Abstract

This thesis examines how neoliberal discourses of diversity operate at the university level through the administration’s policies, reports, and responses to racism. The perception of inclusion and acceptance, as present in the rhetoric of diversity policies and procedures, has shaped and obscured cultural perceptions of race (specifically the experiences of students and faculty of colour) while also upholding white supremacist logic. Using Queen’s University, a medium sized elite institution in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, as a case study, I discuss how academic spaces have been structured to reflect a vested interest in neoliberal capitalism, with the institution using diversity narratives to bolster excellence in reputation. In bringing together theories of race and education, as well as anti-racist theories that forefront racialization alongside issues space and belonging, this thesis argues that Queen’s University uses “diversity” to manage race. Specifically, I explore how reports, assessments, workshops and courses name and/or teach “diversity” without comprehensively challenging practices of racism, colonialism, and white supremacy. The thesis concludes with a brief discussion of how racialized students and other collectives on campus have responded to racism at Queen’s University.
Acknowledgements

There are several people who have made this process possible, and I am incredibly grateful to you all. Thank you to:

To my supervisor, Katherine McKittrick: thank you for your tremendous support and mentorship. You inspired a level of rigorousness that I did not think I was capable of. Thank you for helping me find the critical lens that was required for this project. I would have quit long ago if it weren’t for you.

Thank you to Anita Jack Davies. I was so touched when you agreed to be my secondary reader without even having met me. Thank you for your invaluable edits and for encouraging me to ask important questions. Thank you Beverley Mullings for your time and energy in reviewing this project.

Thank you to Stephanie Simpson for meeting with me in the early stages. You gave me the resources that I needed to get started.

A lifetime of thanks to my inspiring sisters: Rebecca, Dara and Alysha. Thank you for always checking in, for the endless phone calls, and for your unwavering, fierce love, and guidance. I wouldn’t be able to do anything without you. (An especially big thanks to Alysha for your help with editing and formatting!)

To my partner, Sam: thank you for your patience, empathy, and encouragement. Thank you for listening to me when I asked you never to talk to me about this project. Thank you to my beautiful friends Brett, Fiona, and Justin: I benefit so much from your friendships. Thank you Lola for the beautiful cuddles.
Lastly, I want to give special thanks to the amazing black femmes and queers that I follow on Twitter. While this project may be unbeknownst to you all, know that none of this would have been possible without the knowledge that I receive from the content you share.
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Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review: Diversity and Equity Practices at the Neoliberal University

This chapter will outline interdisciplinary feminist scholarly studies of race and education to provide an overview of existing research that takes up the language of diversity, systemic racism, and the neoliberalism. These themes will be addressed alongside work from scholars who explore how multicultural policy in Canada influences diversity policies at universities. My discussion also relies on theorizations of race by black geographers who outline how the processes of racialization impacts how space is experienced and produced. In organizing my research overview in this way, I will provide a framework that delineates the overall argument of my thesis, specifically how racism operates through place making and the production of space at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

How do we talk about equity and diversity within academic institutions; and what does diversity work do in terms of representation, race, and whiteness? Sara Ahmed (2012) evaluates how diversity is an active project within many institutions and theorizes how it upholds white supremacy. Specifically, she notes how diversity works as image management to represent institutions as “being colourful and happy as a way of holding onto whiteness.”¹ Indeed, “the very idea that diversity is about those who ‘look different’ shows us how it can keep whiteness in place.”² For example, when racialized people are included as party of diversity initiatives, then their integration confirms the already

¹ Sarah Ahmed, “White Men,” Feminist Killjoys (blog), November 04, 2014,
established whiteness of the organization: if ‘diversifying strategies’ are considered necessary, it reveals that there was an absence of racialized people to begin with. Additionally, the responsibility of diversity work often falls on racialized people; they are expected to point out instances of inequity, in order to “prove” that racism happens. Ahmed writes, “to be responsible for this work can mean to inhabit institutional spaces that are also less valued.”

This uneven division of labour is political. Those faculty and students of colour who critique systemic racism, or point to moments of discrimination within the academy, are often met with defensiveness and denial of experiential racism. Defensiveness, Ahmed points out, obscures and hides racist practices while also drawing attention to, and often belittling, those who experienced, noted and critiqued racism. Within academic and workplace environments, diversity work (or the appearance of diversity work) is often complicit in silencing and diminishing the experiences of racialized people. Ahmed poignantly writes that, “when diversity is a viewing point, a way of picturing the organization, then racism is unseen.” In academic settings, diversity work is not meant to ignite discomfort; rather, the language of committing to diversity is cast as the basis of marketing the *excellence* of the institution.

Universities commodify diversity through marketing strategies. Specifically, campus diversity is offered through representation: pamphlets, recruitment commercials, and other promotional materials that include racialized people. In these kinds of representational materials diversity—or what Ahmed refers to as the “commitment to

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3 Ibid. 4
4 Ibid. 4
5 Ibid. 155
6 Ibid. 145
diversity”—is often linked to “excellence” at the institution and the accumulation of organizational value. Specifically, the value of universities as organizations, within the context of neoliberal global capitalism, comes from how they are ranked and measured against one another. Ahmed writes that “diversity is a technology of excellence” and a language signifier to reward or achieve performance. Ahmed points to equity reports and diversity policies as an indicator of how well a university does diversity thus showing that representations of equity and equality are used as measurements of institutional caliber. Universities must showcase and brand themselves as diverse and equitable if they are to be considered exemplary institutions, and institutions can benefit from this branding through increased funding opportunities and bureaucratic procedures. Thus, “diversity accrues life value by being aligned with organizational value.” Not only does this performance of diversity and equity commodify diversity, but investing in diversity in order to demonstrate the value of an organization also obscures instances of inequality and the experiences of racialized people.

With respect to language, we are moving away from terms like "people of colour”, yet there are instances where such terms carry particular meaning. Similar to the myriad of acronyms and terms to describe racialized people (such as Black And Minority Ethnic [BAME], non-white people, and visible minorities), using “people of colour” as an overarching way to describe racialized people carries political weight. Indeed, as Rubab Zaidi writes:

It couldn’t be clearer to me that all of the terms used to describe non-white people are a product of white privilege and racism embedded so deep within white people

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8 Ibid. 108
9 Ibid. 110
that they don’t even know or realize it exists. The majority of the world’s population are not white, so why are we then being referred to as minorities? And who gets to decide this? There is no denying that the term ‘People of Colour’ presents a unified front and brings together all racialized groups and their experiences. It has been used as a means of solidarity in challenging whiteness and/or white power, so if I was going to pick one term to use I would use this. However, I also believe frequent use of abbreviations of these terms such as POC or BAME reduces us to just that, terms and abbreviations, and dehumanizes us further for the people who already think they have a say in how we should or should not be described.10

Zaidi contests how some terminology orients racialized people in relation to whiteness. In considering the ways in which settler colonialism and white supremacy affect the existence of racialized people, I must be accountable to my language choices. I call on the poetics of Dionne Brand as she theorizes how “no language is neutral.”11 In this poem, Brand points to the difficulties of language, engaging with how meaning becomes “so ordinary as if not to see it anymore, that constant veil over the eyes, the blood-stained blind of race and sex.”12

Throughout this project, I make specific use of the term “racialized people” as a way to account to the transformative and ever changing processes of racialization that Indigenous, black, brown, Asian, Latinx, and/or other racialized people experience. I purposely distance myself from the term “people of colour,” as this term, in particular, has been deployed to shift away from the specificities of anti-black racism. As a mixed-black, racialized person, my rationale and language choices are responsible to other racialized people.

11 Dionne Brand, *No Language is Neutral*, (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1990), 22
12 Ibid. 27
Ahmed’s interviews and accompanying research reveal how the university’s diversity language impacts faculty, staff, and students who experience race, gender, and class-based marginalization. Her extensive research explores how the language of diversity is used as a placeholder for addressing systemic racism within universities (as sites of both employment and education). This language is often used as a code within human resources and through the branding of diversity workshops to signify equality, but it effectively conceals “the continuation of systematic inequalities within universities.”

If an institution’s policy includes a commitment to inclusion or the promise of diversity, then it gives the appearance that diversity issues are an active concern for the administration. The branded promise of diversity makes it difficult to question or raise issues of race within the institution, and poses challenges to the ways that race can be spoken about within institutions; experiences of racism and oppression are minimized and erased, as they are “heard as an accusation that threatens the organization’s reputation as led by diversity.” Here, Ahmed problematizes when diversity is shaped through the lens of the university. People’s experiences of marginalization within institutions are obfuscated, as they not only go against the organization’s commitment to diversity, but also the belief that issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity have been resolved.

Given the tensions noted above, the language of diversity in the academy is highly political. Universities are not merely sites for instruction; they reflect the wider society and reproduce various cultural and political constituencies, contexts, and processes of exclusion. With this in mind, neoliberalism is necessary to assessing how race-, gender-

\[13\] Ibid. 53  
\[14\] Ibid. 146
and class-based exclusion occurs within academic institutions and complements Ahmed’s insights. I follow Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore’s tracing of neoliberalism as a conceptual and ideological term. Since its emergence during the 1980s, as an economic term signifying the free market, the concept of neoliberalism has been referred to in different contexts to denote “a politically guided intensification of market rule and commodification” within the context of global capitalism.¹⁵ Many signal the end to its ties to economic-political contexts with the financial crisis in 2008; however, Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley (2011) argue that its effects on governmentality and policy are ever present, and worth observing.¹⁶ Brenner, Peck, and Theodore also reject a singular association between neoliberalism with economic commodification, urging us to consider its geopolitical influence among varied sources and using a range of intellectual disciplines and theories.

If we are to unpack the relationship between the neoliberal university and modes of racial oppression, then it is important to take a varied, multi-lensed approach to critiquing neoliberalism’s systemic impacts across geopolitical and institutional platforms. Though the ideological, political, and cultural influence of neoliberalism over the past few decades is significant, the simultaneous under/over specification of neoliberalism as a concept means that it is ambiguous and difficult to define. Part of this ambiguity stems from how neoliberalism has shifted the landscapes of globalized capitalism. Brenner, Peck, and Theodore write that through the “continued collision with, and working of, inherited institutional landscapes, neoliberalization processes have

established ever more deeply interconnected.”

Henry Giroux (2005) also observes the effects of neoliberalism as an active ideology on democratic society. He writes that neoliberalism “expands its reach to include all aspects of social life within the dictates and values of a market-driven society.” In valorizing the citizen who is able to perform in market economies, Beverley Mullings writes that neoliberalism “tends to reward and punish particular groups according to the degree to which they meet the neoliberal citizenship ideal.”

Given the deeply embedded impacts that neoliberal ideology has on social life, we must emphasize and practice critical interrogation of the nuanced and contextually specific ways that neoliberal ideology produces itself within various spheres. As David J. Roberts and Minelle Mahtani assert, “it is important to analyze the processes through which the ideology neoliberalism is actualized through various policies, discourses, and social relations.” As the above scholars have outlined, neoliberalism is not only entrenched in governmental processes, but has vast impacts on the ways that institutions have been formed and are continuously shaped by neoliberal rhetoric and ideology.

Neoliberalism is an active a project and ideology and it affects how the processes of racialization occur within the context global capitalism. We cannot understand how racism operates without considering the ways in which neoliberalism has modified how racism functions. According to Lentin and Titley, “understanding racism in a neoliberal

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age requires making sense of [a] double move, towards a privatization of both the doing of race and the experience of racism” (their emphasis).  

David J. Roberts and Minelle Mahtani also discuss the fundamental interconnectivity between neoliberalism and race, racism, and racialization. They propose critical intervention to understand “the ways neoliberalism (its underlying philosophy) is fundamentally raced and actively produces racialized bodies.” Roberts and Mahtani clearly delineate the inextricable interconnectivity of racism and neoliberalism. They write, “it is essential to understand neoliberalism as a facet of a racist society that works to both reinforce the racial structure of society, while also modifying the processes of racialization.” Following this logic, I will now turn to scholars that evaluate how racism happens within the neoliberal university.

