

EVE HAQUE

Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework

Language, Race, and Belonging
in Canada



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MULTICULTURALISM WITHIN A BILINGUAL FRAMEWORK

Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada

This book explores the roots of multiculturalism and bilingualism in Canada to show that these two important Canadian policies are inextricably linked and operate together as a contemporary national narrative, famously formulated by Pierre Trudeau as 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework.'

Both official bilingualism and multiculturalism emerged out of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism of the 1960s, which was established to address the emerging contestations to Anglo-Celtic hegemony from not only francophone but also Indigenous and other racial and ethnic communities in Canada. Eve Haque undertakes a comprehensive analysis of archival material, including transcripts of royal commission hearings, memos, and reports, to reveal the conflicts underlying the emergence of multiculturalism policy. This book explains how, in this era, the push from historically marginalized communities for recognition and national belonging led to a decisive shift of the national narrative onto the terrain of language and culture in order to maintain white settler hegemony while disavowing racial and ethnic exclusions.

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MULTICULTURALISM WITHIN
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Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada

Introduction: 'I'm Talking Language'

On 30 October 1995, the night of the sovereignty referendum in Quebec, Premier Jacques Parizeau became infamous for his comment that 'money and ethnic votes' had defeated the sovereignist cause. The vote was an incredibly close victory for the 'No' side (a margin of 53,000 votes), which may have fuelled the frustration that drove Parizeau to make his remarks. His speech, and in particular his comment regarding the role of ethnic voters, triggered major national media coverage, analysis, and discussion. Within the next twenty-four hours Parizeau had tendered his resignation, and over the next few months he virtually disappeared from public and political life.

What is interesting about this incident is not so much Parizeau's speech, which sustained a surfeit of media analysis, commentary, and public discussion on all sides of the debate, but rather his own explanation of his controversial remarks, made years later in an hour-long documentary about his life. This documentary, entitled *Public Enemy Number One* (2003), directed and narrated by journalist Francine Pelletier, traces Parizeau's early life and the build-up to his successful political career. The climax comes near the end of this documentary, when Parizeau explains what he meant by his 'money and ethnic votes' comment:

It's true that we were beaten . . . but by what? By money and ethnic votes. I know that I'm supposed to be a fascist . . . I'm supposed to be a racist but I never put anyone in jail. I never prevented anyone from saying what they wanted to . . . and it's true that I can't be compared to that great democrat Pierre Elliott Trudeau who put 500 people in jail . . . It's not 'hating'? I've tried to describe reality as I saw it . . . It's true we know now that that love-in cost more than twice what the Yes campaign and No campaign were

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authorized to spend for the full campaign ... so I said it ... money ... yes indeed ... The ethnic vote – the words might not have been very well chosen – but the fact is that that is what happened ... the non-francophone vote ... and I'm not talking here ... I'm talking language ... I'm not talking ... ethnic origin or whatever ... that's why my words were not necessarily well chosen but ... it was a language issue – the non-francophones more than usually as was the case voted No and some polls were zero – I had never seen that ... (Cartier and Henriquez, 2003)

Although Parizeau holds firm to his position and backs it with analysis, he also tries to unpack exactly what he meant by 'the ethnic vote.' In this portion of the documentary, Parizeau, who had been quite articulate until then, starts to struggle. He begins by admitting that his words 'might not have been very well chosen.' In his attempt to delineate exactly who was covered by the term 'ethnic,' he notes that what he had in mind was not 'ethnic origin or whatever' but rather language: 'it was a language issue.' Significantly, he is not specifying the Quebec anglophone minority either, for then he could simply name it as such; instead, he is trying to find a way to identify the 'No' voters among the 'non-francophone' and, by extension, non-anglophone groups. If this is not a group of voters/non-voters that can be acceptably delineated through 'ethnic origin' – for, after all, this is what ignited the country-wide storm of reaction against Parizeau's speech – then Parizeau's own effort to find the acceptable words and offer the appropriate explanation ('that's why my words were not necessarily well chosen') reveals that language was a good substitute: 'I'm talking language.'

