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**EXPOSING THE THREADS: A CRITICAL
INTERROGATION OF THE POLICIES,
PRACTICES AND (NON-)PERFORMATIVITY
OF DIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF TORONTO**

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Abstract

This paper explores "diversity" as a discourse, and thus as a mechanism of power. Specifically, this paper invites a critical interrogation into the racial logics of diversity and how political power of government and its policies have been constructed through race, which in turn binds the racialized body against the changing landscape of the City.

Introduction

The language of diversity is elusive, pervasive, and widely contested. For some, diversity is a celebration of multi-cultures; for others, diversity reinforces racial lines, whiteness, and racism. Over the past two decades, multiculturalism scholars have argued that diversity inspires pluralism as well as inclusive policies and practices which seek to accommodate equal recognition of cultural identities in order to transcend the

boundaries of difference (see for example Good, 2009; Isin & Siemiatycki, 1997; Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka & Banting, 2006; Nagle, 2009; Parekh, 2006). Yet critical race scholars also contend that celebrations of cultural “difference,” proclamations of political success, and feelings of happiness and harmony that diversity inspires conceal the centrality of race and power in its construction (see Ahmed, 2000, 2012; Bannerji, 2000; Cross & Keith, 1993; Jordan & Weedon, 2015; Keith, 2002; Puwar, 2004; Shaw, 2007). In short, conceptualizations of what diversity is, or what it *does*, are riddled with tensions and contradictions.

These contradictions are highlighted further in empirical studies of diversity in the City of Toronto,¹ a municipal government which claims that Toronto is “one of the most diverse cities in the world and has gained an international reputation for the successful management of its diversity” (City of Toronto, 2003a, p. 2). The City of Toronto’s motto “Diversity Our Strength” implies a celebration of ethnic harmony and multicultural inclusion in a city that is now over fifty percent people of color (Altilia, 2003; Boudreau, Keil & Young, 2009; Saloojee & Siemiatycki, 2002). In her study of how responsive Canadian municipalities are to their multicultural communities, Kristen Good (2009) suggests that the official adoption of the City of Toronto’s diversity motto is one example of how integral the accommodation, integration, and engagement with immigrant and ethno-cultural groups are to the City’s mandate and image. In Good’s view, initiatives such as these show how the City of Toronto goes “well beyond their limits” to respond to and successfully “manage its diversity” (p. 87). As she also suggests, it is evident that diversity and multiculturalism are extremely important to the City of Toronto, as “community leaders representing

¹ Big “C” City refers to the corporation/municipal government, small “c” city to the metropolis.

immigrants and ethnocultural minorities would not support an increased municipal role in immigrant settlement and multiculturalism policy if the city were not responsive to their concerns” (p. 65).

However, empirical studies which link diversity with race and/or racism in the City of Toronto indicate that despite the motto, the City has consistently excluded racialized communities from its political decision-making processes (Altilia, 2003). In her study of the City of Toronto, Carol Altilia (2003) argues that diversity precludes analyses of inequity, and as such, the exclusion of racialized communities in Toronto’s municipal government is not prioritized, or even addressed (Altilia, 2003). As Sheila Croucher (1997) also points out, because the City of Toronto relies heavily on its image as a “diverse” city of multiple languages, cultures, and positive ethnic relations to compete effectively in the global marketplace, any struggles based on race and class are effectively written out of the historical and political space of the city.

How is it possible for the term “diversity” in the City of Toronto to vacillate between presence *and* absence, inclusion *and* exclusion, mobilization *and* repression of racialized communities? Furthermore, under what condition(s) might any tensions between the “inclusion” of bodies and the “management” of bodies dissolve to a point where they appear in a natural, even symbiotic relationship? This paper takes these paradoxical moments as its point of departure. Specifically, in this paper I seek to demonstrate how diversity, as a discourse and as a mechanism of power, negotiates and transforms multiple conceptual, racial, and embodied schisms into the reproduction and justification of particular historical “truths” and knowledge which provide the conditions for the possibility and (re-)emergence of diversity in the present. As Michel Foucault (1984) writes, in understanding discourse, we must seek to understand, historically, how truth and its effects are produced within discourses which accept and make it function as truth.

Discourse thus provides “the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, 1984, p. 73). As Ann Laura Stoler (1995) also argues, power organizes “truths” (or truth-claims) in a way that justifies and re-produces historical, social, and racial distinctions and exclusions in the world. This paper begins to trace the historical and racial conditions, practices, and truth-claims which rearticulate and are rearticulated by diversity discourse in the City of Toronto, in order to begin to grasp the political force behind truth, knowledge, and diversity itself.

Attending to the Local – Diversity and Space

There are multiple and in some cases conflicting interpretations of the relationship between the municipality and the central state on conceptualizations of diversity and race. Malcolm Cross and Michael Keith (1993) argue that it is both politically and theoretically necessary to interrogate whether the limits of “race equality” efforts in Cities, as far as they may have been pushed, reflect the extent of the commitments made by municipalities themselves, or “the degree to which the mirage of an autonomous urban political machine masked the necessary subservience of the local to the central state” (p. 20). Scholarly research in this area demonstrates the complex interplay of factors that make interpreting and taking up this task a challenge.

