Tenth Avenue had been called" (241). Paradoxically, then, it is the nation that excludes the immigrant from its service who places the burden of exclusion on the immigrant.

5. When used in this Act the term "immigrant" means any alien departing from any place outside the United States destined for the United States, except (1) a government official, his family, attendants, servants, and employees, (2) an alien visiting the United States temporarily as a tourist or temporarily for business or pleasure, (3) an alien in continuous transit through the United States, (4) an alien lawfully admitted to the United States who later goes in transit from one part of the United States to another through foreign contiguous territory, (5) a bona fide alien seaman serving as such on a vessel arriving at a port of the United States and seeking to enter temporarily the United States solely in the pursuit of his calling as a seaman, and (6) an alien entitled to enter the United States solely to carry on trade under and in pursuance of the provisions of a present existing treaty of commerce and navigation. (in Bennett 55-56)
6. Section 4 of the 1924 Act defines "nonquota immigrants" as follows:
 1. An unmarried child under 18 years of age, or the wife of a citizen of the United States who resides therein. [...]
 2. Returning alien residents who were previously lawfully admitted and are returning to the United States after a temporary visit abroad.
 3. Aliens born in other American countries, their wives and unmarried children under 18 years of age.
 4. Ministers and professors, their wives and unmarried children under 18 years of age.
 5. Students at least 15 years of age.
 6. American women who lost citizenship because of marriage to an alien prior to September 22, 1922. (After that date a woman United States citizen did not lose citizenship by marriage to an alien.) (in Bennett 56)
7. Section 6, summary of preferential status for quota immigrants:
 1. Parents of adult citizens of the United States and husbands of our citizens where the marriage occurred after May 31, 1928. (This was later amended to change the date to January 1, 1948). [...]
 2. Persons skilled in agriculture of a nationality whose quota is 300 or more and their wives and children under 18 years of age.

3. Wives and unmarried children under 21 years of age of alien residents of the United States who are lawfully admitted for permanent residence. (in Bennett 56-7)

The “Nonpreference Quota Immigrants,” in contrast, were

those not entitled to preference under any of the preceding classes. However, detailed regulations made provision for them as to priorities [...]. They were divided into (1) first-preference quota immigrants such as relatives and skilled agriculturalists, (2) second-preference quota immigrants whose priority was determined by the date the immigrant submitted a registration form by mail to the consular office, (3) nonpreference quota immigrants of top, first and second priority, as determined by the regulations, and (4) nonpriority classes, a catch-all class for all quota immigrants not falling within a preference or priority class. They had the last call on quota numbers. (Bennett 57)

Appendix B

1. In 1919, “persons suffering from alcoholism, mental or physical defects or a condition of ‘constitutional psychopathic inferiority’ were added to the lists of prohibited classes” (Whitaker, *Canadian* 11). The 1919 amended Immigration Act also excluded “the diseased, [...] physical and mental defectives illiterates, persons guilty of espionage or treason, enemy aliens, and those who believed in the overthrow by force of the government of Canada or who were opposed to organized government” (Kelley and Tebilcock 183-84).
2. Like the American “coolie” labourers, Chinese workers were brought into Canada by companies like the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to build the railroad in the West. Galloway notes that there were competing views on the importation of Chinese labourers since British Columbia viewed the Chinese labourers as immigrants coming in to stay and therefore wanted to prohibit Chinese immigration while the companies wanted to exploit the cheap Chinese labour to finish the construction of the railway (Galloway 11-12). Because the Crown initially gave the provinces the power to regulate immigration, British Columbia passed a series of laws requiring that all incoming aliens have a proficiency in a European language, “thereby condemning most Asians to the ranks of the inadmissible” (Galloway 12). By 1884, the Chinese Regulation Act explicitly stated the fear of the perceived invading (Asian) Other:

Whereas the incoming of Chinese to British Columbia largely exceeds that of any other class of immigrant, and the population so introduced are fast becoming superior in number to our own race; are not disposed to be governed by our laws; are dissimilar in habits and occupation from our people; evade the payment of taxes justly due to the Government; are governed by pestilential habits; are useless in instances of emergency; habitually desecrate graveyards by the removal of bodies therefrom; and generally the laws governing the whites are found to be inapplicable to Chinese, and such Chinese are inclined to habits subversive of the comfort and well-being of the community. (in Galloway 11)

