

As Canadian as can be: A Transnational Identity

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Abstract

This study bridges social theories of literacy and rhetorical genre theory to complicate the notion that remote sponsors of literacy use individuals for the sponsor's benefit. This study contributes to an understanding of how an individual uses the ideologies of remote, powerful sponsors of language practices in English and Punjabi to create social capital for himself and his family through a fluid, complex, transnational identity which itself bridges family, community and national borders.

Language as Semiotic

Language, as is true of other signs, is not inherently meaningful, but takes meaning through arbitrary assignment by its community of users (Bakhtin, 1986; Peirce, 1931/1958; Vygotsky, 1978). Language practices serve as a lens for understanding how a community imbues an individual "with intention, situation, attitude, and purpose" (Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Pare, 1999, p. 37) and how it values that individual. Bourdieu (1991) coins the term "linguistic habitus" to describe the actions and materials of an individual's linguistic identity. The social capital assigned to the linguistic habitus of an individual reveals ideologies inherent within local and remote communities of practice that interpret the individual (Burke, 1969; Rogoff, 2003; Wertsch, 1991). The linguistic habitus also indicates how an individual acts with inherent intention, attitude and purpose within a situation to take up or resist those ideologies.

Identities as Socially Situated

This study focuses on how one bilingual individual heuristically creates a complex identity that takes up the values inherent in sponsored literacy practices (Brandt, 1998) in English and Punjabi to cross personal and public borders. Identity is seen as complex and "connected...to [people's] performances in society" (Gee, 2001, p. 99). Individuals create an identity as they internalize family discourse (Vygotsky, 1978) and later exercise agency to create further identities (through multiple secondary discourses) throughout their lives (Gee, 2001, p. 104). Sponsorship of identity can be seen in the often invisible institutional promotion of images. Affinity groups are formed as individuals take up images of community or lifestyle associated with goods or services produced (p. 106).

Identities become complex as individuals seeking legitimization through affinity groups uphold the interests of remote or invisible institutions.

Contemporary theories of literacy and identity are social theories, informed by Lave's notion of situated social practice:

This theoretical view emphasizes the relational interdependency of agent and world, activity, meaning, cognition, learning, and knowing. It emphasizes the inherently socially negotiated quality of meaning and the interested, concerned character of the thought and actions of persons engaged in activity... [T]his view also claims that learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people engaged in activity *in, with, and arising from the culturally structured world* (1991, p. 67).

Lave's work reflects Bourdieu's notions of social capital in general and linguistic capital specifically and informs rhetorical studies of discourse and discursive practices called genre theory (Bazerman, 1994; Miller, 1984). Genre theory looks at both social action and textual regularity as it shifts away from an earlier view of writing as an individual, cognitive action (Dias et al., 1999). Genre studies allow an understanding of the actions and materials of language, the linguistic habitus, as socially-situated, fluid, complex, and ideological.

Genres are socially situated actions recognized and allowed for by a community of practice (Miller, 1984). The genres of a group show an individual both what members of that community do and rhetorically how to do it. As part of communities, genres help define roles and groom attitudes and actions (Dias et al., 1999, p. 20). Within a community of practice, discourse patterns are used to reinforce ideas about identities. The need, or exigence, for discourse patterns, including written texts, is not an external state of affairs (Bitzer, 1968), but a "form of social knowledge" reflecting participants' understanding of the situation (Dias et al., 1999, p. 20). Thus, patterns of discourse are a "means of legitimately acting on a situation" (p. 20) and reflect the ideologies of a community. Genre theory implies that socialization into a community of practice requires an individual "learn to adopt social motives as ways of satisfying private intentions through rhetorical means" (p. 21). Identities can be characterized by a "variety of discourses, practices, concepts, means, and modalities of the self" (Holland, Lochiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998, p. 20). A socially-situated theory of genre reminds us that the linguistic identity of an individual is imbued with social capital by local or remote sponsors of language practices if that identity reflects their ideologies. The use of patterns of discourse, as a part of a linguistic habitus, also reflects the agency of an individual to take up and/or resist the ideology of local and distant sponsors in complex ways. Patterns of discourse, or genres, then, are a rhetorical means through which local and remote sponsors of discursive practices impart ideology and through which individuals take up and/or resist ideology in complex ways to cross borders of personal and public identity.