In the City of Toronto, diversity policies and practices are often directly linked to liberal state multiculturalism and its celebrations of ethnic differences that have dominated Canadian public discourse for years (Boudreau, Keil & Young, 2009; Catungal & Leslie, 2009; Croucher 1997; Good, 2009; Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005). Julie-Anne Boudreau, Roger Keil and Douglas Young (2009) suggest that although Toronto offers serious challenges to the multiculturalism policies of the

nation-state in terms of the actual lived experiences of ‘visible minorities’ and the anti-racist actions that are sparked by them, multiculturalism remains central to the City’s various “diversity actions”(p. 88)². Kanishka Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer (2005) and Croucher (1997) further suggest that bourgeois urbanism uses multiculturalism in Canada to reinforce capitalist urbanization and the desires of the elite and middle class because of its occlusion of the racial hierarchies and nationalist narratives that constitute and are re-constituted by multiculturalism policies. Multicultural rhetoric thus allows Toronto as an urban setting to re-imagine itself as ethnically harmonious while preventing racism from being seen as a social problem (Croucher, 1997). Croucher (1997) espouses that the idea of urban ethnic relations being harmonious in Toronto largely serves the interests of elites (including those of the local state), who use the ideology of multiculturalism in order to demonstrate the irrelevance of race and racism in Toronto, and to its municipal government. For those who suggest that the City of Toronto’s diversity policies draw directly from Canada’s multiculturalism policies, they tend to gradually conflate diversity and multiculturalism, and present the diversity policies of the City of Toronto and Canadian multicultural policies as essentially accomplishing the same thing. This begs the question: why “Diversity Our Strength” in the City of Toronto, and not simply “Multicultural(ism) Our Strength?”

In this paper, I pay close attention to the specificities of diversity discourse in the City of Toronto, following Jane M. Jacob’s (1996) assertion that the local space of the city, as a site of contemporary close(r) encounters with the racial Other, reproduces imperial anxieties which has particular implications for the making of subjects. Although there has been a significant focus on how race is experienced and negotiated in Toronto, significantly less attention has been paid to what the

² In fact, the authors refer to the City’s diversity policies as “multicultural policies.” (p. 88)

City of Toronto's diversity policies and practices actually *do* with these anxieties, as well as *with, for and to the racial bodies that produce them*. In this vein, I move away from attempts to capture how the City's diversity policies might (or might not) reflect the multiculturalism policies of the nation-state, and instead pursue critical questions of what diversity discourse does in and for the City of Toronto, *as a specific and local context*.

Sherene Razack (2002) also asks that we pay close attention to the co-constitution of bodies and spaces, as well to the colonial and racist discourses that produce and contain "how subjects come to know themselves in and through space" (p. 17). In my analyses, I begin to trace how increasing encounters with racial Others evoke specific spatial and racial anxieties which are recuperated via diversity discourse in the City of Toronto, to reproduce processes of inclusion, exclusion, and subjectivity in racial terms. I also show how racial subjects in the City are discursively produced and contained via diversity to simultaneously reproduce the City as a "leader" in addressing issues of diversity and racism. This paper thus poses some important questions about the role of diversity discourse in the co-production of race, space, and the racial subject. Exploring the co-production of race, space, and the racial subject enables an analysis of how the City of Toronto may both enact and react to racialized difference, in local and site-specific ways.

Methodology

Sara Ahmed (2012) calls for a genealogy of the term "diversity" in order to better understand its institutional appeal, as well as for us "to have conversations with each other from our specific locations" (p. 16) to understand how diversity manifests in the local. In this paper, I draw on a genealogical framework to explicate the historical, political, social, and cultural "truths" of diversity discourse in the City of Toronto, as well as how and under what conditions they are reproduced in the space of the City of Toronto. I seek to unravel what

appears as self-evident and linear, to show the discontinuities, exclusions, and alternative accounts of diversity in the City of Toronto so that its perceived essence and logic can be situated within a larger political, economic, and racial project.

Foucault (1984) believed that genealogy conveyed how truth and its effects could not be separated from its processes of production. Thus, through genealogy one could draw attention to the illegitimate, disqualified knowledges of a discourse against what was taken to be its ‘truths,’ in order to expose the processes of the production of knowledge as *political processes* (Foucault, 1980). Using a genealogical framework, I began to explore the productive and political workings of truth and power by unearthing the “local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges” (Foucault, 1980, p. 83) of diversity discourse in the City of Toronto. In the following pages, I draw on examples from a textual analysis I conducted on Committee and Council documents of the City of Toronto from 1980 to the present which named and/or offered policy directions on race, racism, and/or diversity, in order to observe and trace the multiple and contradictory political moments which make up diversity.³ I refer to these City documents as “texts” because, following Dorothy Smith (1999), texts become “active” through their reading by coordinating the activities of many to (re-)produce certain social, historical, and material relations (p. 135). Although the diverse object and subject appear in City