Although the Federal government was initially opposed to the exclusion of Chinese immigrants, a head tax was imposed in 1885, and increased in 1900 and 1903. Parliament passed “The Chinese Immigration Act, [in] 1923, which prohibited the entry of most Chinese into the country. This prohibition continued in force until 1947” (Galloway 12). Other Asians, particularly the Japanese, were also targeted and, like the Gentleman’s Agreement, agreements with Japan to

limit Japanese immigration were implemented.

Appendix C

1. Unlike the provisions made for the immigrant, the law “required that each family group admitted under the [Displaced Persons] act be assured of a job and housing (Bennett 76). One perceptual difference between the refugee and the immigrant is that the refugee is a drain in the nation’s economy insofar as s/he is a “public charge.” Another perceptual difference is that, unlike the immigrant, the refugee is automatically admitted or that it is easier for an unwanted person to enter as a refugee when s/he would have otherwise been excluded as an immigrant. During the 1950s, however, like the criteria for immigrant admission, there was a criteria for refugee admission that was meant to benefit the nation, not the refugee:

A first preference under the Displaced Persons Act was made of not less than 30 percent of the visas issuable under the act to persons who would work at agricultural pursuits. A second preference was given to persons of designated occupational, educational, and professional qualifications and their dependents. Third preference went to those who were blood relatives of citizens and alien residents of the United States and their dependents. Within preferences stated, first priority went to certain war veterans and second priority to those persons in displaced persons camps. (76)

President Harry S. Truman’s objections to the Displaced Persons Act were based on his belief “that it discriminated against Jews and Catholics and that displaced persons should be permitted to enter as non-quota immigrants” (77). Two years after Truman’s objections, Congress did incorporate these, thereby increasing the number of Jewish and Catholic displaced persons (77).

2. The investigation included but was not limited to
 - (1) the history and development of [American] immigration policy; (2) the administration of [American] immigration and deportation laws, and practices thereunder; (3) the extent, if any, to which aliens have entered the United States in violation or circumvention of such laws, and the extent, if any, to which aliens have been permitted to remain or have remained in the United States in violation or circumvention of such laws; (4) the situation with respect to displaced persons in Europe and all aspects of the displaced persons problem; and (5) the effect upon [the United States] of any change in the immigration laws. (in Bennett 109)
3. Paragraphs 28 and 29 of Section 212 of the INA of 1952 state the excludable

classes of aliens as follows:

(28) Aliens who are, or at any time have been, members of any of the following classes:

(A) Aliens who are anarchists;

(B) Aliens who advocate or teach, or who are members of or affiliated with any organization that advocates or teaches, opposition to all organized government;

(C) Aliens who are members of or affiliated with (i) the Communist Party of the United States, (ii) any other totalitarian party of the United States, (iii) the Communist Political Association, (iv) the Communist or any other totalitarian party of any State of the United States, of any foreign state, or of any political or geographical subdivision of any foreign state, (v) any section, subsidiary, branch, affiliate, or subdivision of any such association or party, or (vi) the direct predecessors or successors of any such association or party, regardless of what name such group or organization may have used, may now bear, or may hereafter adopt: *Provided*, That nothing in this paragraph, or in any other provision of this Act, shall be construed as declaring that the Communist Party does not advocate the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means;

(D) Aliens not within any of the other provisions of this paragraph who advocate the economic, international, and governmental doctrines of world communism or the establishment in the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship, or who are members of or affiliated with any organization that advocates the economic, international, and governmental doctrines of world communism or the establishment in the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship, either through its own utterances or through any written or printed publications issued or published by or with the permission or consent of or under the authority of such organization or paid for by the funds of, or funds furnished by, such organization;

(E) Aliens not within any of the other provisions of this paragraph, who are members of or affiliated with any organization during the time it is registered or required to be registered under section 7 of the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950, unless such aliens establish that they did not have knowledge or reason to believe at the time they became members of or affiliated with such an organization (and did not thereafter and prior to the date upon which such organization was so registered or so required to be registered have such knowledge or reason to believe) that such organization was a Communist organization;