Henry Giroux thinks through how diversity and the management of race, within a university setting, is an articulation of neoliberalism. Giroux points to colour-blindness and the denial of race as part of how neoliberalism enforces the belief that racial discrimination is no longer a reality. The outward denial of racism and the language of colour-blindness is part of how “neoliberal racism is proactive and functions aggressively in the public arena as an ideological and pedagogical weapon.” Within this discourse, it has become increasingly difficult to address racism within university settings, as well as within neoliberal democratic society, as “state and civil society are limited in their ability

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21 Lentin, Titley, *The Crises of Multiculturalism*, 166.
23 Ibid. 250
25 Ibid. 200
to impose or make corporate power accountable.”

Importantly, the neoliberal university benefits from this structural power paradigm, enforcing corporate values and the perception of a society that does not experience racism.

The corporatization of higher learning within neoliberalism means, “academic disciplines gain stature almost exclusively through their exchange value on the market.” As such, academic spaces have been restructured to reflect the vested interest in neoliberal global capitalism. Giroux points to budget cuts and funding limitations for the departments that focus and/or emphasize critical analyses on social issues as contributing to the conditions that restrict and devalue conversations around race and racism. Within this environment, the corporate university is a means for students to claim stake in the job market. Giroux’s analysis presents an interesting paradox to how the university has established itself as a means for students to efficiently to pass through onto job prospects, while simultaneously branding itself and its pedagogies as free thinking sites for critical engagement.

Neoliberal politics contribute to racialization by locating race and other social differences within the marketing strategies that promote diversity and institutional

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inclusion. Part of Giroux’s extensive research addresses how neoliberal ideology has become intertwined with the racialization that occurs within university and contributes to new forms of ethno-racial exclusion. He urges that, “the racial state and its neoliberal ideology need to be challenged as part of any viable antiracist pedagogy and politics.”

The project of neoliberalism masks racialization and exclusion under the guise of democratic acceptance. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) also discusses the increasing corporatization of universities as a way of critiquing shifts of power within global capitalism. As Mohanty outlines, universities brand themselves as “sanctuar[ies] of nonrepression,” as a way to mark them as contributing to democratic citizenship and the project of equality. Within this framework, Mohanty argues, attempts at branding are misleading given the blurred relationship between universities and corporate interests. She posits that “academic capitalism,” establishes the relationship that universities have to the policies and practices of commercial industries and that “pedagogies of accommodation” are fueled by neoliberal and multicultural ideologies. The commitment to corporate interests means that universities are “a locus of struggle,” that (re)produce oppression, as well as race, class, and gender based exclusion. Mohanty’s argument fits within Brenner’s, Peck’s, and Theodore’s assertion that “neoliberalization projects build on, exploit, intensify, and canalize” differences.

33 Ibid. 178
34 Ibid. 176
Roderick Ferguson (2012) adds to the insights I have noted above by delineating the ways that the academy is inflected with modes of power that impact upon minoritized subjects. University policies geared towards inclusion are “affirmative models of power” within neoliberal capitalism that coopt minority knowledge for the purposes of their own affirmation.36 Ferguson contextualizes these procedures within larger multicultural projects that emerged throughout the 1970s-1990s, and includes extensive discussion on the university as a site for neoliberal discourse that enforces institutional policies in and around race and gender.37 His writing on minority experiences within the academy also locates the fetishism of black feminism and anti-black racism as part of the neoliberal project.38 This fetishism, he argues, comes partially through representations of black women as demonstrative of an institution’s diversity projects. In such instances, black women are valorized as a way of deflecting the existence of misogyny and racism.39 When black feminism is corporatized and represented through the lens of the institution, it coopts the labour of black feminisms.40 Ferguson writes, “diversity enacts the regulatory procedures of aesthetic culture,” that works to manage the inclusion of minorities (as well as the implicit exclusion of minorities) that contributes to the image of...

37 Ibid. 50
38 Ibid. 204
39 While Ferguson’s claims are meaningful to my project, it is also important to consider the following perspectives too: Gutiérrez y Muhs, G., Y. Flores Niemann, C. G. González and A. P. Harris, Eds. (2012). *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press and Rollock, N. (2016).

40 Ibid. 204
Overall, Ferguson argues that neoliberalism has impacted the emergence of academic disciplines that transforms “minority cultures and differences into objects of institutional knowledge.” For Ferguson, this absorption into the institution, as well as the objectification of nonwhite knowledge, is a means for the academy to co-opt the experience of racialized people through neoliberal and multicultural discourses.

Scholars who explore multiculturalism complement my discussion of neoliberalism. Many scholars, for example, problematize how multiculturalism contributes to the structure and organization of institutional higher learning—a process that speaks to the aforementioned neoliberalization of race and knowledge. Within the context of Canadian legislature, the emergence of Multicultural Policy with the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 is significant. Alongside changing global immigration patterns, these hearings emerged as a way to give autonomy to Francophone and Anglophone sensibilities. Its naming “bilingualism and biculturalism” is indicative of the dual consideration of English/Anglo and French/Franco as being the basis of language and culture considerations within Canada. As Sunera Thobani notes, “the definition of the nation as primarily bilingual and bicultural

41 Ibid. 204
42 Ibid. 214
43 Neoliberalism and multiculturalism have different historical and geographical contexts. The former proceeds the latter, in terms of Canada, for example; as well, sometimes they overlap and sometimes they are delinked, depending on how they unfold in relation to specific nation-states. For purposes of this thesis I am understanding the two terms and processes as interlocking, with neoliberalism economizing multiculturalism and propping up state-sanctioned, often profitable, versions of race that are celebratory and devoid of racial violence and struggle.

45 Ibid. 144
reproduced the racialized constructs of the British and French as its real subjects.” In 1971, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act replaced the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism as official state policy. Most notable in this transformation is the textual commitment to “valuing cultural diversity,” particularly in response to the influx of immigrants into Canada during the 1960s and 1970s. However, despite the value and acceptance of diversity that this policy professes “multiculturalism” designates power hierarchies as a way of defining “who belongs and who does not belong to the nation.” Specifically, in framing white settlers as the original purveyors of national identity, the policy furthers the reproduction of settler title to Indigenous lands and, at the same time, excludes nonwhite and non-Indigenous communities. In this respect, multiculturalism is inextricably raced. Put slightly differently, because the Canadian Multiculturalism Act emerges out of the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the historical underpinnings of Canadian diversity also emerge from and are sutured to French and English settlement rather than a range of ethnically diverse perspectives.

With the above in mind, multiculturalism contributes to the Canadian rhetoric of inclusion and equality by situating Indigenous and nonwhite communities outside white and Eurocentric citizenship norms. Sunera Thobani’s work shows us how the continuity of white privilege is masked by multicultural policies and procedures. Thobani shows.

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46 Ibid. 145
47 Ibid. 144
49 Eve Haque, Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada, 28
50 Thobani, Exalted Subjects, 154
how The Canadian Multiculturalism Act emerged as a solution to post-war and post-colonial anxieties while also masking historical patterns of discrimination and racialization.\textsuperscript{51} In doing so, multiculturalism replicates a disavowal of racialized experiences by projecting whiteness onto the nation. Indeed, as Thobani notes, “control over representations of the nation’s past is as critical to maintaining legitimacy and moral authority over its present.”\textsuperscript{52} Thobani gestures to the development of state-sanctioned multiculturalist organizations and conferences as part of how multiculturalism manages issues of race. She also argues that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act hides references to race and racism, and problematizes how whiteness is crucial to the maintenance of multicultural inclusionary practices.\textsuperscript{53} Thobani writes, “the institution itself remains obstinately racialized so that it refers not simply to a political identity but also to a white identity reinscribed as a political one.”\textsuperscript{54} Since multiculturalism obscures past racist histories, it is established to create the illusion of post racism. Within this ideology, multiculturalism limits anti-racist struggles, as multicultural ideologies create the illusion that issues of race have been solved. Within inclusionary politics, whiteness, racialization, and exclusion are obfuscated under the guise of a democratic, neoliberal, and multicultural political project.

Thobani’s discussion of citizenship illuminates the connection between Canadian policies, nation building, and university policies. Thobani (2007) notes the paradox of sovereign citizens—who have their own particular set of noted rights and freedoms—
contributing to how the rights of freedoms of others are conceptualized. The inherent racialization of rights based regimes is one of Sunera Thobani’s key concerns. The notion of inclusion through citizenship policies relates to diversity practices because, not unlike my discussion of multiculturalism above, citizenship status emerges from definitive white settler histories. Thobani notes how sovereign rationality, a characteristic of white and Eurocentric citizenship requirements, serves as the basis for embedded racialization in law and policy, “through which the Canadian nation and its subjects are sustained.” For Thobani, the policies surrounding inclusion provides a basis of governing the nation: she writes, “‘we’ may let ‘you’ in, but you must become who we say you should be.” University diversity strategies, such as race or gender motivated hiring quotas, follow this multicultural model of inclusion. With its emphasis on tolerance and acceptance, these kinds of diversity practices assimilate the racialized and gendered Other under the supervision and guidelines of the academy. The perception of inclusion and acceptance, as present in the Canadian citizenship project, and commitment to multiculturalism, has shaped cultural perceptions of diversity through white supremacist logic.

Sherene Razack contextualizes these questions of inclusion, exclusion, multiculturalism, and citizenship in relation to the production of space and place. She examines Canadian legislatures and policies alongside settler colonialism and multicultural rhetoric and, like Thobani, thinks through how the university institutionalizes the tensions between belonging and unbelonging. Razack reminds us that multiculturalism enables Canadians to imagine themselves as non-racist and culturally

55 Ibid. 69
56 Ibid. 40
57 Ibid. 172
accepting, despite ongoing histories of colonialism.\textsuperscript{58} This framework of acceptance requires assimilating to multicultural ideology in order to belong to the nation. Recalling Thobani’s discussion of how the Canadian Multiculturalism Act positions whiteness as central to Canadian culture, this geographical imagination creates racial hierarchies. Specifically, Razack encourages us to consider how multiculturalism contributes how “bodies are produced in spaces and how spaces produce bodies.”\textsuperscript{59} She goes on to write that this national story is “a racial and spatial story, that is, as a series of efforts to segregate, contain, and thereby limit, the rights and opportunities of Aboriginal people and people of colour.”\textsuperscript{60} Neoliberalism contributes to how national multicultural rhetoric is dispelled through educational institutions. In drawing together interdisciplinary conversations that centralize the nation and national space, Razack interrogates “how subjects come to know themselves in and through space and within multiple systems of domination.”\textsuperscript{61}

The same modes that shape how people view themselves in relation the nation are at play at universities. In particular, Razack points to the classroom as a site where histories of oppression are regulated.\textsuperscript{62} In tracking how white domination affects university education, Razack names the power imbalance that exists between those that name their oppression, and those who listen.\textsuperscript{63} When people name the relations of

\textsuperscript{58} Sherene Razack, \textit{Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms}, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 89.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid. 17
\textsuperscript{61} Razak. \textit{Looking White People in the Eye}, 17.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid. 12
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. 169
domination and subordination (surrounding race, gender, as well as other categories of difference), they are more likely to be judged not only as disruptive, but as essentialist as well. In order to disrupt how domination affects academic institutions, it is important to consider “how they structure our subject positions.”

For Razack then, we must name the “particularisms” as a way to mark subject positions while making critiques against racism.

Recognizing how multiculturalism and Canada’s national identity are tied to practices of exclusion raises a number of questions as to how racialization is embedded through university policies. As part of her dissertation project, Anita Jack-Davies critically outlines how Canada’s multicultural vision affects education and the classroom. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the principles of multiculturalism were adopted into educational policies to promote the inclusion of minority students. Although multiculturalism is meant to demonstrate the perception of harmony despite difference, Jack-Davies writes that, “as a policy, it is often used to silence issues of race.” Since multiculturalism is used as a placeholder for discussions of race, it largely affects how the needs of racialized people are addressed within educational policies. Although her discussion is rooted in teacher education, Jack-Davies offers insight as to how multicultural rhetoric replaces critical discourses of power and difference within educational contexts. Jack-Davies explores how critical pedagogies of race and

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64 Ibid. 169
65 Ibid. 170
racialization are considered “add-on” knowledge for teachers in training. In prioritizing multicultural rhetoric of inclusivity over specifically naming issues of race means that, “when such issues are presented, they are presented in ways that fail to address the systemic aspects of social inequality and its impact on the schooling experiences of marginalized students.” Jack-Davies argues that the absence of discussion of the importance of critical knowledge at the educational policy level is a systemic issue. Through her problematizing of the curriculum that shapes teacher education, Jack-Davies shows us how dominant practices of multiculturalism and inclusivity “that work to marginalize difference often go unexamined” in educational institutions.

