

AT THE HEARTH OF THE NATION: THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY
SOCIETY AND VICTORIA'S *CHINESE RESCUE HOME* 1886-1923

by

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Abstract

The *Chinese Rescue Home* was an important feature of Victoria's (British Columbia, Canada) moral and racial landscape. It was envisioned by Methodist missionaries and later the Women's Methodist Missionary Society (WMS) to be a sanctuary for Chinese and Japanese women who were thought to be prostitutes or slave girls or who were believed to be at risk of falling into these roles. Despite its significance to British Columbian and Canadian history, there has yet to be a sustained and systematic study of the *Home*. Using a range of archival sources including WMS reports, newspapers, and legal cases, this dissertation offers an in-depth and empirical case study of the *Chinese Rescue Home*. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach and drawing from theoretical and methodological developments in sociology, history, and geography, I use the concept of domesticity to examine the complex, contradictory, and contentious relationships between gender, race, and religion. While white women derived their own inclusion in the nation by policing the boundaries of race and reimagining the places of Chinese and Japanese women, they did so by including these women as part of the 'Christian family.' Therefore, this dissertation contributes to the Canadian literatures on Chinese and Japanese immigration by foregrounding the ways in which racial power operated through both inclusion and exclusion. Domesticity, here, was central to the shaping of not only the types of relationships that were permitted, but also the spaces in which they took place.

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Lists of Abbreviations

BC – British Columbia

LCP – Live-in Caregiver Program

OUC – Okanagan University College

UBC – University of British Columbia

WCTU - Women's Christian Temperance Union

WMS – Woman's Missionary Society

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Crystal Ikebuchi Mandryk, who taught me to dream, to believe, to aspire, and to risk.

Chapter One: Introduction



Figure 1: “New Chinese Home”¹

In 1886, nearly three thousand Chinese lived in the city of Victoria, British Columbia (BC), making up nearly 18% of the population (Lai 1991, 5). Based on the 1891 Canadian Census, Victoria had a total population of 16,841 (Dunae 1998, 234). While the vast majority of Chinese immigrants during this period were men, the women who did immigrate were targets of

¹Private Collection, “New Chinese Home, Victoria, British Columbia”, [c 1900], Victoria, BC, photograph by Ridsdale, G.F., Library and Archives Canada, accession number 1979-282 NPC, item number 132, reproduction copy number C-012600

both suspicion and concern. According to McLaren (1999), “[i]n a minority community that was overwhelmingly male and in which women were regularly bought and sold, it was assumed by their detractors that, with limited exceptions, any Chinese girl or woman who came to Canada must already be a prostitute or destined for that role” (407). It was based on these assumptions that the *Chinese Rescue Home* was founded. The *Chinese Rescue Home*, later called the *Oriental Home and School* (henceforth to be referred to as the *Home*), began as a project to rescue Chinese prostitutes and slave girls from those who held them captive. But their mandate quickly expanded and between 1887 and 1925, 425 women took shelter in the *Home* (Gagan 1992, 176).

As its name indicates, the *Chinese Rescue Home* had three related concerns: race, rescue, and domesticity. First and foremost, it was about dealing with a particular racial problem. That the word Chinese (and later Oriental) was part of the *Home*’s name is noteworthy, as race and its management were to become its primary goals. Yet, racial concerns informed not only technologies of exclusion, but also inclusion. Although Chinese women and men were, at different periods, excluded from Canada, the *Home*’s mandate was to transform and domesticate these women so that they could eventually be included and assimilated. Second, rescue as a mandate of the *Home* was about benevolence and transformation. Thus, the relationship between race and religion was a vexed one. It was concerned with both highlighting race as a target of benevolence, as well as erasing it through transformation. This was to be achieved through the third concern, domesticity. The role of white women was paramount here, as it was in the domain of the *home* (and *Home*) that this institution functioned. Thus, whiteness and domesticity, like Chineseness, were also racial concerns and form central themes in this dissertation.

A Case Study of the *Chinese Rescue Home*

Although the *Chinese Rescue Home* has become somewhat iconic in British Columbia’s

history, the importance of the *Home* has yet to be fully explored. Many historians and historical sociologists have pointed to its significance in Victoria and in British Columbia more generally (See, for instance, Chang 2004; Mawani 2009; Gagan 1992; McLaren 1999; Valverde 1991). Despite the many references to the *Home*, however, no sustained or detailed analysis has thus far been carried out. A detailed empirical study of the *Home*, therefore, is an important goal and contribution of this dissertation and will add to the historiography of British Columbia. Uncovering the organizational hierarchies, the institutional schematics, as well as the religious and racial tropes which infused the *Home* is crucial to understanding how the institution came to hold such an important place in historical imaginings of the province. Further, these hierarchies and inner workings can also illuminate how whiteness and domesticity came to be imagined and asserted in relation to and through interactions with a racialized Other.

