Reasonable Accommodation as a Settling Concept

CORY LEGASSIC

L'auteure veut ici contribuer aux critiques faites au Québec sur les débats autour des accommodements raisonnables en suggérant de conjuguer les subventions accordées aux recherches sur les handicapés et les 'queer' pour construire une analyse féministe antiraciste des accommodements raisonnables: une stratégie pédagogique à envisager pour aborder le « multiculturalisme » dans les cours de Sciences humaines.

On February 8 2007, Québec Premier Jean Charest announced the establishment of the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences in response to public discontent concerning reasonable accommodation. Some Québebecers perceive recent intercultural friction as a crisis.... Many Western nations are facing the same challenge, that of reviewing the major codes governing life together to accommodate ethnocultural differences while respecting rights.

—Gerard Bouchard and Charles Taylor, Co-chairs of the Commission on Reasonable Accommodation

If you give them the means to go into the margins, they'll never have the opportunity to assimilate our fundamental values. —Gerard Bouchard, one of the co-chairs (qtd. in Heinrich)

"Reasonable accommodation" is the language being used to manufacture a specific multicultural crisis in Québec, with the *Globe and Mail* reporting fears that this "reasonable accommodation" crisis "will spread across Canada" and the CBC proscribing this debate as the "clash with minority cultural practices" (Curry; Canadian Press). As the Commission on Reasonable Accommodation has taken up the "challenge of western nations" of "reviewing the major codes governing life to accommodate ethnocultural differences while respecting rights," the parameters of this debate articulated within the frame of "reasonable accommodation" effectively work to delineate political margins and empower normative subject-positions. People who have testified have used these moments to resettle themselves as normative subjects—people who are privileged by taken for granted socially-constructed norms—at the regulating centre of the debate. "Ethnocultural differences" are teased apart from "rights" and they are produced as each other's antagonists. But, borrowing from Frantz Fanon, to "review the major codes governing life" and to "debate accommodation" is to "dissect [Canadian identity] under white eyes, the only real eyes" (224), and further "fix others" in order to reiterate the conditions for multiculturalism in Canada.[1]

As a new CEGEP instructor in Montreal, I have wanted to explore how "reasonable accommodation" plays into a literacy that drives a colonial epistemological structure—a grammar—that shapes knowledge production around Canadian citizenship practices and Canadian identity formation. This colonial grammar is an epistemic structure that constructs subjects and objects in the cultural production of Canadian identity and holds them in place to maintain colonial relations. Designing "worldview" course outlines around citizenship and colonization in Canada, I am exploring how concepts like "reasonable accommodation" work with multiculturalism in popular literacy on citizenship in ways that continue to invigorate a colonial grammar and allows, as Sherene Razack puts it in *Looking White People in the Eye*, a descent into "a multicultural spiral, to a superficial reading of differences that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place" (9). Tackling the production of this ongoing debate as a "system of thought," I would like to contribute to the contrapuntal readings of this accommodation discourse.

Following Edward Said's approach in *Culture and Imperialism*, contrapuntal reading is reading a text with an understanding of its imperialist context—as developing an awareness "of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts" (51). I use this approach to begin considering the ways the "reasonable accommodation" discourse structures seeks the comfort of obscuring his own settler legacy. Using "integration" or "accommodation" to figure oneself into the original landscape of the province, white settlers repeat the act of settling Canada.

The notion of "reasonable" invites us into the paradigm of "reason," where western political thought often links "reason" and "enlightenment" to "modernity" and "liberal look for the inflections, metonyms and important metaphors that make the reasonable accommodation debate fall into place within larger systems of thought. It is a different way of linking our current practices to larger historical processes and thinking through the relationship between knowledge production and social relations.

The notion of "accommodation"

A "multicultural crisis" is posed as a human rights problem and "reasonable accommodation" works at conceptually framing the parameters for responding and taking a position in dominant media discourse.

---

citizenship practices and empowers specific imperialist subject positions in debates on multiculturalism. By borrowing insights from anti-racist feminist scholars such as Sherene Razack and Sara Ahmed, I would like to begin locating conjunctions specifically in queer and critical disabilities theory in order to describe the (re)production of Canadian settler identity(ies) within a play of settling and unsettling moments.