³ This textual analysis was conducted as part of my doctoral dissertation research. The themes and analyses that I include in this paper were considered as possible chapters of my dissertation, but were parsed out due to limitations of space/pages. The documents included in this paper were selected from a list of hundreds of policy documents which named either “race,” “racism” and/or “diversity”, and then when a deeper investigation was required due to the absence of electronic databasing and/or loss of paper indexing, search terms were extended (some on the advice of City of Toronto Archives Staff) to “race,” “race relations,” “anti-racism,” “multicultural,” “diversity management,” “equity,” “human rights,” “Employment Equity Act,” “Employee and Labour Relations,” and “Aboriginal”. These texts which were grouped into several themes, including “the Good Sell” and “Invitation to Encounter,” which were not included in my dissertation.

texts as having a point of origin and inner meaning in history, the goal of this paper is to begin to unearth how diversity in the City of Toronto accumulates into a series of events, bending to the will of political and racial forces and their effects.

Diversity Exposed

Ahmed (2012) draws on Fanon to emphasize how bodies become racialized through encounters. For example, racialization was crucial to the imperial project, whereby white and black bodies *were produced* as ontologically and epistemologically different through civil/uncivil, moral/immoral, and clean/impure dichotomies, in order to justify colonial violence. Ahmed (2012) also argues that “race is an *effect* of racialization” (p. 47); the meanings and “essences” attached to racial bodies through racialization are incited into discourses of race, and reified through the white masculine subject’s field of knowledge which desires to impart the “truth” about the racial Other.

Following Ahmed, I contend that diversity discourse reproduces and (re-)organizes race in the City of Toronto through racialization and the re-making of the racial subject. Using examples from City of Toronto texts, I also show how the construction of spatially bound innocence (the denial of racism in space) is co-constituted with the repetition of racialization which attempts to fix the encountered racial Other in space. In City texts, any references to race or racism, as embodied or experienced (i.e. barriers to access, human rights violations or hate crimes based on race) are reframed and folded into a pre-existing “diversity” agenda which occludes and/or erases experiences of racism via reifying and organizing the space and bodies of the City in colonial and racial terms. As Claudia Matus and Marta Infante (2011) write:

The construction of diversity requires a counterpart: discrimination. This, if unproblematized, legitimates the oppositional resistance to ‘diversity’. Thus, it is ‘natural’ to engage in discriminatory practices...but what is not at stake are those who are dictating the norms about

who will be penalized and for what differences.
(Matus and Infante, 2011, p. 304)

I want to build on Matus and Infante's idea that discrimination is normalized in the construction of diversity to suggest that the reproduction of racialization and race is precisely what makes diversity in the City of Toronto thrive. I argue that diversity in the City of Toronto requires and *normalizes* racialization in order to be able to co-articulate racial difference and spatial innocence. It is through this co-articulation, which draws upon and recites racial logics and truths, that the reproduction of the historical, ontological, political, and economic violence of race in the City of Toronto is made possible. In other words, racialization essentializes and organizes racial Others in order to make up the "difference" of diversity, at the same time that experiences of race/racism are repeatedly occluded or erased in order to reproduce the City of Toronto as a leader in managing (read: knowing) "them" *and* as a space of innocence.

Here I also want to challenge Ahmed's (2012) conceptualization of commitments to diversity as non-performative. Ahmed builds on Butler's (1993) theorization of non-performativity, which requires that discourse *does not* "produce the effects that it names" (p. 2), to argue that "the failure of a speech act to do what it says...is actually *what the speech act is doing*" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 117). For Ahmed, to name is a way to not bring something into effect; the saying stands in for the *not doing*. I want to complicate her theorizing of non-performativity to suggest that what diversity in the City of Toronto names and/or says is premised on and reproduces racial terms, and therefore that the "saying" of diversity discourse cannot be separated from what it *does*. If race is an effect of racialization, as Ahmed suggests, and diversity discourse invites and reproduces race via racialization, how can what diversity names be separated from its norms and modes of production/re-articulation, even in what it promises to be and *do*? I want to use the idea of ethnic harmony in the City as an example of diversity as a performative. Does the naming of the City as an ethnically harmonious space via diversity discourse not require racialization and race, as well as their reproductions, as effects of its naming *and* doing? Similarly,

does the naming of the City as a leader in managing diversity not require the reproduction and effects of racialization as well, whether occluded or rendered partially visible, as “cultural difference”? I ask: Is diversity in the City of Toronto really non-performative if, as a reiterative practice which conceals the racial norms that are incited into and reproduced by it, diversity does what it intends precisely through what it names/says? In the following pages, I organize my analyses around two themes, diversity as the “good sell” and diversity as invitation to encounter, to show how diversity discourse in the City of Toronto is a performative. I trace how the re-citing of diversity incites and reproduces racializing ideas and practices, which occlude the existence of racism in order to name the City as a space of leadership and innocence.