Socialization through language practices is part of a process through which an individual creates an identity. This view of language practices revises an earlier notion of identity as an individual, cognitive phenomenon. Identities are the lived social experience of individuals acting within communities of practice. Identities are, therefore, fluid and complex (Rogoff, 2003). The creation and acting of identities bring private and personal worlds into the broader spaces of social and cultural patterns and physical geography. The patterns of an individual's use of discourses and linguistic practices, or literacy events, are not exclusively instances of written and read language but include "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions" and to "their interpretive processes" (Heath, 1982, p. 93). This lens of a linguistic habitus offers a view of identities described by Holland et al. (1998) as "hard-won standpoints that, however dependent upon social support and however vulnerable to change, make at least a modicum of self-direction possible" (p. 4).

The self-direction of one bilingual Indo-Canadian research subject, Nirmal, is seen in his heuristic creation of social capital through a fluid and complex linguistic habitus. Nirmal benefits from a secular English linguistic identity as he self-identifies as Canadian ("I'm as Canadian as can be."). In this identity he reflects ideologies of a local BC community and national Canadian and British sponsors. He also creates social capital for himself and his family through Punjabi literacy practices which embody the ideology of local sponsors in the Abbotsford Sikh community and remote transnational sponsors in the international and South Asian Sikh diaspora. This socially-situated, fluid and complex identity establishes his own role as husband and father in his nuclear family; redefines his role in his extended family of parents, siblings, and in-laws; and reflects the ideology of a broader, global British influenced educational system and a broader, global religious system of power within the Punjabi diaspora.

In complex ways, Nirmal creates agency and social capital for himself through discursive practices reflecting the ideologies of local and remote sponsors of those practices. New Literacy Studies of the 1980s framed literacy as locally situated cultural practices, revising earlier theories of literacy as a broader, global system of language use which transcended specific individuals and local contexts. With work by Scribner and Cole (1981) and Street (1984) the understanding of literacy shifted from decontextualized, cognitive, language processing skills to a definition of literacy as contextualized or situated social practices. Scribner and Cole argued that the effect on individuals as they became literate stemmed not from literacy itself but from schooling practices. These studies of literacy as social practice drew on a well-established ethnography of communication to develop arguments that literacy could and does work "restrictively and hegemonically" to implement local social controls which maintain distant social hierarchies (Reder & Davila, 2005), thus connecting global, remote, hierarchical sponsors to local communities (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 351). The ideology of a literacy event "arises out of local, particular, situated human interactions while also arriving from other places — infiltrating, disjuncting, and displacing local life" (Brandt, 1998). As individuals use language practices as a technology, they allow the ideologies embodied within the practices to travel, integrate and endure. Through language practices, individuals

transcontextualize everyday experience by keeping it in play with “remote forces...in the larger sociological context” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). Such literacy practices are inherently ideological because they serve ideological interests.

Sponsors of Literacy

Ideologies are carried within literacy practices because “literacy takes its shape from the interests of the sponsors” (Brandt, 1998, p. 168). Sponsors are “any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy- and gain advantage by it in some way” (p. 166). Brandt’s work illustrates how literacy is offered or withheld according to the “jockeying and skirmishing for economic and political advantage” of sponsors (p. 169). These political and economic forces — often remote and “originating in quite distant corporate and government policies” — were integral to individuals’ literacy practices (p. 172). Hierarchies and bureaucracies impose power through political and economic policy. This policy permeates everyday life by determining how individuals are educated and constraining how they create and act identities to fit themselves into society (Reder & Davila, 2005). Power, in this view, is intimately present in daily life as individuals use the embodied symbolic capital of a linguistic habitus, determined by remote authority, to heuristically improvise personal identities. The rhetorical nature of literacy practices is seen in the “local moves” which represent interests of “global connects” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). These literacy practices include “school” or dominant literacy as well as informally acquired literacy. While Brandt (1998) focuses on ways sponsors used individuals for their benefit, this study contributes to an understanding of how an individual uses the ideologies of remote, powerful sponsors of literacy practices to create social capital for himself and his family through a transnational identity.