Reasonable Accommodation as a Settling Moment

I define a settling moment as a moment where those who are settling (settlers) find comfort, stability and power in their subject-position, and a colonial "common sense" prevails. In the process of "managing an encounter," settlers constitute themselves in ways that reaffirm their rights, their reason, and their entitlements. Such settling occurs in moments like in Jonquière when retiree Germaine Bolduc took the floor during the Commission to claim: "I'm for integration, but not at the expense of our Québec identity and democracy" (Heinrich). Here we see the production of the normative settler subject, whose tone of entitlement

democracy." This paves a narrow pedagogical path into human rights discourse where the possibilities for critically engaging with the relationship between rights discourse and justice are limited. In *The Culture of Literacy,* Wlad Godzich describes this "enlightenment" worldview—this orientation—as "the realization of transparent society, a society in which nothing will be opaque to the Spirit or Mind…; this society will be regulated by the apparatus of knowledge where every object, every behavior, will be the object of some discipline well equipped methodologically to render an account of it" (23-24). As a literacy of citizenship, the concept of "reasonable accommodation" in a cluster with "multiculturalism" and "human rights" anchors the reasonable accommodation debate into this Enlightenment history (with its well-documented imperialist imperatives) and "defines the conditions under which one may have knowledge of beings" (Godzich 24). In this case, "reasonable accommodation" plays into the organization of national belonging. In *Playing in the Dark,* Toni Morrison remarks that, "in a wholly racialized society, there is no escape from racially inflected language" (13). Contrapuntal reading is to

resonates for me in Razack's work as a discursive project to "manage an encounter" (8). This notion of "accommodation" socially organizes us into a hierarchy of rights: first-class rights citizens accommodate second-class rights citizens and the power to accommodate helps organize this relationship. This debate around reasonable accommodation demonstrates how human rights discourses are racialized. A "multicultural crisis" is posed as a human rights problem and "reasonable accommodation" works at conceptually framing the parameters for responding and taking a position in dominant media discourse. Razack warns that, "without an understanding of how responses to subordinate groups are socially organized to sustain existing power arrangements, we cannot hope either to communicate across social hierarchies or to work to eliminate them" (8). In her introduction to *Strange Encounters*, Sara Ahmed argues that "we need to consider how the stranger is an effect of processes of inclusion and exclusion, or incorporation and expulsion, that constitute the boundaries of bodies and communities, including communities of living (dwelling and travel), as well as epistemic communities" (2000: 6).

No One Is Illegal-Montréal, the Montreal based group of immigrants, refugees, and allies who fight for migrant and Indigenous rights, have put out several statements throughout 2007 in response to the debate. In their statement "The 'Reasonable Accommodation' Commission and Debate" on November 12th, 2007, the group declared [translated from the original French]: "From the outset, the 'debate' fails to recognize that Québec and Canada are built on stolen Indigenous land, and constituted through the dispossession and genocide of Indigenous peoples who have been forced into 'accommodating' colonization." This response identifies this debate as taking place in a long line of repeated colonial encounters and articulates the discourse and terms of "accommodation" within a colonialist imperative.

We are invited in this debate in many ways to re/produce imperialism. While the media talks about unsettling tensions in a clash of cultures, othered voices are naming this debate as another settling moment. "Reasonable accommodation" legitimates—in its conceptualization—comfortable unequal relations of power for those who are constituted from the onset as normative subjects—those constituted as the entitled subjects who accommodate. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed describes norms as "investments, which are 'taken on' and 'taken in' by subjects" (2004: 146). Looking at how commissioners have taken on the burden of protecting certain investments (Québec identity and democracy) and recommending clearer guidelines for accommodation, it is possible to explore a little further a genealogy of "reasonable accommodation" as a way to deepen our understanding of the possible paradigmatic experiences made available in this settling concept. It provides an excellent concept-as-case-study for bringing together crucial histories into a critical citizenship literacy project in the Humanities classroom.

Reasonable Accommodation and its "Undue Hardships"

According to the Canadian Human Rights Code, accommodation is required when an employee's disability results in "functional limitations" preventing them from performing an "essential duty" of their job. Accommodations are "reasonable" so long as they don't impose "undue hardships" on the employer, and recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions have placed the burden on employers to demonstrate how providing accommodations will cause undue hardship (usually by compromising safety or jeopardizing the organization's solvency). ("What is 'Reasonable Accommodation'?")