Diversity as the “Good Sell”

“TORONTO THE DIVERSE”

- ▶ Multiple ethnic cultures: 160 countries
- ▶ 1-of-3 GTA residents is a visible minority
- ▶ Religious freedom
- ▶ Inclusive
- ▶ A City of nations (Chinatown, etc.)
- ▶ Caribana: largest West Indian event in North America

(“Increasing Toronto’s profile internationally and at home (all wards)”, City of Toronto, 2002a, p. 12)

Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel (2002) write about the intrinsic value and broader trend of “‘selling diversity’ – whereby the skills, talents, and ethnic backgrounds of men and women are commodified, marketed, and billed as trade-enhancing” in Canada (p. 12). Catungal and Leslie (2009) and Shaw (2007) further assert that diversity is a consumable product of whiteness. Only those who have the class, cash, and right ethnicity can enjoy the rewards and benefits of “ethnic” diversity (Shaw, 2007, p. 95). Diversity draws directly on corporate logic, market based strategies, and the achievement

of goals and standards alongside the management and containment of internal differences.

Diversity as a concept and as a discourse is used frequently by the city of Toronto to promote a strong economy and to attract tourism, investment, and capital. For example, in 2002, the City of Toronto embarked on three-year marketing plan with a “branding strategy” in order to increase its profile internationally and at home, and to increase its global competitiveness (City of Toronto, 2002a). As part of the plan, the City sought to highlight Toronto’s “ethnocultural diversity as one of its major competitive advantages and community strengths” (International Policy Framework for the City of Toronto, 2002b, p.4), and includes the following statement from the Toronto Economic Development Strategy, approved in 2000 by Toronto City Council:

Nowhere else in the world do so many people from so many different cultures, different ethnic background, different religions, races, creeds, color, sexual orientation, live together in peace, harmony, and mutual respect (City of Toronto, 2002a, p. 2).

The City’s \$500k branding strategy, developed in consultation with five City departments and external consultants, included the theme “Toronto The Diverse,” which seeks to promote the city as a space that is “inclusive” and where there is “religious freedom,” to name a few (City of Toronto, 2002a, p. 12).

However, during the same year that the branding strategy was developed and put forward to Toronto City Council, a Toronto Response for Youth (TRY) program was being developed in response to concerns of “a significant increase in the number of incidents of hate and racism directed against members of Toronto’s Muslim communities following the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001” (p. 1), and “crime statistics released in the spring of 2002 by the Toronto Police Service which revealed that hate crimes against Muslims in Toronto had more than doubled” (City of Toronto,

2002c, p. 2). Earlier that same year, a Notice of Motion was also put forward concerning the vandalism of the Gayatri Mandir, a Hindu Temple in Toronto, which included the following statements:

WHEREAS Toronto City Council has taken a leadership role to respect and to celebrate the diversity among the people of Toronto; and

WHEREAS Toronto City Council has adopted many policies and programs which respect our diversity; and

WHEREAS on February 8, 2002, the Gayatri Mandir at Dupont Street and Ossington Avenue in the City of Toronto was vandalized...

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT City Council express its distress, deepest concern and indignation about these hate crimes and join with the Federation of Hindu Temples of Canada in condemning these acts... (City of Toronto, 2002d, p. 31).

In 2003, a report and subsequent Notice of Motion was issued concerning the “60.48 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2002...the highest number recorded in the 20-year history” (City of Toronto, 2003b, p. 17). The Notice of Motion included the statement that because “anti-Semitism is incompatible with Toronto's slogan: ‘Diversity is our Strength,’” Toronto City Council should pass a resolution “strongly condemning all acts of anti-Semitism and all forms of racism” (City of Toronto, 2003b, p. 17).

bell hooks (1992) writes how the Other, encountered in politically progressive spaces, must assume “recognizable forms”; where voices of non-white Others are first enabled, and then “eaten, consumed, and forgotten” (p. 26). In the texts noted above, the City of Toronto repeatedly marketing itself internationally and locally as being “good at” and/or a leader in diversity enables and is enabled by the racialization and commodification of its “diverse” populations, premised on the

evocation and occlusion/erasure of experiences of racism in the City. I argue that racialized Others and their experiences of racism become recognizable, and that they become *subjects* in the City, only in their consumed, de-contextualized, and re-branded forms. This subjectivity is premised on the reproduction of essentialist representations of the non-white Other, as co-constructed with the occlusion and/or denial of (their) experiences of racism in the City, which directly informs and is informed by how the City is good at and/or a leader in diversity. What I am suggesting here is that experiences of racism in the diverse City become *necessary*; that they are deliberately evoked as signs of racial difference which are then re-framed/commodified and erased once they, and the bodies that have been subjected to them *and by them*, have been “eaten”. The processes of evocation, consumption, and reframing are precisely the moments where race is reproduced *through racialization*, where Othered bodies serve a particular cultural and consumable fantasy of Otherness in the diverse City, and as a reconfirmation of whiteness and power.