Nirmal

This study is based on field notes gathered during 6 hours of home observation and 2 hours of semi-structured interviews. This study is an early report of a larger ongoing investigation into literacy practices of a well-established Indo-Canadian community within the Fraser Valley of BC.

The subject of this research is a bilingual Indo-Canadian man, Nirmal. At the time of this study, he is a mature university student in his final semester of study. He is also a husband and father. He was born and raised in a northern BC coastal community. While his parents spoke Punjabi in the home, he acknowledges that he and his siblings were more comfortable in English. While his parents attended a temple on a weekly basis, he explains that he was not religious. “It was their thing,” he says of his parents’ temple attendance. He and his siblings, an older brother and a younger sister, did not attend the temple and spoke English with one another in the home and the larger community. When

Nirmal was eight, his father began weekly lessons in Punjabi for several Indo-Canadian boys in the town. Nirmal remembers that his father drove his truck around to pick up the boys to ensure their attendance for the language schooling. Nirmal recalls that his father wanted to “preserve the culture” through the Punjabi lessons.

Nirmal moved to the Abbotsford area as he finished high school. Here he worked as a truck driver before attending two years of community college. His wife, Parminder, is from the Punjab area of India. He met her when he visited his parents’ village in the Punjab after he had finished high school, and he later sponsored her immigration to Canada. Parminder had no schooling in English when they married and is currently a homemaker. The couple have four children. The two oldest children are girls, one a Grade Four student and the younger a Grade Two student enrolled in a local English elementary school. The girls are also enrolled in a Punjabi language school and attend weekly evening classes. The two younger children are boys. The older of the two, a four year old, is enrolled in a half-day English preschool and the youngest is a two year old.

Nirmal’s linguistic habitus incorporates English and Punjabi practices and materials. Literacy practices are key in creating discourse, affinity and institutional identities which afford him the social capital of a secular educated Canadian identity and a modern transnational, religious Sikh identity crossing Canadian and South Asian borders. Nirmal works to establish Punjabi as the language used in the home — however both English and Punjabi are used. Television programming, videos, DVDs, computer programs, product labels, and community newspapers deliver English into the home daily. Parminder easily uses Punjabi with the children, and Nirmal works deliberately to speak in Punjabi. The two daughters, now in English elementary school, readily use English with one another, but are continually reminded by Nirmal to use Punjabi at home. Nirmal references his discursive practices in English, as he explains, “It infiltrates every part of your life.” He recognizes the work he has taken on to use Punjabi rather than accepting a default of English speaking practices in the home:

I think, just of this household specifically, as a family. The constant struggle on my part as a parent to remind the children to speak Punjabi. And it wouldn’t be an over-exaggeration if I said I have to remind them a hundred times a day because, these children, you know, what’s their mother tongue? I could say Punjabi, really, it’s English. What I mean is, they know English way better, as I do. I know English way better than Punjabi. Punjabi is a struggle. But, this would not be a struggle if we were in India. The struggle would be “Speak English, ‘cause I need you to learn English now.” They would know Punjabi so well.