Malinda Smith also explores multiculturalism, neoliberalism, and the discursive relationship between diversity and the academy. Smith argues that there has been a shift as to how equity (as a concept and as a key characteristic of some university diversity policies) privileges some people over others. Smith focuses on how equity feeds into white privilege, and how many universities consider the hiring of white women as evidence of diversification.

Smith (2010) troubles neoliberal feminist diversity projects that work towards the advancement of white women within the academy and in the workplace; she draws parallels between the academy’s commitment to multiculturalism and discourses of inclusion and accommodation that marginalize racialized people. She discusses her experience working on employment equity, sexual harassment and same-sex benefits as

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68 Ibid. 257
69 Ibid. 253
70 Ibid. 24
71 Smith, States of Race, 38.
part of the Equity Task Force at the University of Alberta,\textsuperscript{72} and notes that gender equality was the focus of these initiatives. Constructing gender equality as the key marker of equity and diversity racializes gender as white and also privileges the needs of white women. Because white women fall under official equity-seeking groups in most institutions, such hires, although reinforcing existing power relations with respect to race, count towards equity/inclusivity goals. The process of privileging white women through equity driven hiring practices (what Smith refers to as “gender equity”\textsuperscript{73}) is part of how “the discourse and practices of equity within universities is in terms of shifts in governmental rationalities, or the mentalities that shape how the conduct of the ideal academic self is formed and performed over time and space.”\textsuperscript{74} Separating the positions of difference (such as race and class) “engender[s] a dividing practice by privileging “(white) women as ‘the Other’ and further marginaliz[ing] non-whites (visible minorities), Aboriginal peoples, and persons with disabilities as the undifferentiated “other Others.””\textsuperscript{75} The ways that diversity extends to some people while excluding others fits within a conversation about modes of power, and political rationality.

The fetishisms of black feminisms, as noted above by Ferguson, also extend to the way that black women in particular are often absent from “diverse” hiring. University departments can officially say that they are "diverse" with the hiring of racialized peoples, yet the numbers of black men and women are often non-existent. (I will further discuss the statistics of racialized people in leadership positions at Canadian Universities in my chapter on official diversity strategies). Henry et al note the difficulties in knowing

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. 50
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid. 43
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. 45
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid. 37
the exact representation of black women among university departments, due to a lack of disaggregated data. However, “it cannot be denied that under-representation occurs, that women are less represented than men, and that there are significant differences in the numbers and the patterns of representation of different racialized groups.” This analysis fits within research from Henry et al, who reveal that, “the presence of some Indigenous and racialized faculty disguises the fact that there has been little or no change in the ways institutions operate...even as the university advertisements declare commitment to having an ethnically and racially diverse faculty body.”

Many black scholars trace how race and racialization affect how space is produced and experienced. These scholars (see Gilmore 2002, Wynter 2003, McKittrick 2006) theorize how race, as a fundamental organizing principle, operates within spatial economies. To borrow from Ruth Wilson Gilmore, race is “a condition of existence” that needs to be considered as a “category of analysis.” Gilmore’s approach to her research and activism has influenced me: she carefully puts political and economic landscapes—the production of space and scale—into conversation with race, racism and experience, all while foregrounding activism as a locus of struggle and resistance. The works of Paul Gilroy and Édouard Glissant, as well, show us how geographical space is laden with racial violence. When looking at how diversity operates at Queen’s University, I will think about how the campus is a geographical site of pain, built on anti-blackness and
colonialism, while also foregrounding activism and resistance. Thus, the themes I noted above (how multiculturalism, diversity, policy, equity emerge from white settler histories and are deployed in academic settings, thus obscuring nonwhite histories and experiences) will be theorized as *geographical* processes.

I follow Katherine McKittrick’s assertion that the theorization of space and place can be reimagined using black geographies as foci.\(^82\) Katherine McKittrick (2006) reads the geographies of transatlantic slavery to theorize how hierarchies of racial power and domination are spatially organized in both the past and the present.\(^83\) In looking at the works of black studies scholars, critical human geographers, black cultural producers, and cultural studies scholars, McKittrick argues that “spaces and places that are racialized and gendered are not static- even though racism, sexism, and class differences in various contexts and settings uphold oppressive categorization and stigmatization.”\(^84\) In mapping the multiple subjectivities of black womanhood, McKittrick offers us tools to examine how racialized oppression is reproduced and resisted in different geographical and historical spaces. Similarly, in situating blackness and recalling alternate historical narratives, Rinaldo Walcott connects the unbelonging of those who are part of black diaspora within the Canadian cultural landscape. In *Black Like Who*, Walcott explores how the conceptualization of Canada and nation contributes to the erasure of blackness.

The state policies that produce Canada as white supremacist manage, police, and contain

\(^82\) Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), x.
\(^83\) Ibid. 40
\(^84\) Katherine McKittrick, “‘Black and’ Cause I’m Black I’m Blue: Tranverse Racial Geographies in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye,*” *Gender, Place and Culture* 7, 2 (2000): 128.
blackness within the nation. Walcott argues that state sanctioning identity politics (such as multicultural policies) alters how we consider relation and difference. He writes, “nation-state influence can (re)direct the potential political possibilities of meaningful diasporic conversations.” Walcott’s work is necessary in order to contextualize how the university can be understood in relation to the anti-blackness and the nation and, with McKittrick and Gilmore in mind, how these kinds of patterns, which link policy and the production of space to race and resistance, will help me tease out how oppression informs the geographies of academic institutions.

Minelle Mahtani’s work will be explored because she complements the above. Mahtani specifically addresses how women of colour geographers experience racism, isolation, and an overall lack of support in their departments and universities. Though experientially and methodologically grounded in geography, her work is insightful because it addresses how faculty of colour, generally, navigate marginalization within academic institutions. Mahtani puts forward the concept of “toxic geographies” as a way to pinpoint the ongoing production of emotionally harmful spaces that women of colour experience. Mahtani’s framework allows me to think about how diversity is expressed and managed at Queen’s University and to address how Indigenous, black, and other nonwhite faculty, staff, and students understand questions of equity and diversification. How do instructors and students of colour navigate the whiteness of institutions, and how do we take note of their experiential knowledge? Mahtani writes, “documenting how

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86 Ibid. 40
88 Ibid. 360
women of colour professors and graduate students navigate their way through the very murky waters of systemic racism in the academy is crucial if we are to map out a game plan to create more equitable places in [geography].” For Mahtani, part of documenting the experiences of women of colour academics and students is acknowledging the toxic barriers they come up against. In addition to presenting hiring data and recruitment policies and practices as indicators to the racist practices of the academy, Mahtani—like McKittrick, Gilmore, and Walcott—draws attention to how the experiences and narratives of marginalized communities challenge the neoliberalization of diversity.

The kinds of patterns and theories I have noted above draw attention to how multiculturalism, neoliberalism, policy, equity, citizenship, diversity, geography, resistance, and race underpin academic institutions. My literature review has provided a solid base to address how diversity and equity policies at Queen’s University can be understood. In this literature review, I explore how diversity at Queen’s University, within our current neoliberal capitalist context, should be understood as a spatial issue.

Using interdisciplinary works from my literature review, I will read primary sources, including Queen’s University’s commissioned race reports; media images; videos; and website data, in order to perform a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). So much of the oppression that racialized groups experience on campus is hidden under the codified nature of the discourse of diversity. This is where the importance of language comes in. Critical Discourse Analysis analyzes the structural relationships of dominance,

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discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.\textsuperscript{90} Emerging as a methodology from the early 1990s, CDA is characterized by an interest in “demystifying ideologies and power” across disciplines\textsuperscript{91} and examines discourse alongside socio-political contexts.\textsuperscript{92} Among the fundamental principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, Ruth Wodak (2007) outlines the necessity for interdisciplinary, problem oriented, and varied approaches that involve the interplay between data and theory.\textsuperscript{93} In weaving together interdisciplinary scholars of race, geography, and education, I use Critical Discourse Analysis in order to examine the tensions between racialization and diversity at Queen’s University. In addition to the Principal’s Advisory Committee Report and Henry Report, Queen’s University has conducted the following reports that examine issues of race at the university:

- The Systems Review or “Norton” Report
- The DARE Panel Report (2009)
- Principal’s Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (2017)

In this thesis I use CDA to examine these reports as well as newspaper, media, and website narratives. In my next chapter, I will situate the history of the Henry Report as

one of Queen’s key diversity strategies that works to distance the university from accountability to institutional racism.
Chapter 2

Reactionary Inaction: The History of “The Henry Report”

In this chapter, I will give an overview of the origins and findings of the “Systemic Racism Towards Faculty of Colour and Aboriginal Faculty at Queen's University.” The 2004 report, which is commonly referred to as The Henry Report, details the findings of a select subgroup of the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC), and outlines survey and interview responses from Queen’s University Indigenous faculty and faculty of colour regarding their experiences of racism at the university. In examining the contexts of The Henry Report, I consider the implications that this document has for issues of race, racialization, and belonging at Queen’s University while also paying attention to how race and racism are integrated into campus policies and procedures. In this chapter I argue that Queen’s University leverages the commissioning reports in order to restrict pedagogies of resistance, and to limit the development of anti-racist institutional policies and procedures.

The Henry Report seeks to address the “culture of whiteness” on Queen’s University campus. In providing a brief history of the report that preceded the Henry Report, I draw attention to how they build and draw upon each other; I therefore trace the underpinnings the Henry Report and show how the reports and findings repeat over time. This overview will serve as context for my discussion on the interplay between administrative policy recommendations and how issues of race and diversity are managed at Queen’s University.
The document that preceded the Henry Report, titled the “Final Report of the Principal’s Advisory Committee on Race Relations,” was published February 1991. This report, henceforth referred to as the PAC Report, emerges in part from an advisory meeting in 1989 between the Principal’s Advisory Committee (PAC), a group consisting of 14 appointed committee members and Principal David Chadwick Smith. During this meeting, the PAC stated that, “there is a problem with racism at Queen’s.” In context of the PAC Report, their use of the term “race” focuses on “visible minorities and First Nations peoples,” and “all race-related grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship and creed.” Intentional or unintentional racism, based on differential power and prejudice, is defined as “the result of activity or arrangements that set out to discriminate or harm. The presence of racism can be detected by its effects, in addition to its intent” (emphasis my own). Their report identifies that “racism is a problem, and that it should not be tolerated at Queen’s.”

In the PAC Report, racism is examined as operating through a number of domains, including: recruitment and student admissions; hiring and faculty appointment; promotion and tenure; curriculum and library; university climate; implementation and

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95 Ibid. 15.
97 The Principal’s Advisory Committee on Race Relations. “Towards Diversity and Equity at Queen’s.”
98 Ibid. 3.
99 Ibid. 3
100 Ibid. 3.
101 Ibid. 2.
complaints procedures. These factors are seen to promote a “general university climate” of racial discrimination on campus, based on the relationship between the students, faculty/staff, and the curriculum and library (Figure 1).

![Diagram of General University Climate]

**Figure 1:** According to the PAC Report, the Queen’s University general climate is made up from the relationship between faculty and staff, students, and university pedagogies. Source: Principal’s Advisory Report 1991.