"Reasonable accommodation" is a legal term in Canada with origins in labour law jurisprudence and describes an obligation to change laws, norms, or policies that potentially violate rights set out in the Canadian and Quebec charters. It comes with a formal set of relations between people who accommodate other people, in this case employers accommodate employees. I argue that concepts are technologies of power that can help nation-states and their "ideal" subjects cut and "dissect" (borrowing again from Fanon) the world into those "us" and "them" subject positions necessary to maintaining colonial systems of power. Subject-positions are social constructions—fantasies—that play out in the imaginary, but the impacts are real and violent. Considering Fanon's further use of a metaphor around amputation,[2] it also seems worthwhile to consider the notion of "accommodation" and its ableist invocations. Cautious around using ability as a rhetoric and disability as a metaphor, it's important to examine how the rhetorics of disability, multiculturalism and accommodation inform each other—if only to high-

light how systems of power work more tightly together than made apparent. Furthermore, it is important to complicate the analyses of interlocking oppression outside of the "triangle" of race, class and gender. The rhetoric of "reasonable accommodation" pathologizes disabilities as "burdens" and describes a need to assess if the burden causes "undue hardships" and disruption to business as usual. I am interested in how this rhetoric gets mobilized around culture as well—where "culture" is defined and assessed as a burden. It is my intention here to begin describing this rhetorical move—as one site where disability and multiculturalism intersect—but the scope of this paper does not unpack in depth these intersecting histories of pathologization.[3]

Reading for ways histories behind words and concepts overlap is not about reading for analogies; instead it is a very different project. Reading contrapuntally as a method in critical conceptual literacy should not constitute a mobilization of analogy between race and disability (or sexuality, gender, class); rather, as Suzanne Lenon also makes clear in her doctoral dissertation "A White Wedding? The Racial Politics of Same-Sex Marriage in Canada," the objective should be "to trace their relationship as mutually constitutive, that is, how relations of dominance interlock to produce contemporary subject-citizens…" (83-84). Further borrowing from Razack, I read accommodation as a strategy to "privatize the condition of being disabled," where cultures are dissected by "real" / *able* eyes, (constructed, im/mobilized, fixed) and where we "do not ask questions about the social relations that transform a physical and mental situation into one great vulnerability" (21).

Accommodation constructs immigrants as politically disabled identities—identities that pose potential hardships in a political system—in order to contrast with the normative national subject-position and what that subject is able to do. Disability here does not describe a passive iden-

tity state but rather an active process that produces certain kinds of bodies—a process of disabling certain bodies while enabling others. For an oversimplified example, stairs disable a person in a wheelchair from entering a building. In that space, stairs help construct what a normative abled body is and can do. In *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation,* Eli Clare questions whether disability

tive subjects are those subjects who are made to feel (through language, culture, law) more comfortable and able to do and occupy positions in spaces. In response to media about the Commission deliberations, Québec provincial Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities Yolande James said she has no intention of caving in to some intolerant voices heard throughout the Bouchard-

Phenomenology) where, "through repeating some gestures and not others, or through being orientated in some directions and not others, bodies become contorted" (2004: 145). The Commission on Reasonable Accommodation gestures towards the margins and naturalizes certain bodies as the norm. It constructs the clash between itself and the racialized margins (those national

---

Accommodation constructs immigrants as politically disabled identities—identities that pose potential hardships in a political system—in order to contrast with the normative national subject-position and what that subject is able to do.

---

lives in the body or the social and physical environment. (67) Clare uses "disabled" as a verb "to name what this ableist world does to us crips and gimps" (69). An able body is an enabled body. We can look at the language of accommodation and its histories to analyze how it reinscribes these social relations by constructing cultural difference into a framework of "undue hardships." Amidst the talk of clashes, integration/assimilation, and fears of erosion, this debate has been a repeated reenactment of a settling moment for the normative national subject, a moment where settlers make themselves comfortable (and able to do things) in their positionality—make themselves at home.