The rooms in the family’s small, rural one-story rental home differ significantly from one another and reflect the transnational identity of the family and its linguistic practices. This study or den, combining both English and Punjabi materials, is visually busy with notices, calendars, posters, tables, computer desk, computers, filing cabinets, bulletin boards and CD shelving on two walls of the room. One wall is defined by a curtain-

enclosed canopy bed which serves as sacred space for the Sikh holy scriptures and the Punjabi work the girls are doing for their weekly lessons. The sponsors of literacy are easily seen in this room, which serves as the homework and organizational centre of the home. This space is as busy socially as it is visually. During the 6 hours of home observations, the den is where Nirmal and his children spent most of their time. Here Nirmal sits at the computer desk, often with the two youngest boys climbing into or leaving his lap, listening to English online news or reading e-mail in English. He explains that he can use the keyboard for Punjabi characters, he is the only one in the home who can, and that most of his computer use is in English, reflecting the inherent value of English in Internet and software marketing. During my spring break morning visits when the daughters are home, they are seated at, or coming from and returning to, the child's table in the den. Here they are directed in math and reading by Nirmal who explains this is not homework from the school for spring break, but it is homework he downloads from an Internet site (a US site, \$25 per year) which provides level-appropriate exercises and answer-keys. Thus one sponsor of these practices is a cross-border for-profit US software company. The larger sponsor of these 'homework' sessions is an international hierarchical system of education, with an ideology of meritocracy stemming from Great Britain into colonial India and the US and Canada.

Overall, the materials and the actions housed within the den are organized around the central values of literacy and education for the family. Carrington and Luke (1997) explain what they see as the folk-myth of education, the commonly held idea that education can determine an individual's chances for success. Nirmal's investment in the homework for his children suggests his belief in the power of education. Carrington and Luke and Brandt recognize that the access to education and socialization into the ideology of powerful sponsors of education are better predictors of fortune.

Nirmal's use of computers for e-mail, research and the purchase of educational material shows his socialization into and participation in a global knowledge economy. A knowledge economy operates on the value, thus power, of technology and knowledge as commodities, extending value to literacy practices of collecting, manipulating and sharing knowledge. Studies of transnational identity show ways that knowledge and technology are used to create and act identities that transcend local borders and culture. Complex, fluid identities within a knowledge economy are modern as they amend earlier notions of immigration as a geographic and cultural crossing of a border for more simplistic reasons of upward mobility (Kanno, 2003; Walton-Roberts & Pratt, 2003). The linguistic actions and materials (the linguistic habitus) that Nirmal creates and acts is fluid and complex and problematizes the notion of "primary" identity (Gee, 2001) as Nirmal creates a complex bilingual Indo-Canadian identity.

A Primary Identity

The primary identity for the Parminder can be seen in details of the habitus of her parents' Punjabi speaking village home in the Punjab. Her parents are the immediate local sponsors of her language practices and help to shape her primary Punjabi identity. Interestingly although both Parminder and Nirmal grew up with Punjabi-speaking parents they differ in their use both of oral Punjabi and of Punjabi and English literacy. Parminder's home was situated in the Punjab while Nirmal's home was in a northern coastal BC town.

Parminder has been in Canada for 11 years at the time of this study. Her discourse and affinity identities reflect the family and village sponsors of her Punjabi practices, both in India and currently in Canada. She met Canadian-born Nirmal in India, when he visited her village where his parents were born. They met through mutual family friends, got to know one another and married in India. Parminder stayed in India for a few months while Nirmal returned to Canada to do the necessary immigration sponsorship to bring her to Canada. Parminder's parents did not speak English nor was she schooled in English in India. She recalls depending on Nirmal to help her settle in Canada: finding a doctor, the temple, the grocery stores, and so on. Parminder has taken one community college course in English (specifically for Punjabi speakers) and describes herself as learning English from her children. Her interest in acquiring more English is instrumental. She would like to work outside the home in the next year when the youngest child is in preschool. English can help her earn money to gain goods useful to the raising of her family (she mentioned a car) and to support the family's transnational travel between Canada and India. While she wants to work within the local English-speaking community, she does not indicate an affinity identity within the English-speaking community of Abbotsford. She views her potential work as a means of supporting an ongoing Punjabi family and community identity, reflecting the values of her English and Punjabi sponsors, primarily family members.