In writing the report, the PAC met 42 times, held two open forums, and led workshops on topics relating to racism at Queen’s. The meetings that accompanied the writing of this report also coincided with a number of discriminatory incidents that targeted racialized people on campus. In a *Kingston Whig Standard* article published in 1990, Dan Hogan outlines a number of accounts made during a Kingston Coalition Against Racism meeting at the Queen’s University Centre:

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102 Ibid. 3.
103 Figure 1: The Principal’s Advisory Committee on Race Relations, “Towards Diversity and Equity at Queen’s,” 3.
104 Ibid. 2.
In one case last month, a Muslim student was physically attacked at a restaurant, Ms. Chen told the crowd. Just last Thursday, Queen's student Ali Rahnema found a note addressed to him in a campus mailbox reading, "... if you and your commie paki faggot dyke nigger proabortion friends don't like it here, leave before something happens to you." The day before, when students marked a national day against racism on campus with a rally, Vice-Principal Tom Williams addressed about 90 students at an impromptu meeting after the rally and suggested that racism is not rampant on campus. Other incidents cited by the coalition include a racist message left on the telephone answering machine of Queen's student Atif Ghani in September by a fellow student living in the same campus residence, and the posting of a sign last August in the university's new technology building reading "Muslims out of Canada." "To the administration....Your students are under attack." 105

This section of the article gives some insight as to the tensions present on campus during the time that the PAC Report was being written while also providing some context in terms of what kinds of incidents shaped the recommendations of the committee.

The PAC Report recommendations and objectives are, arguably, anti-racist; their intent is to make the general university climate more equitable for minorities. The numerous recommendations thus include more diverse hiring practices, developing anti-racist curriculum that is not based in Eurocentrism, and developing accountability measures for administrators that include consulting with racial minorities when writing policies. 106 Within each of the aforementioned domains are separate objectives and recommendations that urge for acknowledging racial biases in existing systems, policies, and procedures at Queen’s University, and promoting accountability and equity when adopting recommendations for future planning. 107 All their suggestions are made with the goal that racial minorities should feel welcome and valued at Queen’s University. 108

105 Dan Hogan, “Queen’s must do more to fight racism on campus student leaders say,” The Kingston-Whig Standard, November 17, 1990.  
106 Ibid. 3-11.  
107 Ibid. 4.  
108 Ibid. 8.
A decade after the release of the PAC report, Professor Enakshi Dua left Queen’s University due to discrimination. Dua describes her experience at Queen’s University as “a constant state of uncomfortableness” that persisted during interactions with fellow faculty, staff and students. Beyond these experiences (what George Dei characterizes as the “everydayness of racism”), Dua also describes a systemic reproduction of racism, which occurs in the university’s overall lack of institutional attention to issues of race on campus. Dr. Dua was one of six racialized faculty members to leave their positions due to the racism they experienced on campus. The Queen’s Journal newspaper article, “Confronting a culture of silence” documents Dua’s absence, as well as the media coverage on the term “culture of whiteness” that Henry puts forward in her report.

Following a string of faculty departures, former Vice Principal Academic Suzanne Fortier commissioned the Senate Educational Committee (SEEC) to examine

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110 Ibid.
111 See also Enakshi Dua et al., The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017)
113 MacDonald, Woods, “Confronting a culture of silence.”
116 Ibid.
“the experiences of visible minorities and First Nations persons at Queen's by preparing a survey... to gather their views.”

The 2003 study, titled “Understanding the Experiences of Visible Minority and Aboriginal Faculty Members at Queen's University,” (also known as The Henry Report) includes survey responses from 270 faculty (15.4% of those asked to participate) and includes more detailed answers to opinion questions from racialized faculty as to how they are treated at Queen’s. In this document, Dr. Henry, who worked alongside Joy Mighty, identifies patterns in faculty survey responses, and corroborates the data alongside discussions from additional interviews and focus groups with racialized faculty.

Dr. Frances Henry released The Henry Report in 2004. This document outlines and expands on the 2003 survey findings, interviews, and focus groups comprised of a small group of faculty of colour. Henry organizes her findings under the following key themes and headings: (1) Hiring Decisions: Equity Hiring and the Potential for Backlash (2) Student Rejection/ Hostility (3) The Interrelationship Between Ethno-Racial Status and Teaching and Research (4) The Dominant Institutional Culture: The Culture of Whiteness (5) Recommendations Emerging from the Focus Groups. These sub themes examine diversity and equity procedures, such as attempts at equity hiring, alongside the

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117 Ibid. 2.
118 Ibid. 2.
119 The survey questionnaire asked questions such as “Do colleagues treat me with respect? Do colleagues value my knowledge and work? Is everyone accepted as an equal member? Is there an equitable tenure process? Are hiring selections procedures fair? Is anti-racism research is valued?” (The Henry Report, 4).
120 Ibid. 1.
factors that contribute to faculty experiences of alienation and racialization, and an overall detachment from their positions.

The qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions indicate that Queen’s University institutional culture is that of whiteness. Dr. Henry defines “culture of Whiteness”\textsuperscript{121} as the dominant culture that contributes to faculty experiences of racism and discrimination,\textsuperscript{122} including “doubts about their initial hiring as a function of equity practices rather than merit; the impact of diversity on teaching, research, and relations with students, colleagues and administrators.”\textsuperscript{123} Whiteness also (re)produces Anglo-Eurocentrism at Queen’s University that is reinforced through the curriculum and through the connection between Queen’s University history, traditions, and Scottish symbolism,\textsuperscript{124} which are regarded as a source of institutional pride.\textsuperscript{125} It might be useful, then, for us to consider the implications of the university’s historically white culture and customs. Richard Dyer proposes examining how whiteness “produces itself regardless of intention, power differences and goodwill, and overwhelmingly because it is not seen as whiteness, but as normal.”\textsuperscript{126}

The belief that Queen’s University is anti-racist or post-race is also a large contributor to the institutional culture of whiteness. Henry writes:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid. 2.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid. 18.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid. 18.
\textsuperscript{125} Henry, “Systemic Racism Towards Faculty of Colour and Aboriginal Faculty at Queen’s University,” 21.
\textsuperscript{126} Richard Dyer, White: Essays on Race and Culture, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 10
\end{quote}
It is too easy for White faculty to believe that racism does not, indeed cannot, exist in the liberal university setting of the 21st Century. As a result, their very belief in the absence of racism blinds them to the experiences of faculty of colour and Aboriginal faculty. And their very whiteness - rather than their racism - makes them unable to understand what those experiences might be. As a result, it is not surprising that White students, faculty, staff and administrators find it confusing and threatening to have to address the need for systematic and sweeping forms of organizational, institutional and culture change.\textsuperscript{127}

Here, Henry outlines an inability of white faculty and staff to take institutional measures to address issues of discrimination on campus as well as an unwillingness to acknowledge the complicity of whiteness in contributing to this oppression.

The “culture of Whiteness” does not only affect the overall climate on campus, it also manifests through interactions between faculty and students, and correlates with hostility directed towards non-Eurocentric curricula and critical pedagogies. Henry argues that these “tensions also reflect a resentment of any cultural approaches that depart from the Anglo-Eurocentric models that dominate curricula and pedagogy.”\textsuperscript{128} Several respondents acknowledge the tensions that arise for students and faculty when confronted with information that challenges or critiques whiteness. One respondent recounts how these tensions extend to Queen’s students: the respondent indicates that students “don’t want to hear anymore of this fucking [race] stuff.”\textsuperscript{129} This example shows that there is a general hostility to curriculum on race and racism, especially if racialized faculty teaches the subject.\textsuperscript{130} The antagonism that Henry recounts is amplified by the homogeneity of Queen’s majority-white populations, a lot of whom have little to no exposure to

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. 21.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{128} Ibid. 16-17}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{129} Ibid. 16.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{130} According to The Henry Report, student hostility increases to Indigenous faculty and faculty of colour, as well as those with accents (see Henry Report pages 14-17).}
\end{footnotes}
racialized people.\textsuperscript{131} Henry argues that white students’ upbringing is related to the ways in which they experience teaching and education; racial privilege thus contributes to how Queen’s University students willingly (or unwillingly) engage pedagogies that attend to difference and/or race.\textsuperscript{132} Given this dissonance, issues of racialization continue to be entangled within institutional life at Queen’s University.

In outlining a small glimpse of the Henry Report, one can conclude that the document is the result of how racism and the experiences of faculty and students of colour are managed by the larger institution. Specifically, Queen’s University allocated resources and institutional attention to report on race and racism, rather than explicitly dismantle racism or question processes of marginalization. How an institution responds to incidents of racism reveals how it does (or does not) assume responsibility for the reproduction of structural racism, and exposes how race, and those who speak about race, are regulated. The contexts of the PAC Report and the Henry Report indicate that incidents of racism at Queen’s University (such as the harassment of racialized faculty) are catalysts to a very particular kind of institutional attention. As this history shows us, the university’s reactions are rooted in commissioning reports that propose recommendations in the interest of making Queen’s University more equitable and diverse. The Queen’s Provost website summarizes this institutional goal: reports that look into issues of race on campus are meant to ensure accountability for “integrating diversity and equity more fully into the governance and structure of university decision-

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. 14.  
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid. 14.
making.” Yet this rhetoric of ‘integration’ does not align with changes in governance and structure based on the recommendations of committee members that research, write, and outline the measures that Queen’s University should take in prioritizing anti-racism.

A series of documents that corroborate the recommendations put forward in the PAC Report and the Henry Report reveal how little has been done to implement structural changes and thus adequately address racism at Queen’s University. These documents are part of commissioned work compiled by the Queen’s Diversity and Equity Task Force (DET), a panel consisting of Dr. Adnan Husain, the director of the task force, and five other appointed members. In 2009, the DET was tasked with accounting for the recommendations that were made in the PAC Report and the Henry Report, and to identify the “successes, failures, and unresolved issues in the university’s various approaches to dealing with [issues of racialization] over time [in order to make] both long term and short term recommendations to the university.” The first of these documents assesses the status of recommendations proposed in the 1991 PAC Report. I have included a page of this document (Figure 2) from the section titled “Implementation.” This provides a snapshot of the many unresolved recommendations put forward nearly twenty years prior.

135 Figure 2: The Principal’s Advisory Committee on Race Relations, Towards Diversity and Equity at Queen’s.
## Figure 2: Recommendations from the Principal’s Advisory Committee Report as reviewed by the Diversity and Equity Task Force. Source: Towards Diversity and Equity at Queen’s: A Strategy for Change: Area: Implementation

The left column lists the PAC recommendations, which includes putting together a Race Relations Council that would take an “advocacy stance for the interests of racial minorities at the University.”\(^{136}\) The right column indicates if and where the recommendation has been adopted as university policy or as part of its governing structures. This section of the document—the blank column—shows us that Queen’s University has not taken any steps to implement the Race Relations Council, despite it being suggested by the Principal’s Advisory Committee. The additional reviewed sub-areas of the PAC Report demonstrate the same outcome: there are extremely few

\(^{136}\) Ibid. 23.
recommendations, put forward by PAC in 1991, that Queen’s University has adopted. The “Summary of Recommendations ‘Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) Response to the Henry Report’” (Figure 3) looks staggering similar to the review of the PAC report.¹³⁷

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>Every member of the Queen’s Community has a vital role to play in achieving equity. It is important to provide the tools that will allow them to do so through University-wide educational programs.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rethink and redesign current equity and diversity awareness and training programs to ensure that they are inclusive and comprehensive.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not done.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>This should be a collaborative process that involves all units and groups that have special responsibility in this area, for example, the AMS, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Equity Office, Human Resources, Human Rights Offices, Residence, and the SGPS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Done.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ensure that awareness and training programs recognize the need to value differences in the academic and broader learning and working environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-cultural Training (QUIC Student Affairs); Focus on Diversity (CTL).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure that all members of the Queen’s Community benefit from these programs, including the Governing Bodies, Administrators, Students, Staff and Faculty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3:** Recommendations from The Henry Report as reviewed by the DET. Source: Summary of Recommendations ‘Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) Response to the Henry Report’ *Diversity And Equity Task Force.* 2009

As Figure 3 suggests, this section lists Dr. Henry’s suggestions for equity education at Queen’s University. Although “Cross Cultural Training” is listed for Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC)—a resource centre for international staff and students—the programming and equity training listed is unique to this very specific group. “Cross Cultural Training” does not, then, encompass the scope of the entire institution as was recommended. It is notable that the one community the university provided training for is one that is “marked” as other—international students and staff—thus reifying whiteness as the indicator of both normalcy and privilege (and thus not in need of diversity training). Diversity training often propagates apolitical, ahistorical, multicultural pluralism (discussed more extensively in my next chapter). In allocating diversity training to Queen’s International Centre, the university focuses on, and invests in, a specific group’s set of differences. While I do not know the exact administrative reasoning for singling out the QUIC as in need of training, it is possible that this decision is meant to target international staff and students who are most easily recognized through their experiences of marginalization as non-Canadians. In other words, it is safe for Queen’s University to allocate diversity programming for the QUIC, since international people who attend and work at the university are grouped as belonging outside of the nation; they thus must learn about cross cultural “Canadian” cultures. Here we see what Sunera Thobani describes as multiculturalism rhetoric, which operates to recognize the enriching aspects of “international culture” while also designating the international other as a way for the nation to exalt itself. Reworking her thinking slightly, Queen’s University—as
enacted by their targeted cross-cultural training of international students and staff—is the “tolerable host” to difference.\textsuperscript{138}

Following Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993), we might also read this moment as indicative of how neoliberal universities code marginalia as part of crisis management.\textsuperscript{139} Spivak argues that sets of marginalia are defined and negotiated for their value in ways that will most benefit the institution.\textsuperscript{140} Even in instances where institutions commit to difference— as seen in Queen’s University’s resource investment with QUIC diversity programming— the commitments are always negotiable and subject to radical shifts.\textsuperscript{141} These shifts are subject to change due to reallocating resources, administrative attention, or voting against policy changes.