In "Queer Feelings," Sara Ahmed argues that "comfort may operate as a form of 'feeling fetishism': some bodies can 'have' comfort, only as an effect of the work of others, where the work itself is concealed from view" (2004: 146). We can make links here between the "work of others" and the comfort of some by asking, "Why 'accommodate'?" How do bodies get constructed in relation to each other so that some bodies work at making other bodies feel more comfortable in Canada? How are some bodies made *able* to do this work? Norma-

Taylor commission: "Québec needs workers. We are talking about economic development and we must not forget the good things immigrants bring to Québec" (Authier). An even less settling response by those directly affected at the Immigrant Worker Centre in Côte-Des-Neiges Montreal stated:

It takes enormous courage to stand up for (immigrant, migrant or refugee) labour rights when the chances of their winning anything and keeping their job is remote. You might say that this is a situation of "reasonably accommodating" the class interests of employers by providing a pool of skilled, cheap labour (trained and educated elsewhere) who are prepared to work in almost any conditions as the price of migration to a better place. (IWC)

The way in which racialized "others" are repeatedly interpellated against regulative norms functions in a way, I would argue borrowing from Ahmed's "Queer Feelings," as a form of "repetitive strain injury" (Ahmed makes use of this metaphor when discussing heterosexuality and "orientations" in her book, *Queer*

imaginary encroaching "shores") and, in emphasizing a regulative norm and compulsory settler imperative, the Commission commits that repetitive act and "shapes what it is possible for bodies to do, even if it does not contain what it is possible to be" 2004: 145).

Racialized immigrants are expected to work and integrate, and even if they wanted to, the current discourses of multiculturalism and "reasonable accommodation"—as "systems of thought" with domains of recognition, normative systems, and modes of relation—constitute racialized immigrants as failures. Farah Abdi, a Solidarity Across Borders member, says in an interview with the *National* that as a black Québecois he will always be asked where he comes from. We all fail against the innocent and ideal national subject that labours intensively in mythologizing the continuities in Canada as a liberal democratic nation state. The repetitive strain injury—that contortion of possibilities for ourselves as human beings—happens in the legacy underpinning the imperative of this Commission to settle the question of "accommodation" without locating its "grounding mistake" (Spivak qtd. in Bhattacharyya 484). The "grounding mistake" is the settling moment

in the way it invisibilizes the visibilizing forces that produce, as Razack points out in writing about disability rights, "the material exclusions that enable the ableist gaze at the same time that the ableist gaze enables it" (131). This argument compliments Ahmed's description of "feeling fetishism." Beginning this genealogy of power relations and locating some of the tropes made available by the

contradictions and discontinuities; but the infrastructures that hold Canada as a nation-state together are founded and continue to perpetuate violences that contradict the continuity and narratives that underpin human rights and liberal democracy. Building a critique of the concept of "reasonable accommodation" into a critical conceptual literacy on citizenship in Humanities curricula can help

objects: fixed identities, spaces, and time. The "grounding mistake" is that dominant discourses on Canadian identity and belonging are founded on and defined through a colonial grammar. The making of Canadian subjects is founded on ongoing colonial relations that work at settling the paradigmatic experience of what it is to be "Canadian." A contrapuntal reading reveals the imperialist and

---

> ## Infrastructures that hold Canada as a nation-state together are founded and continue to perpetuate violences that contradict the continuity and narratives that underpin human rights and liberal democracy.

---

conceptual use of "reasonable accommodation" from labour history, we can recognize how normative national subjects are invited to accommodate minorities in the double bind from which they construct persons with disabilities as persons with "functional limitations."

In "Im/plausible Deniability: Racism's Conceptual Double Bind," Barnor Hesse makes arguments around the definition of racism using the concept of the "paradigmatic experience." In discussing racism, Hesse describes how "the paradigmatic experience underwriting the concept (valorized for its theoretical and political insights) incorporates the experience of 'others' where they approximate to the 'originating' insights *and at the same time* proscribes these 'other' experiences where they resist translation and challenge the 'originating' insights" (14). The concept of "reasonable accommodation" contorts us and orients our bodies in divergent ways into the paradigmatic experience as subjects always-in-process in relation to a regulating norm. This regulating norm can never be achieved because the ideal subject is founded on a "grounding mistake" of western liberal democracy and its human rights regime. The norm requires transcending important

explore this grounding mistake. The grounding mistake here is making Canadian identity an innocent practice—a practice of denying Canada's own discontinuities.