This dissertation also adds to the existing literatures on Chinese and Japanese immigration and historiographies of racial exclusion to show how racial power also operated through inclusion. Many have documented the varied and multiple technologies of racial exclusion as they existed in British Columbia, especially with regard to Chinese and Japanese populations (see Ward 2002; Roy 1989, 2003), which, it has been argued, has “led to a portrayal of racialized peoples as victims without voice or as people whose identities were externally imposed” (Price 2008, 54). Recent work has begun to take into account the active role of Chinese and Japanese populations in resisting and challenging governmental and societal exclusions (See Price 2008, Ng, 1999). One of the goals of this dissertation is to build on these important works by examining a case study where government and institutional work took a less exclusionary form. While many in the province were decrying the menace of the “Yellow Peril” and calling for the expulsion of the Chinese and Japanese populations, if not always from the nation then certainly from white society and white labour interests, white women were taking a

different approach. Although many Christians (and non-Christians) during this time argued that Japanese and Chinese men and women could not (or should not) be assimilated into the nation, the women of the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) were of a different mind. They saw these populations to be inferior. But, rather than focusing only on exclusion they engaged in what they believed to be transformative projects of inclusion.

By viewing domesticity as spatial, psychic, and corporeal, and the *Home* as a geographically situated site and embodied practice of moral regulation, this project moves beyond dominant explanations which focus on racial exclusion alone. Domesticity was central to these more inclusionary processes, as it informed how space was conceived, how identities were forged, and how bodies were disciplined. In this dissertation, therefore, I foreground the importance of domesticity both in its material geography and its imaginative one (Gregory 1995). As the title of this dissertation indicates, the *Home* might be likened to the hearth of the nation. Not only does the hearth represent the home and domesticity and their association with women, but the hearth is also a symbol of welcome. It is a space for those coming in from 'outside.' In the case of the *Chinese Rescue Home* the welcome was not unconditional. Yet, the hearth offered a space for some outsiders to find openings into a world in which they seldom otherwise found welcome. The hearth also represents a place of transformation; it is here that the fire turns a cold room into one filled with warmth. It is a space where the outsiders are not only welcomed, but also affected and transformed. The transformation of the Other through regulation threaded itself materially and discursively into the very fabric of the *Home*. Deconstructing the processes and practices of this benevolent work, I argue, uncovers the complex relationship between whiteness, femininity, and religion.

A third contribution of this dissertation, then, is a critical examination of these relationships. The *Chinese Rescue Home* was a site where white women exerted their moral

authority in ways that enhance our understanding of how racial projects functioned in early British Columbian history. The centrality of whiteness and its performative significance was exemplified within the *Home* and it is this foregrounding and privileging of whiteness, its assertion and maintenance amidst challenges made by many, both within and outside of the *Home*, which is of primary concern to this dissertation. Although this was in part an assimilatory project, it was not *only* about inclusion. Rather, the goals included sending converted women back to Japan or China as missionaries—an indication that racism was more than a delineation between self and Other. Instead, racism worked through a contradictory process of inclusion, exclusion, and regulation. Race, here, was used to identify inferiority, as the Other was opposed to the white self. Here, whiteness was deployed as both authority and therefore superiority, and as a model to emulate. Yet, race was also malleable and subject to transformation through domesticity.

The *Home* illustrates how whiteness was also central to both the state and the domestic realm. This dissertation, explores how whiteness was deployed through national and global imaginings, and how these relationships intersected with religious discourses. The *Home* was a religious institution that straddled the public/private and national/global divides. Run by women, the *Home* was a space informed by gender hierarchies, just as it was informed by racial ones. It occupied a unique space where (gendered and racialized) national and domestic spaces overlapped; thus a critical discussion of the *Home* offers a clearer understanding of how these relationships informed institutional practices while providing insights into the state's investment in and interventions into the domestic realm. This dissertation is also prioritizing a discussion of the tensions and contestations that arose from the overlaps between the national and domestic, and what was largely man's dominion and women's domain.

Although the photo that opens this chapter was taken approximately twenty years after

the first ‘rescue’ of a Chinese woman from what was assumed to be a brothel, I have chosen to open this dissertation with this photo because of its symbolic and material significance. This photo was taken during the construction of a new home for Chinese and Japanese women and children. The new building was evidence of both the success of a twenty-year project and a promise of the future. This photo represents the building of a home and a family in a local context, but it also represents citizenship and nationhood, and the challenges that Chinese and Japanese women and men posed to them. Yet, it was the white women who ran this home who posed on the veranda. The significance of this photograph lies not only in what it shows, but also in what is missing. The Chinese and Japanese women, absent here, were central to this project: without them there could be no *Home*. Although the stories of Japanese and Chinese women and their recollections of the *Home* are an important piece of Asian Canadian history, it is not the history that I have written. Instead, I have chosen to write a history of an institution, of the intersections between whiteness and domesticity and the ways in which these were produced through the *Home*. By focusing on spatial metaphors and material spaces, the goal of this dissertation is to theorize the *Chinese Rescue Home* as an active site of production. This included the production of racialized and gendered spaces, behaviours, discourses, and ideologies.