Roderick Ferguson (2012) also takes up how institutions benefit from organizing marginalia; he writes, “the ‘academy’ names that mode of institutional validation, certification, and legibility, bringing them into entirely new circumstances of valorization.”\textsuperscript{142} I recall Ferguson’s cautioning of this kind of coding: we must pay attention to how Queen’s University manages marginalized culture as part of efforts “to keep minoritized grievances from compromising the itineraries of state, capital, and academy.”\textsuperscript{143}

While it is relevant to trace where Queen’s has implemented diversity strategies in response the recommendations of the PAC and Henry Reports, any noted developments

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid. 169.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid. 68.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid. 68.
\textsuperscript{142} Ferguson, \textit{The Reorder of Things}, 144.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid. 144.
\end{flushleft}
are complicated from how few policy and procedural changes have actually been made. There are politics at play with how action arises from institutional interests. I observe a significant disparity that exists between the administrative resources used to produce committees, task forces, and reports compared to the 30 years of labour from committee members that have research diversity and equity at Queen’s University in order to make suggestions. In The Henry Report, Dr. Henry writes that, “issues relating to equity and diversity are not on the mainstream of the University's agenda and therefore they attract little attention.” As the DET’s comparison documents show us, the efforts of the administration to respond, though perhaps well intentioned, have translated to disproportionate amount of policy and procedural changes that have been actualized. Committees such as the DET are further stifled in their capacity to organize by the timing limits placed on organizational mandates. For example, the DET project was limited to two years, between 2009-2011. Time restrictions place additional restrictions on the capacity to produce work that challenges the performance of diversity at Queen’s University.

Ahmed reminds us that performing equality and diversity are part of how universities brand their institutional excellence within neoliberal capitalism. Maintaining a historical production of documents that revisit and continuously report on race at Queen’s University is a tactic that reveals the duty to perform, rather than enact,

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144 Henry, Systemic Racism Towards Faculty of Colour and Aboriginal Faculty at Queen’s University, 22.
145 Office of the Provost and Vice Principal (academic), Diversity and Equity Task Force (DET).
146 Ahmed, On Being Included, 84.
equality. Queen’s University’s performance of equality occurs when determining which report recommendations are implemented as policy, and how those policies operate. What comes to mind, for me, are the revisions to the Human Rights Office’s Code of Conduct. These revisions have expanded to include procedures for handling Harassment and Discrimination Complaints at the university. According to the Queen’s University policy on Harassment and Discrimination, complaints “may be utilized by groups as well as individuals and may involve complaints against one or more individuals as well as the University and its various operating units.” The effort of filing a human rights complaint often makes it a last resort for those who have experienced discrimination. It is also relevant to consider that the onus and labour of undertaking a human rights complaint falls on the person who has already experienced oppression and discrimination. Sarah Ahmed argues that filing complaints are used as an opportunity for the university to strategically attach and detach themselves from acts of discrimination and racial violence. In such instances, an institution will congratulate itself for simply having the appropriate channels for complaints. This self-congratulatory practice often obfuscates the complaint of racism (which is perceived as a threat to the institution).

As I have discussed previously, The Henry Report contains testimonials from respondents who detail how racialized people on campus experience racism and

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147 Ibid. 87.  
148 The Principal’s Advisory Committee on Race Relations, Towards Diversity and Equity at Queen’s.  
150 Ahmed, On Being Included, 143.
oppression. It is important to read these experiences as evidence of how racism exists and is perpetuated at Queen’s University. Although Queen’s University is not overtly suggesting that racism does not exist on campus—the Principal’s Advisory Committee, Dr. Henry, and the Diversity and Equity Taskforce demonstrate otherwise—the decision to continually re-commission reports, taskforces, and committees who ask the same or similar questions about combatting racism, in fact, must be read as a kind of political refusal. The university’s historical pattern of commissioning reports as a response to racism on campus in order to fuel policy inaction fits within Sara Ahmed’s arguments on how evidence based research on racism is often ignored due to the research subject. She writes, “no matter how much evidence you have of racism and sexism, no matter how many documents, communications, encounters, no matter how much research you can refer to, or words you can defer to, words that might carry a history as an insult, what you have is deemed as insufficient.”\footnote{Sarah Ahmed, “Evidence,” Feminist Killjoys (blog), July 12, 2016, \url{https://feministkilljoys.com/2016/07/12/evidence/}.} A Globe and Mail article covering the release of the Henry Report attempted to devalue what Henry’s research offered in stating, “The methodology would earn any serious sociology student an "F."”\footnote{Margaret Wente, “A ‘culture of whiteness’ in the ivory tower? Not,” The Globe and Mail, May 2, 2006.} Ahmed describes the refusal to acknowledge research on racism as “displac[ing] the attention” away from critical race vocabulary as a way to deny responsibility for racism.\footnote{Ahmed, On Being Included, 155.}

I argue that Queen’s University disavows the commissioned research evidence of racism on campus. To acknowledge the data that was brought forward in the PAC Report and Henry Report would be to admit institutional complicity to issues of racialization,
which does not fit within the neoliberal institutional rhetoric of post-racism. Denying racialized people’s experience of racism as evidence of racism contradicts the ways in which evidence is often considered benevolent truth. Dr. Henry notes that the refusal to accept the realities of racism, despite overwhelming evidence of prejudice and discrimination, is a key part of how racism operates in Canada.\footnote{Frances Henry, “From Racism in the Canadian University,” \url{http://www.yorku.ca/fhenry/writings.htm}.}

There are also financial considerations at play when thinking through how decision-making happens at universities. We know that neoliberalism complicates how funding is allocated.\footnote{See: Henry Giroux: 2002, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2013.} Henry Giroux notes, for example, how the increasing corporatization of higher learning poses serious impacts on funding, research and pedagogy, as well as hiring practices.\footnote{Giroux, “Neoliberalism, Corporate Culture, and the Promise of Higher Education, 446.} The Queen’s University D.A.R.E report notes the financial duress that the institution faced when the document was written.\footnote{Ibid. 11.} In addition to financial considerations, I acknowledge Mohanty’s argument that transformations of the academy are complex.\footnote{Ibid. 11.} While a “budgetary crisis,”\footnote{Ibid. 11.} was noted, the university’s funding decisions must be critiqued for the lack of concrete measures to address institutional racism on campus that is researched, reviewed, and qualitatively proven time and time again. Queen’s University history of policy inaction is also complicated by the absence of accountability structures, such as a committee whose task it is to implement the recommendations put forward in race reports, or administrative guidelines that ensure recommendations are met. In this regard, the reports function as a placeholder for concrete action.
It is relevant to note that during my MA research another committee was struck to examine issues racism on campus. A Queen’s University communication report states that as of December 2016, the current Principal, Daniel Woolf has sought out another report:

In an effort to initiate a broad, meaningful, and sustained conversation on racism, diversity, and inclusion at Queen’s, Principal Daniel Woolf will establish a small group comprised of faculty, students, and staff that will be tasked with expeditiously reviewing past reports on these issues and making short- and long-term recommendations for change. The Principal’s Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion will begin its work early in the new year.160 (emphasis my own)

The language of the above communication’s briefing is remarkably similar to the language of the description of the Diversity and Equity Task Force’s undertaking of this project in 2009:

Diversity and Equity Task Force (DET), [will] complete an assessment of the various diversity and equity reports that have been tabled at Queen’s in the last two decades, as well as determine the present status of the recommendations outlined in those reports...We intend to develop a plan of action that identifies recommendations that can be easily implemented in the short term and prioritizes remaining recommendations and assesses the needs and resources for longer term implementation of programs and measures over the next few years.161 (emphasis my own)

Although this upcoming project emerges twelve years following the Henry Report’s release, it is probable that the conversations and conclusions drawn will point to similar issues that have been pointed to in the past. The highlighted phrasing that is replicated in both descriptions shows the how intent does not correlate to action at Queen’s University. Given what we know about the neoliberal university, any institutional attention to issues

161 Office of the Provost and Vice Principal (academic), Diversity and Equity Task Force (DET).
of race occurs from multicultural and diversity rhetoric. As I explored in my literature review, university policy action is geared towards modes of inclusion and equality, which coopt racialized people as part of the performance of the institution as “excellent.” This quotation, and the proposed report, is part of how Queen’s University demonstrates itself as “doing” race, while concealing systemic inequalities. The university’s plans to prioritize recommendations have not been met thus far, and it is likely that it will not in the future.

The history of the Henry Report fits within Sarah Ahmed’s conceptualization of institutional containment strategies. She writes that the managing of diversity as a human resource allows universities to “conceal the operation of systematic inequalities.”\(^\text{162}\) The work of Dr. Henry, the Principal’s Advisory Committee, and the Diversity and Equity Task Force shows us how racialization and discrimination persists at Queen’s University, despite the university’s claim of working to implement policies that address racism on campus. Overall, this enables the university to overlook the impacts of colonialism and discrimination. Agnes Calliste and George Dei (2000) argue that anti-racist measures must ethically negotiate the construction of power and difference in ways that go beyond ideologies that serve a system of national and global economic/political interests.\(^\text{163}\) Queen’s University administration needs anti-racist policies that move beyond commissioning the replication of research. The reports, overall, demonstrate how diversity and equity oriented work operates, discursively, at institutions in ways that do not adequately consider the material impacts of colonialism and discrimination. This is to

\(^{162}\) Ahmed, On Being Included, 53.

say that the reports name and track experiences of racism, yet are mobilized as documents of diversity, thus obscuring practices of discrimination, inequity, and intolerance. In my next chapter, I will discuss how Queen’s University’s commitment to diversity plays out in official administrative statements, in policies, and branding techniques.
Chapter 3

Maintaining the Impression of Diversity

In this chapter, I will unpack how diversity operates at Queen’s University. I borrow from Roderick Ferguson and consider how academic institutions are enforcers of public policies around race and gender.\textsuperscript{164} Chandra Mohanty situates these kinds of processes in relation to global capitalism and corporatization, stating universities “recycle and exacerbate gender, race, class, and sexual hierarchies.”\textsuperscript{165} In critically interrogating the relationship between neoliberalism and the academy, scholars such as Ferguson and Mohanty consider how oppression continues to be dispelled through the corporate university’s operations. Specifically, they underline how the question of diversity gets folded into economic strategies and decisions. In reviewing the policies, documents, strategies, and branding that make up Queen’s University’s official “commitment to diversity,”\textsuperscript{166} I argue that diversity procedures are a part of how institutions try and make advantageous use of difference to demonstrate organizational value, all while maintaining historical inequalities. Diversity work—or the appearance of diversity work—is sustained through neoliberal global capitalism and multiculturalism as well as ideologies that profess the rhetoric of post-racism. In short, I show that diversity strategies sustain and dispel white supremacy, anti-blackness, and colonialism.