The Canadian normative subject is "that queer" who is always invited to come out and claim an identity in some kind of performing moment, allowing the normative discourse to contort bodies in exchange for the right to take up space. The discourse of reasonable accommodation contorts bodies in the way it ardently commits itself to constraining and depoliticizing the way we understand ourselves, further essentializing communities into caged static cultural identities, and in consequence, constraining the possibilities and hope as earlier discussed of "communicating across social hierarchies and working to eliminate them." The Reasonable Accommodation Commission—as it toured through towns staging public forums—is a settling moment in that it repeats the act of settling in order to secure power relations by invisibilizing its own contradictions and the work that goes into containing them. "Reasonable accommodation" and "multiculturalism" operate as they do because they maintain the underlying grammar that structures Canadian subjects in relation to

universalizing impulses underpinning the concepts framing this debate. A contrapuntal reading also turns to active resistance that offers different histories. The few activists I cite work to unsettle the assumptions about who we are in relation to each other; then bring histories into account that trouble the ground beneath us.

Moments of Unsettling and "Better Epistemologies"

Ahmed echoes the line of theorizing in much of queer theory that "the work of repetition involves the concealment of labour under the sign of nature" (2004: 145). It takes a lot of work to produce history, create its continuities, and naturalize entitlements within those narratives. I have only briefly gestured towards some contradictions inherent to the epistemology underpinning "reasonable accommodation," that is serving the ongoing debate as the conceptual framework for marking bodies into a hierarchy of rights, and pointing to its ableist invocations as a gesture towards the necessary analysis of interlocking oppression. The impositions of a debate around "reasonable accommodation" may be grounded in a settling imperative, but its compulsive repetition,

I argue in the spirit of Foucauldian rejection of the repressive hypothesis ("Excerpts"), *attests to the power produced within the infinite networks of unsettling moments*.

The ideal itself is unsettled with its own contradictions and, in response finally to Gerard Bouchard's fantasies of the margins and assimilation, I refer to Ahmed who asserts that "[a]ssimilation involves a desire to approximate an ideal that one has already failed; an identification with one's designation as a failed subject. The choice of assimilation … is clearly about supporting the violence of … distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate lives" (2004: 150). I look to groups such as *No One Is Illegal* who work both within and against the state, as they embody the paradoxes from different unsettled positions. They practice a necessary commitment to "better knowledges" and "better epistemologies" as pointed to by Jane Flax, which describe (as the basic point of departure) "knowledge and epistemologies less contaminated by false beliefs and dominating relations of power" (142). In "The End of Innocence," Flax argues that:

> We need to learn ways of making claims about and acting upon injustice without transcendental guarantees or illusions of innocence.… To take responsibility is to situate ourselves firmly within contingent and imperfect contexts, to acknowledge differential privileges of race, gender, geographic location and sexual identities. (146)

Groups like *No One Is Illegal* continue to produce unsettling moments as they physically disrupt the Commission hearings with the response that "[t]his Commission, sanctioned by the state, is a process of submission, whereby minority populations are forced to justify their very existence in Québec" ("The 'Reasonable Accommodation' Commission and Debate").

Conclusion

Reflecting on my own role as a potential future CEGEP (Québec college) teacher—where the Humanities curriculum often navigates students through discourses of "citizenship" in the context of "liberal democracy" and "human rights"—the notion of "reasonable accommodation" offers an opening into a discussion that begins to talk about and locate "grounding mistakes"—those settling moments that happen around and through us in everyday practices and our complicity in knowledge production.

Cory Legassic is a recent graduate student of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto collaborative MA in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, and Women and Gender Studies. His research interests are currently focused on racism, nationalism and queer identities. He works as a teacher and activist in Montreal.

[1]On page 224 in "The Fact of Blackness," Fanon writes: "I move slowly in the world, accustomed now to seek no longer for upheaval. I progress by crawling. And already I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am *fixed.*"
[2]On page 239 in the "Fact of Blackness," Fanon writes: "The crippled veteran of the Pacific war says to my brother, 'Resign yourself to your colour the way I got used to my stump; we're both victims'. Nevertheless with all my strength I refuse to accept that amputation."
[3]Nwadiogo Ejiogu has presented work on this pathologization in her conference paper, "'We Stand On Guard For Thee': Immigration, Able-bodiedness, and the Colonial National Subject in Canada."

References

Ahmed, Sara. "Queer Feelings." *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004. 144-167.

Ahmed, Sara. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Authier, Philip. "Province Opens Door Wider to Immigrants." *The Montreal Gazette* 2 November 2007. Online: <http://www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/story.html?id=447dd0de-4bc0-495a-8492-99bb320bdfcc>. Accessed: 4 December 2007.