(F) Aliens who advocate or teach or who are members of or affiliated with any organization that advocates or teaches (i) the overthrow

by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means of the Government of the United States or of all forms of law; or (ii) the duty, necessity, or propriety of the unlawful assaulting or killing of any officer or officers (either of specific individuals or of officers generally) of the Government of the United States or of any other organized government, because of his or their official character; or (iii) the unlawful damage, injury, or destruction of property; or (iv) sabotage;

(G) Aliens who write or publish, or cause to be written or published, or who knowingly circulate, distribute, print, or display, or knowingly cause to be circulated, distributed, printed, published, or displayed, or who knowingly have in their possession for the purpose of circulation, publication, distribution, or display any written or printed matter, advocating or teaching opposition to all organized government, or advocating or teaching (i) the overthrow by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means of the Government of the United States or of all forms of law; or (ii) the duty, necessity, or propriety of the unlawful assaulting or killing of any officer or officers (either of specific individuals or of officers generally) of the Government of the United States or of any other organized government, because of his or their official character; or (iii) the unlawful damage, injury, or destruction of property; or (iv) sabotage; or (v) the economic, international, and governmental doctrines of world communism or the establishment in the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship;

(H) Aliens who are members of or affiliated with any organization that writes, circulates, distributes, prints, publishes, or displays, or causes to be written, circulated, distributed, printed, published, or displayed, or that has in its possession for the purpose of circulation, distribution, publication, issue, or display, any written or printed matter of the character described in paragraph (G);

(I) Any alien who is within any of the classes described in subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), and (H) of this paragraph because of membership in or affiliation with a party or organization or a section, subsidiary, branch, affiliate, or subdivision thereof, may, if not otherwise ineligible, be issued a visa if such alien establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer when applying for a visa and the consular officer finds that (i) such membership or affiliation is or was involuntary, or is or was solely when under sixteen years of age, by operation of law, or for purposes of obtaining employment, food rations, or other essentials of living and where necessary for such purposes, or (ii) (a) since the termination of such membership or affiliation, such alien is and has been, for at least five years prior to the date of the application for a visa, actively

opposed to the doctrine, program, principles, and ideology of such party or organization or the section, subsidiary, branch, or affiliate or subdivision thereof, and (b) the admission of such alien into the United States would be in the public interest. Any such alien to whom a visa has been issued under the provisions of this subparagraph may, if not otherwise inadmissible, be admitted into the United States if he shall establish to the satisfaction of the Attorney General when applying for admission to the United States and the Attorney General finds that (i) such membership or affiliation is or was involuntary, or is or was solely when under sixteen years of age, by operation of law, or for purposes of obtaining food rations, or other essentials of living and when necessary for such purposes, or (ii) (a) since the termination of such membership or affiliation, such alien is and has been, for at least five years prior to the date of the application for admission actively opposed to the doctrine, program, principles, and ideology of such party or organization or the section, subsidiary, branch, or affiliate or subdivision thereof, and (b) the admission of such alien into the United States would be in the public interest. The Attorney General shall promptly make a detailed report to the Congress in the case of each alien who is or shall be admitted into the United States under (ii) of this subparagraph;

(29) Aliens with the respect to whom the consular officer or the Attorney General knows or has reasonable ground to believe probably would, after entry, (A) engage in activities which would be prohibited by the laws of the United States relating to espionage, sabotage, public disorder, or in other activity subversive to the national security, (B) engage in any activity a purpose of which is the opposition to, or the control or overthrow of, the Government of the United States, by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means, or (C) join, affiliate with, or participate in the activities of any organization which is registered or required to be registered under section 7 of the Subversive Control Act of 1950. (66 Stat. Section 212)

4. Linked with the classes of excludable aliens, the definitions of the terms “organization,” “totalitarian party” and “world communism,” as defined in the INA of 1952, are also worth noting:

(28) The term “organization” means, but is not limited to, an organization, corporation, company, partnership, association, trust, foundation or fund; and includes a group of persons, whether or not incorporated, permanently or temporarily associated together with joining action or any subject or subjects.