The City also markets itself as a “global city” where immigrants are welcomed and are an integral part of the celebrated cultural diversity and economic viability that makes up Toronto’s unique character. For example, in a request to Toronto City Council to cover additional expenses of hosting the 2005 Metropolis Congress, the benefits of hosting included showcasing how the City, “as one of the most ethno-racially diverse cities in the world, can demonstrate how it has successfully integrated newcomers into the fabric of Canadian society,” and how it can “boost Toronto’s international image as a leader in dealing with immigration and settlement issues,” who is willing to share their experiences and successes with other cities (City of Toronto, 2004, p. 5). Similarly, in the City of Toronto’s 2006 Creative City Report, which seeks to highlight Toronto’s creative and growing cultural sector in order to position the city internationally and to attract local and regional investment, Toronto’s immigrant populations are

conveyed as a source of creative talent and economic growth, where they “bring their skills, experience, social network, and artistic traditions to the city,” but also as evidence of the City’s inclusive nature: “their very presence stands as an indicator of the city’s openness to diverse newcomers” (City of Toronto, 2006, p. 19).

However, in City texts, the existence of racism does not entirely disappear. In 2002, the “City of Toronto Immigration and Settlement Communications Framework” outlines the need to translate key City materials into various languages, to increase outreach through ethnic media, and to increase the presence of multilingual staff in order for newcomers to have increased access to City services. Indicated very briefly in the report is that the communications framework must also support the removal of “*systemic barriers such as racism and the lack of recognition of overseas education, qualifications, or work experience*” (2002e, p. 6; my emphasis). This statement is immediately followed by an understanding that information in languages from the most frequent countries of immigrant origin is vastly required, as it further enables the City to respond to immigration and settlement issues, and to encourage a positive climate and attitude towards newcomers that the City is known for. Similarly, the City of Toronto Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (City of Toronto, 2003) begins with the claim that “Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world and has gained an international reputation for the successful *management of its diversity*” (City of Toronto, 2003, p. 2; my emphasis), and that the Plan is but one of the ways in which “the City of Toronto continues its leadership role in building a society that respects and values the diversity among the peoples of the City of Toronto” (p. 3). The 2000 Ornstein study, the City-commissioned study on ethno-racial inequality in Toronto, which sparked the Plan, concluded that for ethno-racial minorities with similar education, the levels of unemployment and poverty are significantly higher than for persons of European origin. The City of Toronto Plan

identifies these labor market and economic disparities that may be experienced by racialized and/or immigrant communities *due to racism*, and suggests:

integrating into the City's labour force development plans co-operative strategies to address unique needs of diverse communities to ameliorate labour market and economic disparities, *implement mentoring programs* to assist employees and immigrant workers, continue outreach and information initiatives so that businesses from diverse communities have access to the procurement process of the City and agencies. (City of Toronto, 2003, p. 6; my emphasis)

Himani Bannerji (2000) argues that as an ideological tool, diversity re-packages un- or underemployment into issues of culture rather than as evidence of racism. I want to build on Bannerji's analysis to offer that the City's continued leadership in the area of diversity is co-constructed with racializing practices which are premised on the essentialized inferiority of racialized bodies. The discourse of diversity re-circulates racializing norms by suggesting that issues of racism and/or unemployment of racialized Others in the City can be resolved by translation and mentoring; which identifies "their" *lack* of knowledge and language skills in order to conceal and continue to deny racism (and accountability for racism) in the space of the City. The denial of racism in the space of the City, which keeps the City of Toronto's local and world leader status intact, is thus premised on the reproduction of racialization and racial thinking which is incited into and incited by diversity discourse in the City of Toronto.

Reframing experiences of racism in the City as difficulties experienced due to language barriers and/or lack of skills, knowledge, training and/or education is prominent in and across several City of Toronto diversity texts, dating as far back as the 1980s. What becomes interesting here is the extent to which the City re-circulates the embodiment of lack (of language, knowledge, and/or skills), in order to re-frame and/or

deny the existence of racism, and to reassert itself as a leader in issues of diversity. For example, the “Deputy Mayor’s Black Business Professionals Roundtable” report (City of Toronto, 2014) suggests that issues faced by Black business owners and operators in the City could be resolved by “building education and awareness,” “skills development workshops,” and “creating a business professionals mentorship program” for the Black business community (p. 10). Experiences of racism were mentioned nowhere in the report. The report also includes a note from Toronto City Councilor Michael Thompson, which states:

Diversity is Toronto’s strength ... what we learned and shared at the Black Business Professionals Roundtable will go a long way toward building productive ongoing collaboration and instituting effective support services (City of Toronto, 2014a, p. iii).