Bannerji, Himani. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000.

Bhattacharyya, Gargi. "Black Skin/White Boards: Learning to be the 'Race' Lady in British Higher Education." *Theories of Race and Racism Reader*. Ed. Bach, Les and John Solomos. New York: Routledge, 2000. 478-489.

Bouchard, Gerard and Charles Taylor. "Mandate." *The Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences*. Sponsored by the Quebec Government. Online: <http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/commission/mandat-en.html>. Accessed: October 24 2007.

Canadian Press. "'Canadian Style' Multiculturalism a Menace to Québec, Commission Hears." *CBC News* [Montreal] 24 October 2007. Online: <http://origin.www.cbc.ca/canada/montreal/story/2007/10/24/qc-herouxville1024.html>. Accessed: 24 October 2007.

Clare, Eli. *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*. Cambridge: South End Press, 1999.

Curry, Bill. "'Them' and 'Us' Split Spreading Nationwide, Federal Officials Warn." *Globe and Mail* [National] 19 October 2007. Online: Online: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM. 20071019.walarm19/BNStory/ National>. Accessed: 24 October 2007.

Ejiogu, Nwadiogo. "'We Stand On Guard For Thee': Immigration, Able-bodiedness, and the Colo-

nial National Subject in Canada." The Collaborative Women and Gender Studies Graduate Student Symposium on "Patriotism and Patriarchy: Transnational Perspectives" hosted by the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto, Ontario, March 6th 2008.

Fanon, Frantz. "The Fact of Blackness." *"Race," Culture and Difference*. Eds. James Donald and Ali Rattansi. London: The Open University, 1992. 220-240.

Flax, Jane. "The End of Innocence." *Disputed Subjects: Essays on Psychoanalysis, Politics and Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 1993. 131-147.

Godzich, Wlad. *The Culture of Literacy.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Heinrich, Jeff. "Bouchard, Taylor Take a Stand." *The Montreal Gazette* 26 October 2007. Available online: <http://www.canada. com/montrealgazette/news/story. html?id=fcb173f7-71cd-40ed-b988-4362029b461 2&k=86126>. Accessed: 5 December 2007.

Hesse, Barnor. "Im/Plausible Deniability: Racism's Conceptual Double Bind." *Social Identities* 10 (1) (2004): 9-29.

Immigrant Workers Centre (IWC). "Whose Reasonable Accommodation?" *Sketchy Thoughts*. 10 August 2007. Online: <http://sketchythoughts.blogspot. com/2007/12/immigrant-workers-centre-statement-on.html>. Accessed: 10 December 2007.

Lenon, Suzanne Judith. *A White Wedding? The Racial Politics of Same-Sex Marriage in Canada.* Diss. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada, 2008.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.* New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

Razack, Sherene. *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Solidarity Across Borders. Online: <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/>. Accessed: 10 August 2008.

"'The 'Reasonable Accommodation' Commission and Debate: Statement by No One Is Illegal-Montreal." *No One Is Illegal-Montréal* 12 November 2007. Online: <http://nooneisillegal-montreal. blogspot.com/2007/11/reasonable-accomodation.html>. Accessed: 10 August 2008.

"What is 'Reasonable Accommodation'?" *Mental Health Works.* 2002. Online: <http://www. mentalhealthworks.ca/employers/faq/question7.asp>. Accessed: 24 October 2007.

MARLENE KADAR

Swaddling Clothes

In Memory of Elliott Kadar, 1953-2009

/Like a bird on a wire… I have tried in my way to be free/. Leonard Cohen.

My brother wore the barrel-maker's mantle, as if he thought that like those /kádárs/ before him, he could ply wood effortlessly into circles;

He swaddled those he loved with his out-of-the-blue certainties

and his boyhood predictions,

things he knew about medicine or ability when the evidence of science provided no solace.

Layers of life lived in the shroud of wrenched joints and swollen hands

he wrapped us in the love he had so carefully shielded from all that

as if trying in his way to be free.

Marlene Kadar is the Coordinator of the Fine Arts Cultural Studies Program at York University and the Editor of the Life Writing Series, Wilfrid University Press.

Note: "kádár," apart from being our father's name, is also the Hungarian word for cooper, or barrel and cask maker.