Research Questions

The relationships that were forged within the material spaces of the *Chinese Rescue Home* were neither strictly familial nor economic, but were framed as both. Building on insights from geography, sociology, and history, I utilize a spatial focus to analyze these spaces as embedded in, constructed through, and productive of power relations. The *Home* is a unique and rich site for reconsidering women’s roles both within the home and outside of it. As it existed at the interstices of the public and the private, and of the foreign and the domestic, the *Home* offers a productive space for exploring how Japanese and Chinese women were discursively

constituted as domestically delinquent. Further, I ask how this discursive constitution materially and imaginatively contributed to the construction of the domestic realm that ‘housed’ the *Home* and how these material spaces were themselves practice of power. In what ways did the *Home* interact with and inform imaginative geographies which were informed by gendered and racial hierarchies and how did those outside of the *Home*, including judges, police officers, and the public, also draw upon domestic discourses in the regulation of ‘foreign’ and female bodies and in the disciplining of white men who dared to interfere with or intervene in the domestic relations of the *Chinese Rescue Home*? Specifically, I ask how state practices informed and shaped the types of cross-racial domestic relations that were possible inside of the *Home* and outside of it. Finally, I interrogate how discourses of domesticity were taken up by state institutions, such as the courts, in ways that both undermined and cemented the legitimacy of the domestic workings of the *Home* and the authority of white women who staffed it.

Review of the Literature

This dissertation builds on three bodies of work. First, it must be contextualized within what I am calling ‘contact narratives’ concerning Canadian Japanese and Chinese populations in the Pacific Northwest. Second, I locate my research within the numerous studies which have documented the work of white women missionaries and other moral reformers both in North America and abroad. Third, this dissertation builds on the work of geographers and others who have focused on the spatial parameters and relationships of the home as a domestic space with political consequences.

Contact Narratives

The links between race and religion are central to this dissertation. Both had an uneasy relation with questions of Chinese and Japanese immigration. My discussion of race, here, begins from an understanding of race as a social construction, not a biological fact. Thus, one of

my goals is to trace how constructions of race were formed through national and religious discourses. For religious leaders, for instance, discussions around race were complex, as they revolved around both global and local concerns. Race was a target of religious interventions, yet it was also malleable enough to be transformed. My goal is to shift the focus away from a singular focus on exclusion in order to explicate the complex relationships between race, religion, and citizenship and how these came together and were combined to form discourses of inclusion as well. Early ‘contact narratives’ have overwhelmingly characterized white/Asian encounters through the lens of racism and anti-Asian sentiment. One of the most widely cited books on Japanese Canadian history is Ken Adachi’s (1991) *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. As the title makes clear, this book arose out of and in response to a very specific historical context: the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. By focusing on race as an exclusionary project, such work has uncovered important functions and consequences of discourses of race. While this book and others that have a similar goal of documenting pre-internment narratives are invaluable documentary resources, their focus on linking past injustices with the internment tends to emphasize the exclusionary functions of race and racism. Alternatives to internment-focused histories do of course exist. Patricia Roy (1989, 2003) provides a comprehensive history of ‘Oriental’ populations, while Kristofer Allerfeldt (2003) offers a geographical shift, focusing on Oregon and Washington instead of California (which has been the locus of much North American Asian history). However, these works also focus largely on the exclusionary effects of race.

Recently, other scholars have taken a critical approach to cross-racial contact in British Columbia. Renisa Mawani (2009) deals with encounters between whites, aboriginal peoples, and Chinese migrants and explores how these contacts were informed by and through spatial practices and legal strategies. Like other postcolonial scholars, Mawani (2009) critiques and

disrupts the binaries of colonizer-colonized, self-other, and metropole-colony (4). By moving away from a unitary focus on contact itself to a discussion of *how* contacts informed racial knowledges and spatial and legal practices, Mawani (2009) is able to uncover the ambivalent effects resulting from cross-racial contacts. In the United States, Nayan Shah (2001) also draws attention to the links between state bureaucracies and racial formations/constructions as they were applied to the Chinese, and how these were informed by discourses of public health. His attention to the role of the state in producing racial discourses is a useful model for understanding the complex relationships between national institutions, the discourses they produced, and the actions and reactions of Chinese Americans and other public citizens. Here, Shah (2001) also points to the complex ways in which the state intervened in matters of intimacy that have often been thought of as confined to the private realm: the family and the body.