In response to the escalating hate crimes against Muslim groups in Toronto in 2002, the City of Toronto created a youth *mentoring program* (TRY), which recruits and trains “at-risk youth” to become peer leaders to assist other young people in dealing with issues related to Islamophobia and other forms of racism, but to also provide at-risk racialized youth with “employment and life skills” (City of Toronto, 2002c, p. 2), in order to gain long-term employment. The report also notes that the TRY project “has the potential to be a useful model for other communities,” given that it is a “unique City-run project which has been built on a foundation of community partnerships” (p. 3). Through the re-circulation of translation services, mentoring, training and skills development, the City perpetually links barriers to access, employment and/or experiences of racism in the City with “their” (racialized Others’) lack of skills, knowledge, education, language, and/or training. This deliberate linking of the reproduction of racialization and the erasure of racism enables a re-citing of the City’s claims of leadership and innocence. In other words, the more translation services and mentoring are repeated in City texts, the more the shift from racism to racialization, the more innocent the City space, the more successful the City of

Toronto becomes at being a leader in “managing” diversity via addressing “their” *lack*.

The City’s Human Resources Action Plan on Access, Equity, and Human Rights 2007– 2008 lists several initiatives for the City to *continue* to achieve diversity and inclusiveness in the Toronto Public Service, including to strengthen relationships with the Aboriginal community, but also “to increase understanding of managers regarding their obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code and to prevent and eliminate racism and racial barriers in the TPS” (City of Toronto, 2008, p. 5). In the Plan, a Mentoring program that assists Black African Canadian employees is listed as an initiative which is “effective in addressing issues of *systemic discrimination*,” particularly the underrepresentation of Black African Canadian senior employees in the City; yet the program is also listed as beneficial for City staff who “learn mentoring and coaching skills and increase their understanding of *cross-cultural issues*” (p. 9; my emphases). The elimination of racial barriers and racism in the City again becomes coupled with the mentoring of Black African Canadians, whereby their lack of knowledge and skills becomes the reason for their lack of access and mobility in the City. However, the existence of racism becomes re-framed as *distinctly cultural issues* which “City staff” (read: white) can learn about in order to *manage*. Page 12 of the Plan also notes that the City won several awards for participation in this Mentoring program in 2007.⁴

⁴ Other examples include the “1986-1990 Equal Opportunity Program Review” report which outlines how racialized and Native employees are significantly underrepresented in the City and “have historically faced systemic barriers to employment” (p. 69). The report suggests “internship/bridging/apprenticeship positions” and training strategies to give employees “the knowledge, skills, and experience to compete successfully” (p. 70). In May of 1991, the City of Toronto created the “Multicultural Access Program” (MAP) in response to problems that members of ethnic and racial minorities had encountered in getting access to municipal services (City of Toronto, 1990). Consultations with racial and ethnic groups began as early as 1984, but particular emphasis was placed on inviting new

In this section of the paper, I have shown how the City of Toronto's marketing of itself as being "good at" and/or a local and world leader in diversity is directly linked with reproducing racialization and race, which simultaneously occludes and/or denies the existence of racism in the space of the City. The City's leadership on managing diversity is repeated in and across several City texts, but what becomes concealed is how the City co-constructs this leadership with the re-circulation of racial norms that reinscribes racialization of the Other, in order to disavow the racist and racializing practices that would threaten its local and international leadership status. Through re-significations of racial difference and the normalization of (racial) lack, which are incited into and incited by the discourse of diversity, race simultaneously flourishes and is concealed in the City.

Building upon my earlier argument that diversity discourse in the City of Toronto is performative, I also want to suggest that the City marketing itself as "inclusive," as a space of "religious freedom," and as a leader in diversity can only be accomplished via the commodification of racial subjects. What diversity names and the effects it produces are both made possible through the reproduction of racialization and race, and as such, the saying/naming cannot be separated from the *doing* of diversity. In the next section of this paper, I discuss further how the reproduction of racialization and race are inextricably linked to the performativity of diversity discourse and the simultaneous occlusion/denial of racism in the space of the

immigrants who, *because of their cultural and language backgrounds*, had difficulty in getting adequate access to services (City of Toronto, 1990, p. 152; my emphasis). Even though racism and discrimination were identified in the consultations as a core issue in terms of accessing service, the City's response was to "provide better information on City services in a variety of languages and media" (City of Toronto, 1992, p. 120).

City, through exploring the invitation to racial Others into consultations in the City of Toronto.

Diversity as Invitation to Encounter

Participants expressed frustration that they were being consulted again. Individuals and community groups asked why they were being consulted when the City and other governments had a catalogue of actions that could be taken.

(“City of Toronto Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination”, City of Toronto, 2003a, p. 27)

They [participants] welcomed the opportunity to participate in these consultations with one of the few orders of government where discussion on issues of diversity is taking place. Participants expressed hope that the City of Toronto would continue to act as an advocate on behalf of its residents despite the current political climate, and that the City would continue to lead the country in addressing issues of diversity.