Parizeau's explanation provides an entry point into the central questions of this book. More than a semantic slip, Parizeau's shift onto the terrain of language to clarify and support his comments was illustrative of the convenient alibi for racial ordering that can be provided by a multicultural nation established on the foundation of a putatively open linguistic duality – articulated in national policy as 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework.' Yet I am not interested in vilifying Parizeau, nor the political position from which he speaks; rather, I wish to use his comments as a basis from which to explore questions about language, race, and nation-building. The animating question of my analysis is this: how, in Canada, did language come to be the site for articulating exclusions which can no longer be stated in terms of race and ethnicity? Flowing from this is my specific goal of tracing how a national formulation of 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework' emerged to install a

racial order of difference and belonging through language in the ongoing project of white settler nation-building.

At the centre of the book is the work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963–70), commonly known as the B and B Commission. Established by the Liberal government of Lester B. Pearson as a response to growing nationalist sentiment among French Canadians in Quebec, the mandate of the commission, as laid out in its terms of reference, was primarily to

inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution. (Canada, *Book I*, 1967, Appendix I)

The terms of reference go on to specify that this would include determining the extent of bilingualism in the federal bureaucracy, the role of the public and private sectors in promoting English-French harmony, and the opportunities open to both English and French Canadians for becoming bilingual. Central to the commission's view of Canada, especially in its early phase, was the notion that the country rested on an equal partnership between the English and French 'founding races'¹ and that the reality of this partnership needed to be fully recognized in national institutions and society at large. In time, as this vision was challenged by non-English and non-French Canadians during the commission, it evolved into what became known as multiculturalism within a bilingual framework.

Those are the basic facts of the B and B Commission; the full story is more complex and multilayered. As the 1960s began, a confluence of events resulted in challenges to the existing Anglo-Celtic dominant national narrative of belonging, and the B and B Commission became the 'apparatus' through which the federal government addressed these issues. It is my contention that, at this particular historical juncture, the need to rearticulate the formulation for nation-building and national belonging meant a decisive shift onto the terrain of language and culture for organizing and maintaining white-settler hegemony while also disavowing racial and ethnic exclusions.

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Archival records and commission reports reveal the conflicts that underlay the emergence of this ostensibly seamless linguistic and cultural policy of 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework,' a policy enshrined in the commission's own report as well as, subsequently, the Official Languages Act (1969) and the Multiculturalism Policy (1971). The emergence of these two defining legislative texts on foundations laid by the B and B Commission required the elision of substantive contestation from both Indigenous communities and 'other ethnic groups' (which is how non-French and non-English immigrant groups were defined throughout the inquiry). Against the background of the commission's terms of reference, which spoke of only 'two founding races,' it is possible to trace how Indigenous groups' claims were eventually set aside and other ethnic groups' demands were muted, all culminating in the commission's final report. The shift from overt racial distinctions between founding and other ethnic groups onto the terrain of language and culture meant that racial exclusions could be disavowed even as they were smuggled back in through the contradictory operation of language and culture. This strategy emerged just as obvious, biologically based racial exclusions became increasingly politically and socially disreputable; therefore, particular cultural forms – especially language – became essential ascriptions for the constitution and exclusion of various groups along racialized lines. Consequently, language was identified as a fundamental element of culture by the commission and mobilized as an essential component of culture for the 'founding races,' even as it was deemed to be a private and peripheral element of culture for 'other ethnic groups.' Furthermore, by fixing narrow definitions of 'multicultural' and 'integration' in federal legislation, claims for substantive and collective forms of recognition from the state for other ethnic groups could be limited. In this way, with the concurrent changes to immigration legislation that were also taking place in the 1960s, language and culture were mobilized through the national formulation of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework in order to incorporate people into the contemporary, racialized hierarchy of belonging and citizenship rights.

Though my main goal is to explore the roots of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework and the implications of this concept for the Canadian social structure, I attempt to answer a set of subsidiary questions as well. First, what was the confluence of events and factors that required the rearticulation of the white-settler national mythology in terms that disavowed Anglo-Celtic dominance and racial exclusion?

Second, what arguments did non-English and non-French communities present to the B and B Commission to support their claims of belonging within the nation? Third, how did the commission respond to such views and, in the end, interpret them in such a way as to maintain white-settler hegemony? Finally, how precisely does this disavowal of racial exclusion operate through language and culture to naturalize the notion of a putatively open multicultural nation, while at the same time organizing the racial order of a new white-settler bilingual and bicultural nation?