As the history of the Henry Report reveals, the neoliberalization of the university contributes to how conversations about racism are managed. Specifically, narratives that

\textsuperscript{164} Ferguson, \textit{The Reorder of Things}, 50.
\textsuperscript{165} Mohanty, \textit{Feminism Without Borders}, 173.
\textsuperscript{166} Ahmed, \textit{On Being Included}, 27.
uncover experiences of racism are reframed as issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Sara Ahmed argues that for racialized people, inclusion connotes being invited into whiteness.\textsuperscript{167} The inclusion project, she notes, is a tool of recognition and governance. She writes that this project delineates how “others as would be citizens are asked to submit to and agree with the task of reproducing the nation.”\textsuperscript{168} Diversity, predicated on difference, is part of how people experience or develop their sense of place (inclusion or exclusion or both) within the institution. In mapping the poetics of blackness in Canada, Rinaldo Walcott theorizes a perilous in-betweeness “of being here and not being here” that is conditioned by state sanctioned multiculturalism, a rhetoric that seeks to enfold—include—non-Europeans into federally defined and eurocentric diversity policies.\textsuperscript{169} Sunera Thobani phrases this spatiality as part of “communalizing power, that is, a power that constitutes communities as discrete racial, ethnic, and cultural groups existing within its territorial borders, yet outside the symbolic bounds of the nation.”\textsuperscript{170} Walcott and Thobani help us view the tensions at play when grappling with diversity work at universities: administrative procedures organize and consolidate racialized people as Other yet within the space of the institution. In this regard, diversity both rejects and invites differences in ways that suit institutional governance.

I am interested in how diversity informs the intricacies of belonging and not belonging in space, and the terms under which belonging is or is not granted to racialized

\textsuperscript{167} Ahmed, \textit{On Being Included}, 163.  
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid. 163.  
\textsuperscript{169} Walcott, \textit{Black Like Who}, 48.  
\textsuperscript{170} Thobani, \textit{Exalted Subjects}, 149.
people.\textsuperscript{171} In order to unpack how Queen’s manages diversity, diversity must be understood in relation to space: since diversity work is an organizational tool that is used to consolidate and organize bodies based on difference (including but not limited to race, gender, class, ability), it is a spatial process. In their critical work on diversity, Patrizia Zanoni, et al, (2010) note the multiple spatial arenas that we can draw meaning about diversity and difference: “The form and appearance of built space, the embodied, social practices that render space an inhabited place, virtual spaces through websites, e-mail, listservs and blogs, posters and promotional material, etc., all shape meaning, including meaning about identities and diversity.”\textsuperscript{172} With this in mind, diversity contributes to what Joan Acker theorizes as inequality regimes, which are the “interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations.”\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{171} While broader national and outernational geographies certainly inform how diversity is understood at Queen’s, this is not my primary focus. However, I do want to highlight that while thinking through how diversity work is entangled with space and belonging, I am reminded that space is laden with longstanding colonial and racial violences, and Queen’s University is no exception. Geography invokes specific and ongoing histories of settlement and colonialism manifest in the continued violence of settler colonialism. As well, Édouard Glissant (1997) reminds us that anti-black violence is implicit to Western conquest and the territorial occupation of sites and spaces. He considers “the intervention of one State on the territory of another, genocide, the universal triumph of a way of life...[as] direct agents” of manifesting violence and attempts at cultural and territorial unification. The land, now called Canada, that Queen’s University sits on is tied to the history of imperialism and occupation that Glissant outlines, particularly considering the campus is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territories.


Diversity is linked to spatial processes that are administered. Nirmal Puwar (2004) reminds us that diversity as policy and procedural framework “has overwhelmingly come to mean the inclusion of people who look different.”\textsuperscript{174} This is tied to, as I have already noted, neoliberalism, the obfuscation of racism (in favour of diversity, inclusion), and what Mohanty calls “pedagogies of accommodation.”\textsuperscript{175} Given the links between inclusion, people “who look different,” and capitalism, diversity is inherently tied to whiteness and white privilege. To put it slightly differently, since diversity is an image-based operation that is used to generate representational value, diversity projects reflect what Rinaldo Walcott refers to as the “imagined community.”\textsuperscript{176} In many ways, then, Queen’s University maintains its claims to white supremacy by investing institutional energy to diversity procedures that prop up the institution.

It is unsurprising that the Queen’s University administration is, primarily, white. The university’s diversity statements, outlined and studied below, demonstrate how representations of race and discrimination are emerging from a privileged point of view. As I noted above, in my brief discussion of Sunera Thobani and Rinaldo Walcott, this point of view produces the other within the institution, while the institution is marked as normative. The racial demographics of those that hold leadership positions in senior level positions thus support how this privileged point of view is circulated and sustained. Put plainly, the administration defines diversity on terms that enmesh with neoliberal

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\textsuperscript{174} Nirmal Puwar, \textit{Space Invaders: Race, Gender, and Bodies Out of Place}, (Oxford: Berg, 2004) 174.
\textsuperscript{175} Mohanty, \textit{Feminism Without Borders}, 178.
\textsuperscript{176} Walcott, \textit{Black Like Who}, 118
\end{flushright}
corporatization. Nancy Bray’s infographic (Figure 4) depicts research done by Malinda Smith and the Academic Women’s Association at the University of Alberta. It represents the racial demographics from senior level administration among the U15, a group of research universities across western Canada.

Figure 4: “The Diversity Gap” as researched by Malinda Smith and the Academic Women’s Association of the University of Alberta. This infographic indicates that Queen’s senior administration is comprised of 83.3% white men, and 16.7% white women. I echo Malinda Smith’s assertion that these statistics do not happen randomly or by accident, and we must read them as indicative of

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an “equity fail.” In having white people occupying senior positions, Smith argues that, “whole groups of people, whole bodies of knowledge, insights, experiences, are being shut out year after year.” Queen’s University’s statistics are certainly at odds with the institution’s official diversity statements, which profess the commitment to diversity as being integral to the its mission. If that were the case, then there would be more Indigenous, black, brown, Asian, Latinx, and/ or other racialized people reflected in leadership positions. It is important that I clarify that more racialized people does not implicitly correlate to eradicating the issues with racism that exist on campus. However, the research compiled by Malinda Smith and the Women’s Association helps us read the disparities between the university’s messaging, and offers insight as to how the pervasive whiteness at Queen’s University is both sustained and defined through racial privilege.

As I noted in my introductory chapter, many scholars argue that diversity is what demonstrates institutional excellence. Using Sara Ahmed’s discussion on the diversity mission statement as a guide, I read Queen’s University’s “commitment to diversity” as a document that sustains white privilege. Queen’s University Employment Equity Policy reads:

Queen's University recognizes and appreciates the value that diversity adds to its activities and initiatives. The University is committed to a workplace free of discrimination that is supportive and respectful of employees with diverse backgrounds and that ensures everyone at Queen's has a full and enriching experience.

180 Ibid.
181 Ahmed, On Being Included, 27.
A similar mission statement, this time in the *Queen’s Gazette*, reads: “the university is committed to the principles of employment equity and to achieving diversity in its workforce.” There is also a longer statement, named the “Guiding Philosophy on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion” on the University Relations Website, that draws on multicultural and diversity rhetoric in order to demonstrate its commitment to creating a ‘welcoming’ and ‘inclusive’ atmosphere. Part of the statement reads that, “University Relations affirms that issues of equity, diversity, and inclusivity must be collaborative and be focused on partnership and community building.”

Given what we know about Queen’s University and whiteness, the aforementioned ‘collaborative’ partnership towards community building implies that diversity procedures are intended to benefit the white demographics of the institution, who also make up the bulk of stakeholders and administrators. These statements Queen’s official narratives about diversity and can be read alongside the institution’s administrative missions and reports analyzed in Chapter Two.

Sara Ahmed notes that official commitments institutionalize diversity as a performative communication tool, and as part of a tactic that appears to give institutional attention to issues of difference. As these official quotes demonstrate, the language of diversity is maintained through very specific administrative communications (the language of respect and equity) and becomes a way for institutions to give the impression

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184 Queen’s University, “University Relations: Guiding Philosophy on Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity,” [http://www.queensu.ca/universityrelations/equity](http://www.queensu.ca/universityrelations/equity).
185 Ibid.
187 Ibid. 30
of accountability. Here, representation outweighs action, and the university is able to name “discrimination” as not tolerated, rather than an ongoing experience. The statements thus upholds “diverse backgrounds” as that which is tolerated, pushing racism out of the picture altogether. Ahmed argues that it does not matter if diversity work is even happening, what matters is carving the institutional space to talk about the words themselves. Diversity then becomes a language tool, rather than an action. I am not suggesting that having diversity language implicitly correlates to a lack of administrative attention, but as my later discussion will show, that is certainly the case for Queen’s University.

In their official statements, diversity is named for the “value” it brings to Queen’s University’s reputation. To recap, the term diversity evokes various meanings that all work to affirm whiteness in the context of neoliberalism. They are as follows:

1. Diversity as difference (without implicitly naming it)
2. The commodification difference and ‘Others’
3. Diversity as a code for post-racism and colour blindness

Not only does Queen’s University use the term ‘value’ to describe diversity support Ahmed’s assertion that diversity is mobilized to benefit institutions, it also gives the impression that the experiences of marginalized people at the university are what generate the university’s positive image. A recent 2012 training initiative presented with Queen’s Equity and Human Rights Offices and Queen’s Human Resources is a certificate program of ten workshops; interested staff and faculty can learn the importance of inclusion and diversity through these workshops while also gaining certification in the

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188 Ibid. 81.
189 Ibid. 29.
area of diversity. It is important for me to point out that the exact training modules are
unavailable for public view, so I cannot assess the content of the certificate program;
however, there is a lot that we can draw from the promotion of the program from the
description, as well as the titles each of the workshops (Figure 5). The program is titled
“From Diversity to Inclusion Certificate Program” and the description reads:

This program is designed to provide staff and faculty at Queen’s with valuable
knowledge and skills to work and lead in an inclusive work environment. It seeks
to engage Queen’s staff and faculty in conversations, discovery, and learning about
diversity and equity principles and to provide resources, knowledge, and tools
required to make Queen’s an inclusive campus. Specifically, the certificate
program offers participants, a theoretical framework for understanding equity and
inclusion principles and concepts; helps participants develop necessary skills
for equity and diversity work; and gives participants direct experience through
interactive scenarios working and communicating across differences.¹⁹⁰ (Emphasis
in original).

The title of the program, which suggests ‘moving’ from diversity to inclusion, is
yet another problematic way of recognizing difference. Inclusion, like diversity, evokes a
function to manage and separate people based on the needs of the institution. Dafina-
Lazarus Stewart makes the necessary critique of inclusion rhetoric: Ze¹⁹¹ argues that
inclusion rhetoric contributes to an “internalized sense of racial, ethnic, sexual, gender
and social class dominance but also reinforcement of the notion that diversity and
inclusion are achieved by having people with different backgrounds in the same
spaces.”¹⁹² The title of “From Diversity to Inclusion” alone is a further “watering down”

Staff and Faculty,” http://www.queensu.ca/equity/training/diversity-inclusion.
¹⁹¹ Dafina-Lazarus Stewart uses the non-binary pronouns ze, zim, and zir.
https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-
one-you-think-essay.
of diversity gestures, as it is a similar means of folding marginalized communities into an already dominant colonial neoliberal model.

The description of the program also yields Teaching or learning diversity or inclusion “skills” is a fraught process. If “diversity” is something that can be passed in a course, it carries in it a very narrow understanding of difference and marginalization. Specifically, race, racism, inclusion, exclusion, colonialism, anti-blackness, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, and other modes of discrimination and violence, are rendered knowable on terms that the administration defines. These workshops thus often replicate what Mohanty calls “codified ideas of difference,” pedagogical categories that rewrite histories of race and colonization in ways that make racism palatable.\footnote{Mohanty, \textit{Feminism Without Borders}, 194.}

As well, given the connection between diversity rhetoric and difference, learning and knowing diversity occurs at the expense of the experiences of racialized people at the university. Marginalized communities are the “datum” through which equity skills are built and tested—stabilizing white normativity as outside the datum. Indeed, the very focus of diversity workshops is to mitigate issues of difference on campus. The workshop descriptions assert that, “[b]uilding an inclusive environment that promotes diversity and inclusion requires active participation of everyone on campus.”\footnote{Equity Office, “From Diversity to Inclusion Certificate Program.”} In this regard, marginalia becomes a focus of relationship building, and difference becomes a bargaining tool that ultimately aids in broadening white people’s perceptions and understanding of difference.