The state was not the only force governing intimate realms: churches also intervened. Despite the fact that some authors, such as Makabe (1998) have highlighted the importance of churches in post-internment Japanese identity, very little has been written about the earlier relationships that informed such alliances. Others such as Razack (2008) and Mamdani (2004) have explored the uneasy relationships between religion and race in other more recent contexts. Three important studies have begun filling the gap as it relates to Japanese and Chinese Canadian and American church history (Knowles 1995; Hennings 2000; Chang 2004). Norman Knowles (1995) compares and contrasts Chinese and Japanese responses to evangelical projects, offering a more nuanced view that does not assume that religious discourses were necessarily equated with assimilation. Joseph M. Henning (2000) evaluates how assumptions “that modern civilization and progress were white, Christian birthrights” (3) were challenged by civilizing missions to Japan. Derek Chang (2004) investigates the racial imaginings of the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) in its work with African Americans and Chinese

Americans, examining the relationships between race and nation-making (134-135).

My focus on religious missions is not meant to imply that white/Asian contact was free from exclusionary discourses and practices; what I show is that contact between white women, Japanese women, and Chinese women was more complex than many have suggested, as white women attempted to bring Japanese and Chinese women into a nation that was at once hostile and ambivalent to their presence. In particular, the roles and importance of white women in these relationships will be explored, as they provide insight not only into the discourses that informed these relationships, but also into the complex relationships between state and non-state institutions. This dissertation, therefore, examines the ways that both Christianity and citizenship were projected onto the bodies of Asian women by white women who themselves were marginal to national projects. Building on Mawani's (2009) approach, this project is also concerned with the legal and spatial manoeuvrings that informed and shaped relationships between whites, Chinese, and Japanese in British Columbia. By focusing on a single case study, this dissertation provides a detailed and systematic study of the ways in which gender and religion coalesced with and undercut state-sanctioned boundaries of both race and domesticity. Like Shah (2001), I examine how various levels of government intervened in the domestic realm, and how this intervention intersected with and against religious narratives and discourses.

Gendering the Nation

The *Chinese Rescue Home* was not only a regional project but also a national one, as it sought to include and exclude Asian women not only in and from British Columbia, but also the nation. It was a site that was shot through with discourses of race and gender which borrowed from global missionary tropes, imperial discourses, as well as national ones. The intersections of gender with religion and citizenship have been taken up by numerous scholars who have studied the work of women missionaries and other moral reformers both in their home countries and

abroad. In her discussion of British women's place in the nation, Antoinette Burton (1994) points out that national identification was not only about the right to vote, but also about women's moral authority. She argues that it was partly their perceived inferiority in relation to men that led women to pursue their imperial duty so enthusiastically and with such fervour. In her analysis of women reformers in Canada, Mariana Valverde (1991) also documents the work of various moral reformers in sustaining the dominance of white Protestants, arguing that citizenship was constructed along very narrow parameters, often centering on whiteness and Christianity. Other scholars have written on the moral regulation of racialized populations by missionary women, but again, these writers have largely examined these processes as imperial projects, as interventions that took place outside of the West (Burton 1994; Klempa and Doran 2002; Melman 1992; Semple 2003; Singh 2000).

In *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939*, Peggy Pascoe (1990) explores the role of women missionaries in the development of women's moral influence into what she calls "female moral authority" (xvi). Drawing from Pascoe (1990), I take a narrower but more in-depth approach. Through a more contracted lens, I examine how women gained moral authority through their work in the *Chinese Rescue Home*, and how they utilized discourses and spaces of domesticity to achieve their goals. If women's status as second-class citizens meant that they reaffirmed their worth through claims to white superiority, it also meant that these claims, and the practices that accompanied them, were curtailed by the dominion of white men. The nation, as the dominion of men, thus, significantly curtailed their public engagements and opinions. The domestic realm, as a site of state intervention, also fell under the nation's dominion as the courts and other state authorities weighed in on who might be allowed within the walls of the *Home*. White women created spaces of autonomy that were also shaped by the white- and male-dominated Methodist Missionary

Society. By focusing on a ‘foreign’ mission located on Western soil, I examine how the domestic realm was produced on three scales: the local, the national, and the global. Examining these scales together allows for a simultaneous examination of local practices, national imaginings, and the global discourses and practices that threatened and sustained them.