First, a few words concerning this book's scope and structure. The B and B Commission published a *Preliminary Report* in 1965 and a final report in six books between the years 1967 and 1970. (With the death of André Laurendeau – co-chairman of the commission – on 1 June 1968, the planned seventh volume on constitutional reform never appeared [Smart, 1991, 9].) My analysis focuses on the *Preliminary Report* and Books I (*The Official Languages*) and IV (*The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*); the remainder of the Books – II: *Education*; III: *The Work World*; V: *The Federal Capital*; and VI: *Voluntary Associations* – fall outside the scope of this discussion. The study proceeds as follows. In chapter 1, I position my study within the larger theoretical literature on language, race, and nationalism, and outline the analytical approach adopted for this archival research project. Chapter 2 examines the relevant historical context in which the commission was conceived and operated, as the 1960s was a watershed decade for the reworking of Canadian settler nationalism on many fronts. In particular, I examine the concurrent and significant changes that were taking place within immigration policy, where a historic shift from race-based policies to a point system was taking place – a shift which would have momentous implications for the demographic future of Canada and, consequently, the implementation of the commission's recommendations. As well, controversial changes were being proposed with respect to the federal policy on Indigenous peoples; changes which would see historical relations between the State and Indigenous people completely transformed through the proposed elimination of the Indian Act. Finally, revolutionary changes were taking place in relation to French-language politics, particularly in Quebec, which gave particular urgency to the work of the Royal Commission.

Chapter 3 analyses the commission's preliminary hearings and subsequent *Preliminary Report*, drawing on Foucault's genealogical method to trace the emergence of a specifically singular notion of 'crisis,'

meant to both animate and circumscribe the precise limits of the Royal Commission's mandate. Specifically, this chapter traces how the range of concerns presented by Indigenous groups and 'other ethnic groups' during the preliminary hearings was distilled into an overall national 'crisis' between the French and English groups in the preliminary report of 1965. In chapter 4, submissions to the commission from various groups challenging the hegemonic formulation of the terms of reference as mainly a crisis between the French and English are analysed. Drawing on Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller's (1992) notion of 'expertise,' this chapter also examines the commissioner's subsequent use of research reports and related documents to confirm their authority in contesting or reinforcing findings from the public hearings in the production of the final report. Chapter 5 examines *Book I* of the final report, which gave rise to Canada's first Official Languages Act in 1969. First, this chapter explores the contradictory mechanism by which language and culture are defined in the opening 'blue pages' of this volume in order to re-inscribe the disavowed racial and ethnic hierarchies of the terms of reference. Next, Adam Ashforth's (1990) idea of 'reckoning schemes of legitimization' is used to trace the process whereby some facts were legitimized against others to justify the primacy of a white-settler bilingual and bicultural Canadian nation. Chapter 6 examines *Book IV* and its conception of and recommendations regarding 'other ethnic groups,' which ultimately led to the federal government's announcement of the Multiculturalism Policy in 1971. In this chapter, the contradictory mobilization of language and culture is used to redefine 'other ethnic groups' as 'cultural groups' even as recognition of their group rights is foreclosed. Specifically, non-official language rights are individualized and relegated to the private sphere as a form of cultural 'integration' and entrenched as such in the Multiculturalism policy – in direct contrast to the group rights accorded to official language communities. A concluding chapter reflects on the various current manifestations of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, most significantly as it is embedded in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Finally, as a way to think outside the limiting, racialized hierarchy of belonging put into place through the white-settler national formulation of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, Jacques Derrida's notion of hospitality is considered. Specifically, the *aporia* between conditional and unconditional hospitality is examined as a potential driving force for the improvement of national 'laws of hospitality' (Derrida, 2000) in an effort to rethink the theoretical limits of nation and community in the present.

1 Language, Nation, and Race: Framing the Inquiry

The durability of the white-settler bilingual/bicultural formulation in the present, and its contemporary mode of ordering racialized immigrant Others, is worth examining in order to suggest ways to rethink the theoretical limits of language planning and policy in nationalist projects. The context for this project lies in the relations between language, race, and nation-building; therefore, it is important to frame this analysis within these larger issues of race, language, and nation – and to outline the analytical approach to the data before narrowing the focus to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