The strength of Parminder's Punjabi identity can be seen in her immigration sponsorship for her parents after she had settled into Canada. They do help (financially) support the family while Nirmal is finishing university. She has also sponsored immigration of a younger brother who lives with her parents. He is taking English courses through a community center. The other brother, the eldest, is still in India, has a Canadian wife in Canada, and has applied for immigration to Canada.

Parminder's disposition of a traditional Punjabi suit, a kirpan and turban are visual evidence of her religious identity through which she integrates her Punjabi discourse practices into a Sikh community affinity identity within a global religious institution that is historical and transnational. The details of Parminder's experience suggest a primary identity (as Gee posits) with further identities layered through choice and within constraints. Her complex of identities is modern in its transnational mobility. The details of her immigration counter earlier ideas of immigration as crossing national and cultural lines in that she has brought her habitus of language, dress, and foods with her, she is

supported by her Canadian-born husband in these practices, and she maintains close telephone and travel ties to India.

Identity as Complex: Religion as Affinity, Discourse and Institutional Identity

Nirmal complicates his identity as he describes his deliberate creation of a religious Sikh identity during the semester break of his first year at college. Through this identity he heuristically integrates the social capital of his secular English identity with a Punjabi discourse and affinity identity, specifically a religious Sikh institutional identity, into a fluid, complex identity that enables him to not only acknowledge his visible ethnic difference, but to accentuate that difference to create a kilometres, transnational identity.

Nirmal presents a complex identity. Although he was raised in Canada by Punjabi-speaking parents, with Punjabi as the language of the home, he expresses his affinity identity shaped through the English Canadian environment of his early school years: “I’m born here. I’m Canadian as can be.” He claims a primary discourse identity (“Me and my brother and sister would speak English...because that was easier for us.”) developed through the power of the sponsors of his early schooling and the larger BC community he was raised in.

Nirmal’s description of the history and complexity of his English and Punjabi use shows his thoughtfulness and clarity of purpose for Punjabi language practices, and his observations on the intertwining of literacy and culture. His narrative explains the evolution of his identities. His creation of a Sikh identity entails his use of language practices as well as visible symbols. Bourdieu explains the power of symbols:

[C]haracteristics and criteria... are perceived and evaluated...[and] function as signs, emblems or stigmata, and also as powers. [S]ymbolic properties...can be used strategically according to the material but also the symbolic interests of their bearer. (1991, p. 21)

While his complexion shows him as a visible minority, his deliberate use of dress and appearance (the turban, kirpan, tunic, and untrimmed beard) serve as emblems to visually accentuate his creation to create social capital through an identity comprised of the ideology of a Punjabi Sikh. These emblems visibly obscure an earlier secular Canadian identity. These specifics of visual appearance are rhetorical as they take on the force of persuasion, if not the form of persuasion (Burke, 1969), representing ideas embodied by Sikhism. This identity is one he created in college, after his first semester in school:

[I]n the winter, September to December semester, I was non-religious. I had the miraculous conversion, you know, the change, the enlightenment, during the break. When I came back, the beard growing, the kirpan, the turban, they could

not believe it. The physical change was a separate thing. Aw, you look different. The nature, the mannerisms, the way of speaking, they just, How come you're not swearing anymore? What's going on? Like, you're totally different.

He indicates his understanding of the symbolic power of his choice of a Sikh appearance and its ability to trump a visible ethnic secular appearance:

...and they said, Yeah, you don't look like you're from here. You know, you look, people probably bet their money on, guys born in India. And, but, it's when you talk to me, it's far from it. I'm born here. I'm as Canadian as can be.

While Nirmal presents a visible identity of a religious Sikh with his tunic, turban, beard, and kirpan, it is important to note that he specifically verbally identifies himself as Canadian.