Space and Domesticity

This study explores an institutional space which took the form of a domestic space, troubling both the binaries of private and public and foreign and domestic. In order to consider the material and imagined geographies (Gregory 1995) of the *Home*, this dissertation builds upon a recent body of work in geography which examines the “house and home, the household and the domestic world” (Domosh 1998, 276). Geographers have taken many approaches to studying the home. For instance, structuralists and phenomenologists have been particularly invested in delving into the relationship between the house, the mind, and emotions. This relationship has been captured in Tuan’s “notion of ‘topophilia,’ or love of place” (in Duncan and Lambert 2004, 383). The links between the home and emotion are not limited, however, to love. In fact many scholars have productively taken up the links between home and loss, fear, and danger (Duncan and Lambert 2004). The domestic realm has also been a site of intervention for geographers and others who are interested in the material ways that the home informs gender and gender relations. Many who have taken this approach have viewed the domestic as part of the ‘private’ realm and juxtaposed this realm against the male-dominated public realm. Others have charted women’s movements both within and outside of the domestic realm, troubling the boundary between the private and the public in significant ways. Stephen Legg (2003), Georgina Gowans (2003), and Alison Blunt (1999) for instance, all examine how women in India used home spaces as political spaces of anti-colonial resistance, which helped to define not only the domestic but the national and imperial as well. While some postcolonial scholars have troubled the space of

the home as itself a site of exclusion from which the Other is debarred (Sibley 1995), others have shown that colonial relations and exclusions occur *within* the home as well (McClintock 1995; Stoler 2002). All of these studies have largely explored how white women gained authority and autonomy through their relationships with the racial Other both inside and outside of the colonial home (George 1993-1994).

The *Chinese Rescue Home* and those associated with it comprised a very small portion of the work carried out by the Methodist Missionary Board and the Woman's Missionary Society. While they had a smaller constituency than the missions explored by Pascoe (1990), the *Home* presents a compelling case study for a number of reasons. First, while missions that were undertaken abroad strove to improve the spiritual lives of those they evangelized, racial 'problems' were seen to originate and thus remained outside of the West. Occupying a space that was between the inside and the outside of the nation,² the *Home* was a space not only of evangelism, but also of assessment and appraisal. Second, a spatial analysis of the *Home* provides insight into the ways in which the institution itself was situated between the public and private. Third, by moving outside of the space of the *Home*, this project offers a valuable study of the disparate ways that moral regulation functioned. While an analysis of the *Home* interrupts binaries of gendered realms, moving outside of the *Home* further extends our understanding of how moral regulation functioned in other ways. While many scholars have argued that moral regulatory projects functioned as technologies of social control (Chunn 1992, Valverde 1991,

²Anzaldúa (1987) writes that borders "are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants" (25).

Pascoe 1990), and the work of the *Home* certainly supports these claims, the *Home* did not exist in a vacuum. In fact, it was its positioning as an in-between space that gave it legitimacy. It was situated on the edge of nation and yet firmly within it. It was a space of domesticity within the public realm. It was also a site that blurred the lines between state and non-state institutions. It is these tensions and ambivalences which make the *Home* an ideal point of departure, allowing for a deeper discussion of the private/public, state/non-state, and national/domestic than these binaries allow. The remainder of this chapter will examine the theoretical concepts and methodological strategies that inform this discussion.

Theoretical Framework

My conceptual framework is influenced by three bodies of literature. My goal in this dissertation is to bring them into dialogue with each other. These three bodies are represented under the following headings: a) Racial Otherness and Whiteness, b) (Trans) National Domains, and c) Moral Regulation, Domesticity, and Racial Governance.

Racial Otherness and Whiteness

Taking a critical approach to race, this research begins with the understanding and acknowledgement that both race and whiteness are social constructions and not biological facts. Three points are important here. First, race and whiteness are socially constructed through processes of racialization, whereby meaning is assigned to biological manifestations of ‘race’: these meanings in turn help to shape institutions and structures (Miles 1989, 76) so that racialization is not only concerned with racial bodies, but also about the institutional practices that govern and create them. Omi and Winant (1994) argue that “racial formation is a process of historically situated *projects* in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized” (55-56). The *Chinese Rescue Home* was just one of many racial projects, and as will be shown, racial projects in this case both sustained and interrupted hegemonic ideas and

practices, for as Omi and Winant (1994) claim, hegemony “is tentative, incomplete and ‘messy’” (68).

The shifting meaning of race can be seen as a part of racial projects which arise out of and inform state practices. States do not only define race: rather, the state and race are in a constant (in)formative dialogue (Goldberg 2002). Thus, understandings of race are understandings of the ways in which state and non-state institutions are built up on and produce racial knowledges. Throughout this dissertation, I also rely on understandings of race as intrinsically tied to space. Influenced by the work of Anderson (1991), Razack (2002), and Mawani (2009) in particular, I see race as both constitutive of and constituted by space. Buildings and landscapes are not just objective and neutral, but also subjective representations of past and future beliefs and practices (Anderson 1991). Thus, the focus on space throughout this dissertation is attentive to ways in which race was always already constituting and constituted by these spaces. Here, I want to consider the ways that values and social relations become embedded in buildings and landscapes (Chari 2008, 1919). Although it is my contention that race as a set of relations generated by the state and other institutions informs space, it does so in distinctly relational ways that intersect and produce gendered, classed, and sexualized meanings.