(“City of Toronto Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination”, City of Toronto, 2003a, p. 28)

In her book *Woman, Native, Other*, Min-Ha Trinh (1989) suggests that the invitation to the “native Other” to contribute their voice in dominant systems and hierarchies reignites the “us” and “them” dichotomy that rationalizes socio-racial and spatial relations of power. In this practice, the native Other is both taken up as the “voice of truth” and re-written by the white male in his own language, to reproduce and manage racial demarcations (1989, p. 67). The co-construction of the occlusion/denial of experiences of racism with the reproduction of racialization and race is evident in and across several City of Toronto texts which discuss the invitation to racial Others to be “consulted” on how to address issues of racism. For example, to prepare for the City of Toronto’s Plan of Action for the

Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (City of Toronto, 2003a), approximately 50 community consultation sessions were held, where over 1,000 people participated and contributed their thoughts on how the City could combat increasing experiences of racism and discrimination in Toronto. In the appended summary notes of the consultations were several statements about experiences of racism in the city, and of the need for the City to be held accountable in addressing racism:

Since 9/11, Muslim is a euphemism for walking bomb. Racism is a growing problem in Toronto. How do I know? I know because the number of attacks on me keeps increasing. There is no safe place. (City of Toronto, 2003a, p. 29)

However, in the body of the Plan, the City is again reproduced as a leader in managing issues of diversity via the occlusion/erasure of experiences of racism. Included in the Plan of Action report is a statement of how the invitation to residents, community groups, and organizations to give their input on the Plan of Action is an example of how the City “build(s) on the legacy and leadership for which the City is known”(City of Toronto, 2003a, p. 25). The report also closes with the following:

Diversity is a fundamental characteristic of our city. It gives Toronto strength through an ability to value, celebrate and respect differences. It is this recognition of diversity, which makes Toronto one of the most creative, caring and successful cities in the world (City of Toronto, 2003a, p. 20).

There is a certain irony attached to the statement that diversity makes Toronto one of the most caring cities in the world in a report which seeks to eliminate racism and discrimination. Those who feel that being Muslim is equated with a walking bomb, those who experience increasing racial attacks, and those who never feel safe, would hardly call the city they live in a place that celebrates and respects differences.

Furthermore, participants' frustrations at being consulted become re-framed in the Plan of Action in order to demonstrate the City's leadership on diversity, as well as their democratic nature. Consultations which were originally frustrating become yet another welcomed opportunity for "diverse" communities to participate, which the City then links to its proactive stance in *inviting and leading* discussions of diversity.

Ahmed (2012) explains that in institutions that embrace diversity, "moments of complaint" (i.e. discussions of race/racism) become opportunities to promote the values of diversity, which prevents messages about racism from being heard (p. 145). Trinh (1989) also aptly writes that the invitation to sit at the table with "us" appropriates and reduces "them" to a detached "us" discourse. The invitation evokes a grateful witness who mimics and legalizes the discourse. A "them" among "us" is thus "a hoax; a false incorporation that leaves 'them' barer than ever, if 'them' allows itself to nibble at the bait of Lies" (Trinh, 1989, p. 67). I want to expand Ahmed and Trinh, particularly their conceptualizations of the failure to hear about racism and the invitation into mimicry, to include an understanding of diversity discourse as a hailing, whereby racial Others come to know themselves and be known as *subjects* through the discourse of diversity. Diversity discourse draws out (hails) repeated consultations with racial Others under the guise of addressing experiences of racism in the City, however what becomes concealed is how the racial Others who participate in consultation processes are both regulated and reproduced through diversity discourse, *as racialized subjects*, via the continued re-framing of their experiences. For example, in 1991, the Toronto Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations held a public meeting, given the poor relations between the Black community and Toronto Police Service (TPS), "to hear from all spectrums of the Black Community about those relations and to avail the Black Community of an opportunity to express those concerns and give the Committee input on changes to the Police Act" (City of Toronto, 1991, p. 204). The meeting, which in the end recommended further "private meetings between the Mayor, some members of the Committee, and the Black Community, to restore mutual

respect and trust between the Black Community and the police” (p. 204) was included in a report for the 1991 program and budget of the Committee, in order to demonstrate the importance of celebrating *diversity* in the City of Toronto, and in particular to request for additional funds to celebrate Black History Month.

In the City of Toronto, experiences of racism become re-framed via the continued consultation and participation of racial Others, which I argue both authorize and are hailed by diversity discourse. I also argue that the establishment of these consultations, particularly what they come to represent in terms of achieving “democratic participation” and commitments to address marginalization/racism in the City, are repetitive and idealized *performances* of diversity, as a set of practices which acquire value and meaning through the reproduction and occlusion of race/racialization in the City. Although the City might also repeat its claims of successfully addressing racism in the City and achieving democratic participation in order to disguise that they can never finally or fully be addressed or achieved, I again want to suggest, following my earlier argument on the performativity of diversity discourse, that the saying/naming of success and achievement and the doing of it both require and reproduce racialization and race.