Individuals within a family share a foundation of genes and experiences through which to establish identification (Burke, 1969). Identification also implies division. For Burke, to be something is to not be something else. Nirmal, while raised in a Punjabi-speaking home, differs from his parents, whose childhoods were in India. Nirmal explains that, although he was raised in a Punjabi-speaking home, he considers the English of his school and larger community his native tongue. Because Nirmal recognizes the ideology that comes with English, the language, and by extension the majority culture it represents, he vigilantly, deliberately reinforces his identity as a Punjabi and a Sikh while he benefits from his fluency in English. English, for him, is taken for granted, in contrast to Parminder who expresses her desire to learn more English to enable her to work outside the home. His fluency in English has afforded him material and social capital which work to complicate his ethnic appearance. He was able to bring his wife to Canada from India and help her settle in Canada while she had no English; he is attending university in English; and he is able to gather all of the news and research in English he wants from the Internet. His facility in English is secure, something he can take for granted in contrast to his Punjabi and Sikh identity which he has had to work for. He credits his father who had the vision to sponsor Punjabi lessons for boys in the northern coastal community where he was raised. The complexities in the contrast in experiences and identities of Nirmal and Parminder, both of whom were raised in Punjabi-speaking homes, point to the need to recognize language practices as situated. Nirmal and Parminder's homes were situated in different communities in different continents.

Nirmal's early schooling in Punjabi, when he was eight, planted the possibility of his conversion to Sikhism as a 21-year-old college student. Nirmal's father was the local sponsor of Punjabi language practices, but those practices represent broader, global interests of a hierarchical Sikh religious institution. Nirmal's Punjabi and Sikh identities allow him to revise his version a secular North American family which values self-reliance and autonomy into a strong family identification with his father: "[T]he main purpose [of his starting the Punjabi school] was for, for my father...was religious based."

Nirmal, now a father himself, did not feel his parents ‘pushed’ him or his siblings religiously or were themselves religious in earlier years. Nirmal now sponsors Punjabi discursive practices for his children and has adopted a religious Sikh ideology. This ideology promotes discourse practices of reading and personally interpreting the Punjabi holy scripture:

[A]n integral part of education is religious education...learn...the Punjabi letters so they can read the holy scriptures. It’s a lifestyle, that theory in Sikhism about building your own personal relationship with god and understanding your religion as best you can.

Nirmal recognizes the agency afforded through literacy practices sponsored by the far-reaching diasporic religious institution of Sikhism. Nirmal’s teaching and use of Punjabi offer greater social capital than a simpler secular linguistic English identity within the Abbotsford community in which he lives and studies.

Identity as Transcendence of the Local

Nirmal’s deliberate shaping of a religious identity is provocative. His decision to act a religious identity uses an already-complex, visible ethnic secular Canadian identity and English language practices as foundations for the later, layered complex identity. Nirmal’s identity entails Punjabi discursive practices, visible Punjabi and Sikh dress and grooming, daily temple visits for community affinity and Sikh religious practices. This complex of discursive, affinity and institutional identities transcends ‘local’ constraints and legitimizes his nuclear and extended family in its transnational identity. This complex of identities is post-modern in its ability to transcend national borders, reclaim and redefine an ethnic identity and use that visible ethnic difference as a legitimizing source of agency, transcending the potential for racial discrimination based on visible difference. Nirmal actions are improvisations which “are the sort of impromptu actions that occur when our past, brought to the present as habitus, meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions for which we have no set response...The improvisations of the parental generation are the beginning of a new habitus for the next generation” (Holland et al., 1998, pp.17–18).

Nirmal’s valuing of a religious identity moves the institution of Sikhism across the borders of differing structural conditions of historic and contemporary India into modern Canada, countering Max Weber’s prediction of the ascendancy of economics and politics over religious norms (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Weber’s binary of economic vs. religious identity breaks down for Nirmal’s as his Sikh identity affords him economic opportunities and connections in Abbotsford he would not otherwise have. For Nirmal, religious identity *is* economic agency.