Race is relational in the sense that the racialized Other is constructed as raced *by* the white subject and in the sense that he or she is raced in opposition to a seemingly unraced (white) subject (Fanon 1967, 110). Thus, in order to understand the process of racialization and its effects, one must also consider how whiteness itself is a product of racial institutions and state practices (Steyn and Conway 2010, 284-285). Although whiteness studies have become prominent in recent years, Fanon’s (1967) work reminds us that the study of whiteness is not new but was always a part of anti-colonial and anti-racist scholarship and activism. The recent studies of whiteness, however, have reemphasized its importance. Twine and Gallagher (2008)

argue that it is often at the local level that “whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed, and reinvented” (5). Drawing from this literature, this dissertation understands whiteness as historically grounded and socially produced. This allows for an analysis that is attentive to the slippages that take place in defining not only the ‘racial problem’ but also the instability of whiteness itself. A critical assessment of the ways that whiteness is itself constructed allows for a destabilization of the binaries of self and Other, by exposing the instability and fluidity of both.

Although I initially conceived this study in terms of race relations and racial discourse, I have been continuously reminded by my sources that power relations based on race, gender, class, and sexuality do not occur in isolation from each other. For this reason, I take an intersectional approach to analyzing the *Home*. Thus, I interrogate not only how white women, as well as Japanese and Chinese Canadian women, were framed in terms of their ‘race’, but in particular how they were also “multiply, simultaneously and interactively” (Stasiulis 1999, 347) framed in terms of nationalism, citizenship, sexuality, class, and gender. Additionally, I argue here that white women were also subjected to gendered and racialized forms of power, and an examination of the *Home* highlights some of the ways these facilitated and constrained their aspirations.

(Trans) National Dominions

Whiteness, like other racial categories, was produced on multiple registers and thus was not monolithic. Central to this dissertation is the understanding that the *Home* was a space that both challenged and interrupted discourses of white (national) superiority. Whiteness, here, must be understood as relationally formed. For instance, global constructions of whiteness informed (and were informed by) local discourses. National discourses which privileged whiteness did not exist in isolation from other racial taxonomies. Therefore, it is important to take into account the

ways in which national discourses of whiteness (and other racial categories) were themselves transnational processes (Briggs, McCormick, and Way 2008, 626). National discourses and processes of inclusion and exclusion were often influenced by discourses from the inside as well as by imperialist relationships that were forged outside of the nation.

Exploring the relationality between the national and the global allows for an examination of how inclusion and exclusion work. Chinese and Japanese women were neither fully incorporated into the nation nor entirely excluded from it. Situated within the borders of the nation, Japanese and Chinese women continued to be framed as foreign. As such, discussions which rely on binaries of inside and outside cannot fully explain how it was that women missionaries could remain within the nation at the same time as they were evangelizing women who were always already 'foreign.' While other scholars have troubled the relationships between religion and nation, both in terms of foreign mission work and more narrowly with regards to home mission work, the vast majority of studies of home mission work have focused on the nation as the site of intervention and analysis (Burton 1994; Singh 2000; Semple 2003; Pascoe 1990; Gagan 1992). However, the *Home* cannot be easily explained through a focus on the nation alone. While Pascoe (1990) focuses her attention on a similar mission in San Francisco, her discussion revolves largely around how Chinese women were regulated in order that they might be assimilated into the nation, especially through education (42). In British Columbia, the process was much more complex. While assimilation was also a goal of the *Home*, the institution also became a site from which some women were expelled from the nation. Immigration officials, for instance, placed women in the *Home* while their claims were assessed. The matron of the *Home* would provide these officials with her recommendation as to the fitness of the women to remain in the country. Those who were seen as unable or unwilling to undergo the transformations that were deemed necessary were, accordingly, expelled from the *Home* and

upon the matron's recommendation, sometimes from the nation.

My approach, therefore, hopes to trouble the nation as an ideology which relies on binaries of inside and outside, but which is never capable of fully sustaining these categories. By theorizing the *Home* as both within and outside of the nation, I argue that the *Chinese Rescue Home* challenged binaries of the national and global and also threatened binaries of race and whiteness as central to defining the nation. A 'borderland' (Anzaldúa 1987) approach provides a more nuanced analysis of the policing of racial boundaries, the crossing of these boundaries, and their re-entrenchment. For if nations are defined by their borders, then understanding the processes that take place at the borders can provide us with a greater understanding of how the nation itself is defined. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of how the *Home* became both a place which facilitated the integration of some 'foreigners' into the nation by teaching them the value of domesticity and a place which expelled others from it.