[...]

(37) The term “totalitarian party” means an organization which advocates the establishment in the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship or totalitarianism. The terms “totalitarian dictatorship” and “totalitarianism” mean and refer to systems of government not representative in face, characterized by (A) the existence of a single political party, organized on a dictatorial basis, with so close an identity between such party and its policies and the governmental policies of the country in which it exists, that the party and the government constitute an indistinguishable unit, and (B) the forcible suppression of opposition to such party.

[...]

(40) The term “world communism” means a revolutionary movement, the purpose of which is to establish eventually a Communist totalitarian dictatorship in any or all the countries of the world through the medium of an internationally coordinated Communist political movement.

[...]

(3) The term “person” means an individual or an organization. (66 Stat. Section 101)

While these definitions appear to be straightforward, the definition of “organization” suggests otherwise as it enables readings of alien conspiracies by calling attention to the various (however tenuous) interconnections that lead to plotting the destruction of “organized government.” As with the definition of an immigrant, one of the crucial aspects of this definition lies in the implicit understanding that such plotting necessitates intent.

5. Title III, reads as follows:

Sec. 30. No visa shall hereafter be issued to any alien seeking to enter the United States unless said alien has been registered and fingerprinted in duplicate. One copy of the registration and fingerprint record shall be retained by the consul. The second copy shall be attached to the alien’s visa and shall be taken up by the examining immigrant inspector at the port of arrival of the alien in the United States and forwarded to the Department of Justice, at Washington, District of Columbia.

Any alien seeking to enter the United States who does not present a visa (except in emergency cases defined by the Secretary of State), a reentry permit, or a border-crossing identification card shall be excluded from admission to the United States. (in Bennett

Registration of all aliens already in the United States was also required for those over 14 years of age.

6. The Act defines a person of “good moral character” as follows:

[(40)] (f) For the purposes of the Act,

No person shall be regarded as, or found to be, a person of good moral character who, during the period for which good moral character is required to be established, is, or was—

(1) a habitual drunkard;

(2) one who during such period has committed adultery;

(3) [...]

(4) one whose income is derived principally from illegal gambling activities;

(5) one who has been convicted of two or more gambling offenses committed during such period;

(6) one who has given false testimony for the purpose of obtaining any benefits under this Act;

(7) one who during such period has been confined, as a result of conviction, to a penal institution for an aggregate period of one hundred and eighty days or more, regardless of whether the offense, or offenses, for which he has been confined were committed within or without such period;

(8) one who at any time has been convicted of the crime of murder.

The fact that any person is not within any of the foregoing classes shall not preclude a finding that for other reasons such person is or was not of good moral character. (66 Stat. Section 101)

Appendix D

1. In Section 5 (“Prohibited Classes”) of The Immigration Act, it is stated that

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

(l) persons who are or have been, at any time before or after the commencement of this Act, members of or associated with any organization, group or body of any kind concerning which there are reasonable grounds for believing that it promotes or advocates or at the time of such membership or association promoted or advocated subversion by force or other means of democratic government, institutions or processes, as they are understood in Canada, except persons who satisfy the Minister that they have ceased to be members of or associated with such organizations, groups or bodies and whose admission would not be detrimental to the security of Canada;

(m) persons who have engaged in or advocated or concerning whom there are reasonable grounds for believing they are likely to engage in or advocate subversion by force or other means of democratic government, institutions or processes, as they are understood in Canada;

(n) persons concerning whom there are reasonable grounds for believing they are likely to engage in espionage, sabotage or any other subversive activity directed against Canada or detrimental to the security of Canada; (1 Eliz. II, Chap. 42, pages 240-41).

In addition to these political exclusions, subparagraphs (q) and (r) exclude persons on the basis of political affiliation during the Second World War:

(q) persons who have been found guilty of espionage with respect to Her Majesty or any of Her Majesty’s allies;

(r) persons who have been found guilty of high treason or treason against or of conspiring against Her Majesty or of assisting Her Majesty’s enemies in time of war, or of any similar offence against any of Her Majesty’s allies; (1 Eliz. II, Chap. 42, pages 240-41).