Marginalized experiences become defined according to institutional standards. Rinaldo Walcott writes that the official sanctioning of identity politics supported by the
state, through its legislated multicultural policy, places issues of difference and connectedness in a different relation and configuration.\textsuperscript{195} When racialized people are centered as learning sites—datum—that can be pedagogically or administratively ‘passed,’ it undermines and erases the experiences and knowledges of racialized people. The complexities of experience that come with navigating racialized worlds are ignored in favour of institutionalized definitions, tests, and measures. Given the above statistics on Queen’s administration and whiteness, who participates at these workshops is curious; if the workshops are for the administration, so they can “learn diversity,” the participants will probably be white. In this system, white administrators are certified in diversity, while the experiences of faculty and students of colour are swept aside.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{workshop_titles.png}
\caption{“From Diversity to Inclusion” Workshop Titles\textsuperscript{196}}
\end{figure}

The issues that I just outlined are exacerbated by the fact that some of the sessions are “electives” rather than “mandatory.” Institutionally espoused diversity rhetoric rarely centres power and difference in any meaningful way. Here, the topics that deal with

\textsuperscript{195} Walcott, \textit{Black Like Who}, 40.
equity and diversity, such as “Building Inclusive and Accessible Workplaces,” and “Employment Equity: Moving Beyond Compliance” are promoted, whereas those that focus on anti-racism, anti-oppression, and sexual and gender violence, three fields of theory and activism that centralize actively undoing colonial structures and patriarchal knowledge systems, are secondary. What is at stake in making portions of diversity training, specifically those that focus on race and racism, “optional”? George Yúdice is helpful here: he argues that diversity is a trade that receives investments, and thus is absorbed into a system of economic rationality.\textsuperscript{197} The pedagogical approach that this workshop series takes is invested in democratic processes—as evidenced by the “optional” workshops. This powerfully suggests that some kinds of knowledge are valued (mandatory) while also and disavowing workshops that may or will produce strategies and narratives of decolonial resistance and unpack privilege, whiteness, and difference. It would be irresponsible for me to suggest that the workshops on anti-oppression and anti-racism would inherently mitigate the practices that I am critiquing. Paul Gilroy (1990) argues anti-racism should be discredited when it becomes entangled with multicultural rhetoric. Scholars like Gilroy point to the need for multi-tiered approaches that account for crises, and ever-adaptive modes of racialization.\textsuperscript{198} I am not so much concerned with what critical pedagogies are named, but more with what they do: we need pedagogies that ask fundamentally different questions than what is offered with “From Diversity to Inclusion.”

It is important for me to distinguish my critiques of diversity workshops from the labour of those who designed them. Maintaining the labour (including resource allocation) of diversity and equity officers are often part of how institutions perform diversity in accordance with neoliberal capitalism. Sara Ahmed also notes that university mandated initiatives depend on the labour of practitioners, who often work tirelessly despite restrictions on funding and obstacles to diversity work. \(^{199}\) Nowhere is this clearer than in the history of the Henry Report, where different researchers have been commissioned to report and recommendations on the same issue time and time again. Ahmed writes that “even when universities allocate resources to diversity and equity initiatives, that allocation seems to depend on individual persistence and individuals who keep saying that diversity counts after it has, as it were, been counted.”\(^{200}\) The way that diversity strategies are embedded in the performance of equity at Queen’s University necessitates the labour of those who write, brand, and market workshops.

This kind of marketing overlaps with the recruitment of racialized people for campaigns and university promotional material is part of how institutions profit from diversity. Puwar (2004) explains that the representation of racialized people is often taken to mean that diversity is ‘achieved’ in institutional settings.\(^{201}\) Ahmed (2006) also takes up the performativity of diversity. She writes:

This model of diversity simultaneously reifies difference as something that already exists in the bodies of others (“we” are diverse because “they” are here). It also transforms difference into a property: if difference is something they are, then it is something we can have. It is this model of diversity as something others bring to the organization that we can see at work in the use of visual images of diverse

\(^{200}\) Ibid. 135.
\(^{201}\) Puwar, *Space Invaders*, 32.
organizations: images of colorful, happy faces, which show the diversity of the university as something it has embraced.202

In the context of neoliberalism, claiming ownership of racialized workers, students, faculty, is a tactic that is considered essential to how organizations demonstrate diversity. Sabrina D. Volpone, Kecia M. Thomas, et al, assert that, “to be attractive as an employer, it is crucial that organizations expand their recruitment to [take] advantage of the benefits of employing a diverse workforce.”203 This is, then, an additional layer to how racialized people are considered advantageous to institutions. A similar study notes: “[i]ndividuals and organizations often take great care to generate a performance that will maintain an impression that is believable by audiences. This effort may mean that some facts are emphasized while others are de-emphasized.”204 These studies highlight that a workplace or institution may even manipulate their personnel or student population in order to give the impression of diversity. Lisa Wade, for example, tracked how a photo of Diallo Shabaz, a black alumnus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was photo-shopped and wildly circulated in university promotional materials, without his consent.205 She argues that the university coopted Shibaz’ image. According to Wade, this kind of commodified diversity is “considered useful for selling an institution...if real diversity isn’t possible, cosmetic diversity will do.”206 Wade’s insights maps on to my discussion

206 Ibid.
of how Queen’s University performs diversity by engaging in similar practices—specifically the strategic recruitment of racialized students for promotional materials.

There are tensions at play with how Queen’s University gives the impression of inclusivity while putting racialized students on display for their own promotional value. The Queen’s University promotional video, entitled “The Queen’s Community,” is a meaningful example of how the institution represents itself as diverse. In this instance, too, given my own experience as a racialized student at Queen’s University, the institution may have intentionally sought out racialized students for this video in order to represent itself as inclusive and diverse. One segment of the video features a group of students that are apparently part of QSuccess, a mentorship program on campus. This particular segment is different from the rest of the video, as the group features several students of colour standing together (see Figure 6).

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208 I did my undergraduate degree at Queen’s University—there were very few students of colour at that time—and I did witness my colleagues of colour discussing being recruited for the university’s promotional films.
209 Figure 6: Ibid
It is unclear whether or not those featured in the video participated in QSuccess. Given the studies noted above, that focus on how universities manipulate the appearance of diversity to their advantage, it is also possible that the above students of colour were scouted to fulfill diversity requirements.

One of the key tactics upholding neoliberal and multicultural ideologies is an investment in post-racism—the assumption that racism is a thing of the past—and denying contemporary manifestations of racism. At the same time, because racism is considered “over,” new and ever changing modalities of racialization are rooted in the perception that discrimination must be proven on a case-by-case basis; any proven acts are considered to be an isolated incident.\textsuperscript{210} Henry Giroux reminds us that this “erases

\textsuperscript{210} Mohanty, \textit{Feminism Without Borders}, 156.
any trace of racial injustice by denying the very notion of the social and the operations of power through which racial politics are organized and legitimized.\textsuperscript{211}

In my earlier discussions, I demonstrated that Queen’s University grapples with race and racism by deploying narratives of “diversity” and “inclusion” and integrating the tolerance of racial difference into their strategic plans; this practice upholds white supremacy while allowing the institution to brand itself as “excellent.” Within corporatized neoliberal frameworks, diversity tactics allow institutions to give the impression that they are absolved of racism. However, diversity procedures do not prevent institutions from being \textit{accused} of racism. I highlight the term ‘accused’ deliberately, as neoliberal post-racism depends on the belief that racism is a \textit{threat} that harms the reputation of organizations.\textsuperscript{212} In this portion of my thesis I explore what happens in the moments where racism is reported at Queen’s University. As I have outlined in my previous chapters, responses often include reports, committees, workshops, and other administrative tasks that obfuscate racism (by focusing on diversity and inclusion) and/or profit from the measures the institution takes to express or practice tolerance (as seen in branding techniques, for example). There is therefore a lot that we can think through in terms of how Queen’s University has responded to racism (and the threat of racism that unsettles diversity, inclusion, and tolerance narratives). The agitation that arises from racism disrupts the perception of Queen’s University as a democratic non-racist space. I read the reporting, and subsequent university response, from a November 2016 “racist party” in order to demonstrate how Queen’s University disavows

\textsuperscript{211} Giroux, “Spectacles of Race and Pedagogies of Denial,” 192.
\textsuperscript{212} Ahmed, \textit{On Being Included}, 144.
itself from racism. I explore the lack of administrative accountability and show how it continues to marginalize racialized people on campus.

On November 21st, 2016, photographs surfaced of party at Queen’s University showing groups of mostly white students dressed in racist costumes. A Toronto comedian named Celeste Yim posted a series of photographs on Twitter showing the costumes that depicted “different countries” (Figures 6 and 7). Yim’s tweets were picked up by a slew of local and international news platforms, and the images incited a number of conversations surrounding the event, its participants, and Queen’s University.


I have included the photos as a reference point and, more importantly, to underline the lived experience of those, such as Yim, who have named the costumes as racist and culturally appropriative. This allows me to highlight, rather than dismiss, the lived experience of racialized people. As Paul R. Carr and Thomas R. Klassen (1996)
note, these narratives and naming practices assert an informal resistance. The above photos depict students wearing saffron robes (typically worn by monks), as well as students in orange jumpsuits and sombreros. According to a CBC article, the latter photo is meant to depict “Mexican prisoners.”

Yim’s response reads: “The costumes are indisputably and unequivocally offensive, tasteless, and should not be tolerated. Context and intentions have no bearing.” Following Carr and Klassen, in reading the photographs alongside Yim’s response, I am working to support the latter’s lived experiences of racism as well as her resistance to racist cultural appropriation that happened at the costume party.

Martha Agoustinos, et al, name the neoliberalist ideologies of individualism, merit, and egalitarianism as principles that deflect accusations of racism. They write that merit and individualism, as well as an equal playing field, provide the discursive tools to present racism as “problematic” rather than systemic. The authors also note that neoliberalism limits accountability of the institution that is grappling with racism and other forms of discrimination. Similarly, Giroux argues that neoliberalism “now work[s] to erase the social from the language of public life so as to reduce all racial problems to private issues of individual character.”

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217 @Celestrogen, (November 21, 2016). “The costumes are indisputably and unequivocally offensive, tasteless, and should not be tolerated. Context and intentions have no bearing,” https://twitter.com/celestrogen/status/801084703486988288.


With the above insights in mind, evaluating the intent of the individual party attendees has been the focus of much of the news coverage of the party. Mack Lamoureux and Anisa Rawhani quote one party attendee who argued that those featured in the photos are “good people with no malicious intent, a grounded worldview and therefore had generally tasteful costumes. It is a beer drinking tournament, not a means to offend other cultures.”

Bhavik Vyas, the president of the Commerce Society at Queen’s University, was quoted by *The Toronto Star* as stating: “the perception is that commerce students are racists, partiers and rich snobs. When I think of commerce, I think diverse, critical thinkers and constant learners.” Vyas is also quoted as stating: “A lot of people who didn't know what was going on, who were not on the ground…That's what created this mess.”

Charlie Tung voiced that, “People are attacking other people. And we shouldn’t be attacking each other. It should just be a neutral discussion.”

Ben Harper also weighed in on Twitter, writing that, “expanding [the definition of racism] after anything that could offend is a disservice to victims of racism.” In attempting to leverage an ‘official’ definition of racism that does not account for the actions of party

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221 Siekierska, “Queen’s University party costumes spark debate on campus.”
224 @Ben_S_Harper. (23 November 2016). “Racism is evil. Expanding its definition to go after anything that could offend is a disservice to victims of racism.” https://twitter.com/Ben_S_Harper/status/801467048677216256/photo/1
attendees, Harper’s tweet demonstrates his disregard for the people who have named the party as racist.