Another example of consultation and the hailing of racial subjects is the response to the 2002 Council Motion on Racial Profiling in Toronto, which references reports over three decades on racial profiling of the Black community in Toronto. Police Chief Julian Fantino “met with members of the Black community” and made commitments, following these consultations, to “enhance the TPS recruit orientation and training programs by arranging face to face meetings with police recruits and members of the Black community prior to their graduation,” and to coordinate a “Race Relations Conference” in Toronto where the TPS, the Black community and all levels of civil society/government focus on problem solving” (City of Toronto, 2003c, p.7). Furthermore, the City’s Race and Ethnic Relations Committee writes in the same report that “sufficient studies and reports have been prepared on the

subject of racial profiling and systemic racism over the last 27 years,” and, based on the recommendations of these various reports, believes that it is “*now time for action on this important matter*” (City of Toronto, 2003c, p. 21; my emphasis). The action that the City’s Race and Ethnic Relations Committee recommends is for groups such as the African Legal Clinic, Toronto Police Services Board, and other stakeholders to be invited to make deputations to the January 23, 2003 meeting of City Council. What I am suggesting here is that the practice of inviting, meeting, and consulting with racialized Others in order to address issues of racism in the City reproduces claims of City’s leadership on issues of diversity, precisely because of what these consultations accomplish: the repeated occlusion/writing out of experiences of racism in the City via the reproduction of racialization and race. It is also through consultation that accountability for racism in the space of the City *by the City* is erased.

In Judith Butler’s (2011) description and analyses of performativity, she writes that “the ideal that is mirrored depends on that very mirroring to be sustained as an ideal” (p. xxiii). In the City of Toronto, consultations with “the community” (i.e. residents of Toronto, community groups, and agencies) are prioritized and idealized because they reflect and entrench the idea of democratic political participation; one in which everyone has an equal voice, and the right to speak.⁵ However, in the City of Toronto, diversity discourse draws racialized Others into consultation processes in order to

⁵ See for example the “International Policy Framework for the City of Toronto” which states “The City of Toronto is a leader in developing innovative policies dealing with the issues of ethno-racial diversity and equity...The Task Force Report sets out major principles of access, transparency, participation and inclusive decision-making processes...The City of Toronto strives to actively engage its citizenry, especially marginalized groups, in the policy development process” (City of Toronto, 2002, p. 12). Similarly, the City’s “Status Report - Implementation of 2004-2006 Access, Equity and Human Rights Action Plans” which states, “active involvement by Toronto’s diverse communities is in line with the trend for enhanced local democracy and public accountability and opening up the process of local government so that residents can influence decision-making in the City”(City of Toronto, 2006, p.3).

reproduce the encounter, whereby racializing norms are repeated and attached to racial Others/subjects in order to occlude or deny the existence of racism in the City. Furthermore, the continued invitation, presence, and/or participation of racialized Others in the City is in itself seen as antiracist *action*, in spite of or, as I argue, *because of* how the presence of racialized Others is taken up and commodified in the diverse City, to mean the City's leadership on democratic participation. What becomes concealed by and through the repeated invitations to consult is how racism in the City actually gets addressed. I want to again suggest here that the encounter with racial Others and the invitation to discuss their experiences of racism are *necessary* to the reproduction of racialization and race, the re-constitution and performativity of diversity discourse, and to the City of Toronto's status as a leader on issues of diversity and democracy.

Some Final Thoughts

Ahmed (2007) and Shaw (2007) argue that the elusive nature and lack of clear definition of diversity is exactly what allows the term to signify the inclusion *and* exclusion, transcendence *and* containment of racialized bodies. Expanding on Judith Butler's (2011) theorization of performativity, I have shown how the racial norms that are incited into diversity discourse in the City of Toronto are reproduced through the commodification of Otherness and occlusion of experiences of racism in the City. In this paper, I have also begun to make visible the regulatory, racial norms that are "indissociable" (Butler, 2011, p. xiii) from the materialization of diverse (raced) bodies, texts, and speech acts. Diversity discourse in the City of Toronto thus becomes performative by drawing on and re-circulating historical and racial norms to make racial Others intelligible, as *subjects*, through speech acts and through texts, via processes of racialization.

Louise Archer (2007) writes about how through its emotive appeal, diversity re-frames and renders unintelligible any efforts to expose racism, because they are seen to be

threatening to the progressive and democratic nature of Toronto, and by extension to its tolerant and welcoming citizenry. In this paper, I have extended Archer's analysis to argue that diversity is simultaneously racialized and *spatialized*. As I have shown, diversity discourse in the City of Toronto is made possible through the reinscription of racialization and the re-making of the racial subject, in order to reproduce and mark the City of Toronto as a diverse space where racism does not, *and cannot*, penetrate. Spatial innocence is thus collapsed with the reproduction of racialization, race, and racial subject. Diversity discourse sets the stage in which the spatial denial of racism not only attempts to foreclose any agency on the part of the Other, it also justifies the City of Toronto's repeated colonial and racializing interventions under the guise of eliminating racism: a racism that becomes intelligible only to incite future interventions in diversity's name.

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