It is not enough to say 'We let them in' or 'We kept them out.' Binaries of inside and outside are not sufficient to explain how once inside the nation, Chinese and Japanese women were framed as both incompatible with their new home and integral to its definition. Without Japanese and Chinese women, Victoria's *Chinese Rescue Home* would have no foundation. Without these women, Victoria's *Woman's Missionary Society* could have no mission. If whiteness was to define the nation through its moral superiority and its benevolent paternalism (and maternalism), then whiteness needed an inferior and a subordinate Other. While it might be claimed that this inferior and subordinate Other was always a part of the national imagining, that this inferiority simply marked a hierarchy within the nation, this does not fully explain *how* the subordinate came to be defined in the first place.

Mawani (2009) and Stoler (1995) inform my discussion here regarding the mobility of

racial knowledges. Stoler (2000) contends that racial discourse evolves out of and through its attachment to prior cultural representations (90). In fact, as I will argue, these were not only localized representations, but also built on and mobilized other forms of representation from outside of the nation. For instance, racial discourses were mobilized through reliance on examples from the United States as well as from prior missionary contact in China and Japan. Race cannot be understood as singular or static, but instead it has the potential to change, evolve, and transform as it attaches itself to other discourses and representations. These representations, I argue, included narratives of Christian transformation, which could transgress but not fully overturn the boundaries of race. Domesticating Japanese and Chinese women interrupted racial discourses of non-assimilability, yet the need for transformation was contingent on understandings of racial inferiority and white superiority.

Whiteness was a central defining component of the nation. For white women in particular, Christianity was used to reinforce their moral authority (Pascoe 1990; Burton 1994, 43). However, the inclusion of racialized populations within the framework of Christianity interrupted the discourses which equated whiteness as superior. It did not open the door to full equality. Instead, racialized bodies were re-constructed as in need of transformation before inclusion could take place; paradoxically, in order for racialized bodies to be seen as in need of transformation, they had to be framed as inferior or subordinate. Thus, Christian missionaries often opposed biological racism, but their Christian project produced another form of racism that rendered Chinese and Japanese as inferior. The discourses that made this construction possible were not to be found within the nation, but instead had everything to do with how the nation was formed through processes that were always already in conversation with racial knowledge from outside of the nation.

Evangelical nationalism relied on discourses of race which were predicated on cultural

differences (Chang 2004, 137). Whiteness was contrasted not only against those who were non-white, but against *foreignness* itself. The *Chinese Rescue Home*, thus, marked off not only the public and private as gendered realms, but additionally marked off the domestic from the foreign—and was therefore crucial to defining the nation and citizenship. It was precisely the form that the *Home* took as a domestic space that allowed for the transmission of Christian morality and its attendant transformative practices. These practices and discourses of morality must also be understood in the context of a gendered moral regulation and reform.

Moral Regulation, Domesticity, and Racial Governance

Domesticity was central to the regulation of Japanese and Chinese women within the *Chinese Rescue Home*. The relationship between gender and domesticity was not only a spatial one. Instead, domesticity also functioned as psychic and corporeal practices of regulation. Understanding domestic spaces as constitutive of discourse *and* practice, especially as these discourses and practices related to moral regulation, is a central goal of this research. Moral regulation projects, according to Alan Hunt (1991), are a “form of politics in which some people act to problematize the conduct, values or culture of others and seek to impose regulation upon them” (1). I am particularly interested in how this operates on local, national and global scales. While taken up by ordinary citizens, these projects are deeply enmeshed in state practices which are informed by colonial discourses, especially around race.

Due to the complexity of regulating the racial Other, in my own work I have taken an approach which views the nation as contested and contradictory. The discourses that fed this particular strand of moral regulation must be understood as located within larger discourses of race and religion, which in turn drew from existing knowledges outside of the nation. The *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* (1885), for example, drew on global knowledges about race from San Francisco and Melbourne. Religious discourses, while largely Western in origin,

also built on missionary narratives from Japan and China in ways that informed not only their understandings of Asian populations, but also informed how and where they would evangelize them. The Methodist Woman's Missionary Society, for instance, in their yearly reports often discussed strategies for evangelizing Chinese women in China as useful models for evangelizing them in Canada. Additionally, religious discourses were also modeled after their British traditions and borrowed from (and sometimes rejected) approaches that had been adopted in the United States.

Second, and building on the first point, racialized Others were viewed, in many ways, as ungovernable. This meant that in order for moral regulation to take place, transformative work needed to be done. Thus, I argue that transformative work must be taken into account, not as a precursor to moral regulation, but as part of the practice of moral regulation itself. Like Nayan Shah (2001), I am concerned with how missionary women worked to transform Asian populations from inassimilable to cultural citizens. For instance, Shah (2001) shows how racial boundaries of exclusion were transgressed through missionary women's training of Chinese women "in middle-class domesticity" (111). This "simultaneously made 'fallen' women 'respectable' and served to transform Chinese society in the United States" (Shah 2001, 111). In the Canadian context, religious missions such as the *Home* were less about bestowing cultural citizenship on their charges, but instead focused on global citizenship. Proper transformations were as much about the entrenchment of Christian values globally as they were about the transformation of the individual and the nation. The regulation of Chinese and Japanese women was initially concerned with producing 'Bible women' to spread the gospel in China and Japan and only secondarily with integrating Japanese and Chinese women into the Canadian cultural community.