Nirmal's actions, instead, illustrate Bourdieu's note that human nature underlying economic and political changes remains unchanged (cited in Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 167). The endurance of religious institutional power supports a theory of the function of religions resting in their concern for ultimate meanings in life (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 169). For Nirmal, religion is a confluence of discourse, affinity and institutional identities which allows him heuristic transcendence of a secular Canadian identity. A religious identity also allows him agency in his roles as a father and teacher of his children, creating meaning in his life that transcends his individual experience by placing him and his family into an historical social order, interacting therefore with others sharing an ideology, a reciprocity of perspectives (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 167–71).

Nirmal's Punjabi identity cuts across commonly held notions about the value of the language of the dominant or majority culture (in this study, the English in the schools and the notices sent home, English news on the Internet, English labels on most products and appliances in the home, and all of the postings in English on the bulletin board wall of the study). Commonly held notions feature the language of the dominant culture valued for the access it offers into a mainstream community and economy. For Nirmal, membership in a broader "Canadian" community does not offer the social capital that maintaining Indo-Canadian and Sikh affinities does.

Implications

Nirmal's modern, transnational identity illustrates his use of language practices in his creation of an integrated nexus of discursive, affinity and institutional identities and illustrates the inherent ideologies of the sponsors of these practices. Nirmal introduces the complex of Punjabi and Sikh and Canadian identities and implies his sponsorship of that complex:

[S]o what do I mean when I say I want to preserve the culture? The [Punjabi] language, first and foremost. And, interactions, food and dress. I want [my daughter] to be totally comfortable wearing the Punjabi clothes, eating the food, going to the temple, doing all those things, because that is her identity. Or that's what I want her identity to be. She's lucky because she's a Punjabi, she's a Sikh, and she's a Canadian...All in one.

Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2003) explore, in part, transnational identities as part of "the nature and geography of modernity" (p. 2) of an Indo-Canadian family which has immigrated to a large metropolis in southern BC. Walton-Roberts and Pratt investigate how a mother, father and two adult sons 'make' themselves modern, as opposed to being 'made' modern by alien and impersonal forces... they give themselves "an identity and a destiny" (p. 7). Nirmal, not an immigrant himself, but the son of immigrants, reveals his agency in establishing a transnational identity that makes time fluid in its acknowledgment of the ethnic history of his family and his future intentions to move

freely and frequently between Canada and India. Nirmal's identity incorporates "the role of historical, cultural and social phenomena in constituting the self" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 20):

India, India is, has been and always will be a destination point for us, because I was married in India, there's that link was established. I mean not my parents from there, but a good reason for me to go back, constantly. One of the reasons is that my wife is from, is born, in India.

Parminder mentions her intention to work once the youngest child is in preschool, although she acknowledges that her husband does not want her to work, explaining that she already has a big job as a mother of four. She will take whatever job she can find, and the money will be useful toward the purchase of a car and trips to India. In this detail, Parminder illustrates her agency. The mother in the Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2003) study, an owner of businesses in Canada and in India, is described as "a powerful agent of economic change" (p. 8) in her family. Both of these immigrant women, while different in their circumstances, fall outside the "common assumption that Punjabi female immigrants are passively subjected to transnational patriarchal processes" (p. 8).

These bilingual, transnational identities are kilometres in that they are formed of choices that would seem to conflict with one another. Parminder reflects traditional Punjabi cultural practices in her explanation of the future responsibilities of her daughters and sons to her and Nirmal. Parminder holds a traditional belief, as did the mother in the Walton-Roberts and Pratt study, in the responsibility of the sons to take on parental care (p. 14). As Parminder explains her understanding of her children's futures, she recounts a conversation with her husband about the size of their family (four children). She explained to him that four children may seem like a large family today, but their daughters will move into the families of their husbands, leaving Parminder and Nirmal with two sons:

I am told my husband my daughters go to own house. I have two boys, so very small family.