Language and Nation

Conventional scholarship on nationalism organizes theories of nation and nationalism into four schools of thought. Although the following examples are not exhaustive, it is clear that – although its operation in each school of thought varies widely – language is a significant and constitutive aspect of nation formation. The first school of thought is what Anthony D. Smith (1998) refers to as the primordialists: those who argue that nations are part of a natural order, ancient and ubiquitous, with modern nations evolving from an original and enduring group. Second (and often seen as a subset of the first) are the perennialists, who, although they agree that nations have a primordial nature, deny their predestination and rather see them as temporally continuous or recurrent in history. Third are the modernists, who treat the nation as a recent, socio-political fact derived from the processes of modernization. Finally, and usually lumped together in one category as the postmodernists, are those who unpack the discursive construction of the nation,

emphasize the fragmentation of contemporary national identities, and unravel the gendered and racialized discourses of nation-building (Smith, 1998). Despite the impression of clearly delineated categories, it is important to note that there is in fact considerable overlap among them as well as disagreement about who belongs in which classification. Further confusion arises from the fact that there is little consensus on the definitions of terms such as nation, nationalism, and state.

In the primordialist school of thought, language is a central point around which the nation is organized.¹ In his prize-winning and influential essay (1770) 'Über den Ursprung der Sprache' (The Origin of Language), Johann Gottfried Herder wrote: 'Language is the medium through which man becomes conscious of his inner self, and at the same time it is the key to the understanding of his outer relationships. It unites him with, but it also differentiates him from, others' (as cited in Barnard, 1965, 57). He believed that the sustaining and integrating power of language would lead to a higher rate of social cohesion and the emergence of a *Volk*, or 'people.' Most important, Herder felt that, if language was capable of arousing a sense of identity in a community, it would also simultaneously give rise to the community's consciousness of difference from those speaking another language. This formulation of language and *Volk* meant a close association between language and politics that led to a change in the meaning of 'nation.' A nation was no longer a group of political citizens united under a political sovereign; rather, it was now a separate *natural* entity whose claim to political recognition rested on the possession of a common language (Barnard, 1965, 56–9). Similar to Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt² made it clear that language was the 'spiritual exhalation' of the nation, and that nothing was more important for national culture and continuity than the ancestral tongue (*ibid.*, 25). Another thinker, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1835), was one of the most famous disseminators of Herder's views, and built on them to develop his own theory of national superiority based on the supposed linguistic purity of the German language (*ibid.*).

This ethnolinguistic formulation of the concept of 'nation' set the stage for what in the present day is more popularly known as the 'blood and belonging' form of nation. In this category, groups who perceive themselves as possessing a common culture and language come together to make a political state, with 'blood' and language as the main criteria for belonging (Wright, 2000, 41). Germany and Japan are the classic examples of this formulation – that is, states where the main organizing principle is the belief in a common cultural and linguistic

heritage. It is also clear that, according to this view, one does not 'join' a nation; rather, one is born into it.

It is through language, too, that Joshua Fishman³ seeks to answer why nationalism so often generates a political community occupied with a common cultural heritage. He identifies three main attributes of language in the message of nationalism. The first is language as a link with the glorious past, where mother tongue becomes history itself (Fishman, 1972, 45). The second is language as a link with authenticity, which is the now-familiar primordial and Herderian formula (*ibid.*, 47). The final is a contrastive self-identification via language, which is described best by Fichte's formulation of language 'purity' as reflective of ethnic superiority (*ibid.*, 52). For Fishman, both the primordial and modernist links between language and nationalism are clear: 'Nationalism intends that language use and language planning both should encourage and facilitate behaviours of broader unity, deeper authenticity, and various modern implementations of sociocultural and political-organizational integration' (*ibid.*, 66). This is precisely the form of language-planning exercise that the B and B Commission became engaged in as they took on the task of reformulating Canadian nationalism.

In the modernist account of nation formation, nations arise out of specific social, economic, and political circumstances. Their emergence as the primary social community in the modern era is related to the advent of modernization, the concomitant rise of the state, and the ideology of nationalism (May, 2001, 63). In this school of thought, language plays a crucial, unifying role in the rise of the modern nation, but this standard language is not so much a primordial, essential precursor to nation formation as something that emerges through the processes of modernity. Language as a unifying force in the formation of the nation can most famously be traced back to the French Revolution and the emergence of a 'national' standard of French (Wright, 2000; Higonnet, 1980; Grillo, 1989).

The French Revolutionary model of linguistic uniformity has given rise to the present-day conceptual framework of French integration, where assimilation is compelled through a hegemonic monoculturalism and monolingualism. The philosophy that underlies membership in this type of nation can be summed up as, 'You are here, therefore you are "X" or must become "X"' (Wright, 2000, 41). Ernest Gellner builds on this model. For him, the material changes associated with industrialization at the end of the eighteenth century are the main causes of the