The defense and consideration of character fits within the “Discourse of National Identity” as outlined by Henry, Tator, et al. The discourse of national identity, the authors write, is fundamental to nation building; given the relationship between multicultural ideology at national and academic levels, the university is part of a nation building project. As already noted, a key part of the neoliberal branding of institutions is to give the impression of tolerance; this involves deploying ideologies of inclusivity and acceptance in the name of democracy. Those who are quoted in the articles above purport that the “good nature” (diverse, critical thinkers, learners; a grounded worldview) of the party participants should exempt them from accountability for racism. This enables those who perpetuate racism to profit from anonymity: some news outlets have chosen to use blurred photographs, whereas the ones I have included are un-blurred.

The rush to defend the actions of the party-goers, based on democratic ideologies (e.g. good character), is present in the administrative response to the party. Following the incident, the Principal of Queen’s University, Daniel Woolf, responded with comments that echo the official statements I analyzed in chapter 3: “Queen’s strives to be a diverse and inclusive community free from discrimination or harassment of any kind.” In the statements that emerged in the days following the party and news coverage, Woolf also attempted to distance the party activities from Queen’s University campus. On November 22, 2016, he states:

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As far as we can ascertain, this event did not occur on campus. No event of this kind would be sanctioned by the university’s senior administration. However, we are taking the matter very seriously, and continue to look into it. If we determine that this was a Queen’s sponsored or sanctioned event, we will take appropriate action.

And again, on November 23, 2016 he states:

That is why I have asked the provost to gather as much information as possible, and, based on what he learns, determine if this event falls within the scope of Queen’s Student Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is applicable to students’ off-campus conduct in certain circumstances.227

There is institutional power in Woolf’s statements, which profess the desire to “look into solutions,” while at the same time denying his institution’s (and institutional) ties to the politicized nature of the party. He is quick to distance the party from the campus space and the resulting subtext gives several impressions: “the party did not happen on Queen’s University campus, and therefore we cannot be held accountable” and “the party cannot have happened at Queen’s University, because we care about diversity at Queen’s.” It is likely that these comments are also an attempt to limit Queen’s University’s accountability- not to racism (or to potential racism), but to the negative reputation that the debate brings to the university. Indeed, Ahmed reminds us that institutions benefit from distancing from the word racism, instead opting for the language of diversity and equity. There might be more punitive repercussions if the party occurred on campus, in accordance to the Student Code of Conduct. However, Principal Woolf has

stated that there will be no formal process taken through The Student Code of Conduct, based on the information that the provost had gathered following the event.228

In Woolf’s statement from December 6, 2016, he says that, “[he knows] that the vast majority of our students, staff, and faculty are kind, accepting, welcoming people who share [his] concern about what has happened.”229 Framed as an issue of institutionalized diversity—specifically a welcoming and inclusive campus population—Principal Woolf’s comments allow him to revisit the same patterns of investigating diversity that we have seen with the history of the Henry Report, as well as other reports on diversity, racism, and inclusion.230 In these moments, there is interplay between when institutional racism is spoken about, and the language that is used by university representatives and their constituents in response. Woolf’s statements above also call upon the shared values of the university, which fits within the neoliberal discourse of values, a universalistic approach that professes a shared human “understanding and expression that transcends all cultural and racial boundaries.”231 Woolf’s statements invoke the kinds of neoliberal rhetoric that attempts to name anything other than the problem of systemic racism.

230 As I indicated in Chapter 2, Principal Woolf has, since the “racist party,” implemented a task force of two faculty, two staff, and two students to look into diversity, racism, and inclusion at Queen’s University in order to suggest short and long term recommendations for change. The report, Principal’s Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (PICRDI), was released in early April-2017, after I completed my primary source research. It includes a range of suggestions—from hiring strategies to training and education workshops on “diversity” and “ inclusion.” It is yet to be seen how this version of diversity management will unfold.
231 Henry, Tator et al., The Colour of Democracy, 31.
Threats of racism disrupt the university’s perception as an equitable and tolerable place. Given the noted relationship between when the university experiences these threats and how they leverage ‘negative’ media coverage into a history of commissioned reports, we can see that Queen’s University invests a lot of institutional energy into distancing itself from any meaningful anti-racist, equitable, and justice oriented strategies. Neoliberalism contributes to the ways that institutions opt for procedures that perpetuate post-race ideologies. As I noted in my literature review, neoliberal ideology situates issues of race as a thing of the past in an attempt to show solidarity despite difference.

The language of diversity professes to prioritize inclusion on the basis of racial difference. Inclusion rhetoric—and indeed, the very idea of inclusion—is a means for some to claim power in deciding what kinds of communities are included and under what circumstances inclusion can, in fact, take place.

In many ways, too, we can think about how diversity, as a system of crisis management, is essential to Queen’s University as a neoliberal institution. The “racist party” is yet another instance: something racist happened, there is backlash against the school, and the administration responds with diversity rhetoric in order to manage the crisis. As with the case of the party, Queen’s University tactics are very transparent:

1. Deny ties to racism
2. Leverage diversity rhetoric to demonstrate commitment to equality
3. Commission an investigative diversity report
In a recent blog post, Marlon James writes “it is that we too often mistake discussing diversity with doing anything constructive about it.”

For James, the way diversity is used provides the conditions where “we continue to fail, but the false sense of accomplishment in simply having one is deceiving us into thinking that something was tried.”

James’ writing aligns very clearly to the blanket diversity espousing done by Principal Woolf. This latest incident reveals the organizational panic that comes with reports of and experiences of racism.

In this chapter, I unpacked how Queen’s University diversity policies, statements, and procedures sustain white privilege by controlling how social differences are represented. The university obscures experiences of racism by producing “official” discourses about diversity that ignore and erase these experiences. I also outlined the institutional labour that is involved in maintaining the appearance of equality on campus, including diversity workshops and representations of racialized people in promotional materials. Diversity, as a neoliberal multicultural ideology, cannot be the source of any meaningful anti-racist, justice, and equity-oriented strategy, as it implicitly connected to white supremacy. This is to say that difference is always understood in relation to normative white privileges. Queen’s University usage of diversity is meant to demonstrate how non-racist the institution is (rather than using diversity as a platform for change or face the longstanding racism that underpins the university). In my next chapter, I will explore how racism is perceived as a threat that harms institutional reputations and the tactics deployed by the university in order to distance itself from racism.

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233 Ibid.
Conclusion

Throughout this project, I have observed some Queen’s University policies and procedures that are linked to diversity and inclusion, specifically those that have emerged within and after the 2004 Henry Report. Through Eurocentric curriculum, and its ties to whiteness and institutional racism, institutions such as Queen’s University marginalize racialized people on campus while also erasing their experiences of racism. Despite the diversity initiatives that attempt to mitigate issues of racism on campus—by promoting inclusion and acceptance—Queen’s University sustains longstanding histories of dominance and oppression. In thinking through how power and privilege ignores the humanity of black women, Audre Lorde asks: “how many times has this all been said before?”234 Lorde’s question is relevant to this project. The scholars and works that read and discussed throughout this thesis take up the themes of belonging, and articulate what is at stake when navigating the ever-changing modalities of neoliberal racism. Beyond this call for recognizing the humanity of marginalized communities, many of these scholars explain that a necessary shift is needed; this would be a move from the rhetoric of diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusivity, toward a praxis that refuses and resists systemic racism, white supremacy, and colonialism (Lorde, Ahmed, Walcott, Roderick Ferguson, Mohanty). Thus, they open up ways to practice and make change—within and outside the university—rather focusing on naming and managing diversity.

So how do we move forward from diversity logic? How might we divert from the Queen’s University model—a model that clearly demonstrates how the neoliberal university mobilizes diversity for its own profit? Following Chandra Mohanty, I shift my

focus to imagining decolonial interventions that adequately address, and undo, the historical processes of dehumanization. Mohanty poses a series of questions that are meaningful:

What knowledges do we need for education to be the practice of liberation? What does it mean for educators to create a democratic public space in this context? And what kinds of intellectual, scholarly, and political work would it take to actively work against the privatization of the academy, and for social and economic justice? Finally, how do we hold educational institutions, our daily pedagogic practices, and ourselves accountable to the truth?²³⁵

This passage from Mohanty reveals the urgent need for critical pedagogies that carve out social and political consciousness within institutions that inherently oppress racialized people.

Many communities resist the diversity logic at Queen’s University. Mohanty’s conceptualization of the “ethnic economy”²³⁶ usefully opens up how racialized people draw on resources to survive in oppressive, racist, environments. The D.A.R.E document, co-authored by the Diversity and Equity Task Force in 2009, reveals the Queen’s University resources and centres that foster supportive environments:²³⁷

[Respondents] pointed to the efforts of the Human Rights Office, the University Registrar and the support services offered by Student Affairs in residences and in the cultural centers under its purview such as the Ban Righ Centre and Four Directions as units where diversity equity and inclusion were fostered. Participants generally agreed student organizations such as the Queen’s University Coalition Against Racial and Ethnic Discrimination (QCRED) and the Queen’s University Muslim Student’s Association (QUMSA), had done much of the heavily lifting on campus to foster a more inclusive climate.²³⁸

²³⁵ Mohanty, Feminism Without Borders, 189.
²³⁶ Ibid. 156
²³⁷ This information was gathered from a mixture of oral testimony, written feedback, and from open forum participants as part of research for the D.A.R.E Report.
This quote, summarized from the comments of open forum participants, argues that it is the smaller organizations at Queen’s University whose programming, mandates, and actions provide support for people on campus, and do more to promote equity than the larger institutional structures. It is also important to differentiate between having the codes and policies in writing, versus how they are deployed to the benefit of racialized people. Looking at the operations of the Four Directions Aboriginal Centre might give us insight as to why this is the case: According to their website, the centre supports Indigenous students at Queen’s University in “balancing their academic, spiritual, physical, and emotional needs” by engaging in Indigenous histories, traditions, and cultural activities. According to Vanessa McCourt, a Mohawk woman from Tyendinaga, the centre helps Indigenous people feel safe and provides a place on campus for them to talk about their identity and their background. While I am not suggesting that an organization's mandate implicitly correlates to fostering equity, organizations like the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre can be accountable to their policies with programming that acknowledges and supports difference.

Audre Lorde notes how institutionalized difference is part of how neoliberal capitalist economies produces Others. In this system, surplus bodies are needed as outsiders in order to sustain white supremacy. However, Lorde also argues that naming difference can be an important tool that can open up ways to challenge multiple axis of

239 Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, “Story,” https://www.facebook.com/pg/Four-Directions-Aboriginal-Student-Centre-153759831445604/about/.
241 Lorde, Sister Outsider, 115.
242 Ibid. 115.
oppression.\textsuperscript{243} We can redirect how difference profits neoliberalism by recognizing, reclaiming, and defining differences; part of this involves fostering, noticing, and sharing modes of survival within institutional spaces. Associations like The Four Directions Centre’s supports Lorde’s reclamation of difference with self-governing programming from Indigenous people on campus. Perhaps the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre’s use of difference in supporting Indigenous students and faculty on campus is part of why they are regarded as an organization that fosters equity on campus. In any case, it is clear that the support that is provided by organizations like Four Directions occur within campus, yet outside of the diversity strategies the larger governing bodies of Queen’s University administration promotes.

The diversity procedures that are deployed at Queen’s University is antithetical to dismantling oppressive systems, and its toxic effects continue to capitalize at the expense of marginalized people on campus. The way that racialized people carve out networks of supports within the institution is spatial praxis. My own self-location as a racialized student at Queen’s University also equips me to discuss spatial issues of diversity on campus. The spaces of Queen’s are informed by these tensions of race. As a mixed black queer cis woman at Queen’s University, it was difficult to place myself within the conditions of oppression that exist at the institution; however, it also enabled me to navigate the pockets that helps many marginalized students. I continue to explore my own position when considering how decolonial work comes in various forms of opposition, assertion, and repositioning. This work is necessary if we are to confront the racialization that is embedded in neoliberal diversity projects at Queen’s University. I

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\textsuperscript{243} Ibid. 115.
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therefore choose to end this project by foregrounding a quote from a blog post from Kýra, who writes that, “when we work for justice and liberation, we can’t accept progress that is conditional on being economically beneficial.”

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**Article**


Book


**Diss**


**Encyclopedia**