While Parminder explains that her daughters will go to their husband's families, her experience includes having brought her parents and brothers to her Canadian community and having daily telephone contact and frequent visits with them. Although she left her family's village home in the Punjab after her marriage, within seven years of that marriage she is still actively involved with her (parent's) family. Nirmal, in contrast, acknowledged that the value he places in education is for the opportunities it affords him and his children. Through education in English, he believes he is sponsoring mobility, independence, and financial gain for his children. His words illustrate his modern identity and carry a more typically Canadian secular view of modern mobility of geography and identity:

You know, they can get their degrees, and head off to the States or England or wherever, if they have that sense of humanity, that compassion...they will be...I feel productive and good members of any society or community they take part in.

For Nirmal, the English practices of education represent the dominant, secular, information economy of Canadian culture. These practices allow access to social capital in a knowledge economy and support the process of a religious Punjabi Sikh education:

There's...there's...it's different in India. Education there is very limited. Those who have money and the resources will educate their children. Those who don't have resources and are not educated themselves will not even consider educating their kids, and along with that everything else is lost. Education is so powerful.

Sponsored discursive practices in both English and Punjabi lie at the heart of the ability for Nirmal and this modern family to create and maintain a transnational, religious identity.

Nirmal uses literacy practices to negotiate transnational, complex, fluid and modern identities within his bilingual Indo-Canadian family. Nirmal's complex, fluid identity is kilometres in its ability to thread together what might otherwise be contradictory details. Nirmal creates a legitimate religious, transnational identity, thereby trumping potential for racism based on an ethnic secular Canadian identity. This finding works against commonly held assumptions about immigrants and contributes to the building of the understanding of how literacy practices contribute to the interesting contradictions and complexities in transnational Indo-Canadian identities.

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The identity of transnational communities is not chiefly based on attachment to a specific territory and thus questions the traditional idea of nation-state affiliation. There is a discrepancy between official and unofficial statistics as to the number of Canadians of Bulgarian origin living in Canada at present – the figures vary between 18,575 (Statistics Canada, 2006) and 150,000! – Peter Li, author of *Destination Canada: Immigration Debates and Issues*. *Transnational Identities and Practices in Canada* establishes the need for discussing ethnicity not just in relation to the Canadian nation-state (as it has been treated so far), but also in relation to the connections that ethnic groups maintain with other locations. In fact, each contributor points towards new directions for research that would offer a better understanding of transnationalism in the Canadian context. Dana Patrascu-Kingsley, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XXXVIII, no. 2, 2006. First: It was added to the Canadian Human Rights Act, joining a list of identifiable groups that are protected from discrimination. These groups include age, race, sex, religion and disability, among others. Second: It was added to a section of the Criminal Code that targets hate speech – defined as advocating genocide and the public incitement of hatred – where it joins other identifiable groups. The Canadian Human Rights Act is a federal act – its scope includes the federal government itself, First Nations governments, as well as federally regulated employers, such as banks and telecommunications companies. Cossman describes this jurisdiction as “every narrow.” She says provinces and territories already protect transgender and gender-diverse Canadians. Margaret Walton Roberts- Canadians resilient transnational attachment. Staeheli Nagel -Diasporas deeply emotionally invested in homeland. Brah (1996)- home and dispersal in creative tension. (3) Sometimes even citizens rights are granted as for Haiti, as an example, where there is a 10th political department possessing its own ministry, that operates under the democratic jurisdiction of overseas Haitians (Basch et al., 1993). Nevertheless, for many countries, emigrants are not able to access meaningful voting rights. live in Canada. be a permanent resident of Canada or a Canadian citizen. be available to verify your application. have personally known you for at least 6 months. Canadian or British diplomatic or consular representative. Qualified local official, such as a civil servant or member of Parliament. Statutory Declaration in Lieu of Guarantor form. The Statutory Declaration in Lieu of a Guarantor form is not available online.