Moral regulation was, thus, a complex, spatial project. According to Hunt (1999), moral

regulation requires the following elements: a moralized subject, a moralized object or target, knowledge, a discourse within which the knowledge is given a normative content, a set of practices, and a 'harm' to be avoided or overcome (7). While it was clear that the state, the media, and the women of the WMS all acted as moralizing agents, and residents of the *Home* were moralized objects, other considerations were also at play. It was not only the 'immoral' *practices* or behaviours which were being targeted, namely the sexual behaviours of Chinese and Japanese women. Despite the fact that the *Home* was meant to be a rescue mission for prostitutes and slave girls, sexuality, while certainly a concern, was not the primary target of regulation. Because white women viewed Japanese and Chinese women as largely coerced into prostitution, once freed from their lives of sin, the regulation of their sexuality was seen as largely unnecessary (except in cases where women were resistant to their interventions). Instead, white women focused their attention on providing Japanese and Chinese women with skills that were in line with (white) classed and gendered expectations. Teaching women to dress, sew, cook, or build a fire the 'English way' was intended to teach them to cultivate and take on their new roles as transformed and whitened subjects. These behaviours were a form of discipline that took place within a domestic sphere. The *Home* produced Chinese and Japanese women as 'docile bodies' who could be "transformed and improved" (Foucault 1995, 136). These practices must also be understood as lessons in social hygiene (Valverde 1991; Melman 1992; Singh 2000).

Although the teaching or controlling of certain practices was linked to a harm that was to be avoided or overcome (Hunt 1999), in the case of Japanese and Chinese women, the harm to be avoided or overcome was much more diffuse than Hunt (1999) suggests. If it were only prostitution and sexual 'licentiousness' that were to be curtailed, removal of the women into the *Home* would certainly have meant an end to or overcoming of potential harm. And yet, the practices and behaviours that were regulated within the *Home* were about more than simply

ending prostitution. The object of moral regulation, here, was seen as inherently inassimilable, except through transformation and thus changes in behaviour (regulation) would never be enough. Instead the Woman's Missionary Society approached the problem more broadly as the 'Chinese problem'.³ Thus, moral regulation needed to be not only about the regulation of practices and the avoidance of harm associated with those practices; it also required another element. This element, I argue is transformation. Thus, the *Home's* mission was to transform not only practices and behaviours, but to domesticate the objects of regulation as well. In addition to cultivating new behaviours, mission work was also designed to produce and cultivate domestic *subjects*.

To be clear, the transformation of racialized bodies into models of whiteness was not to be a transformation of Other into self, but of the Other into another Other. Japanese and Chinese women might be encouraged to aspire to *models* of whiteness, but they would, at best, only inhabit a space between the white self and the Other. If Japanese and Chinese women were able to transgress race and *become* white, this would put into jeopardy the project itself, as it would call into question the superiority of the white self. The *emulation* of whiteness reaffirmed its value. This transformation first meant the removal of the women from their places of domicile and their admission into the *Home*. Once in the *Home*, the women were then able to become part of the family of God. This was a practice in domesticity, as evidence of this transformation was to be found in the women's ability to learn and embody not only Victorian moral values, but

³ Although Japanese women entered the *Home* as early as 1895, the *Home* continued to call itself the *Chinese Rescue Home* until 1910. While Chinese and Japanese populations were not always constructed in the same way, similar assumptions were made about Japanese women, especially with regard to their propensity to prostitution and sexual lasciviousness.

Christian ones as well. Thus, the practices that were targeted in the *Home* were not only about providing training for Chinese and Japanese women so that they would not have to return to lives of immorality, but instead were about processes that would, first, transform them from racial outsiders to ‘family members’ and, second, socialize them into their rightful positions within their new ‘family’, the family of God. This transformation, once complete, did not guarantee their acceptance into Canadian society, however. Although some were allowed to return to their own communities and others even entered white homes as servants, successful transformations did not always translate into their presumed fitness for assimilatory projects. For some, in fact, successful transformations were not seen as evidence of their fitness to stay within the nation at all, but were used as a way to expel them from the nation by sending them to China or Japan as missionaries. Transformations, thus, were always already spatial processes.

Important to this dissertation is an understanding of the (often spatially defined) gendered private/public divide in moral reform projects. Like Peggy Pascoe (1990), Hunt (1999) also views the separate spheres doctrine as inherent to the moral reform movements and women’s places within it (Hunt 1999, 95). This was certainly the case with regards to the *Home*. The women who ran the *Home* were able to do so precisely because the *Home* was seen as an extension of the private realm. However, I attempt to move beyond this public/private dichotomy in two ways. First, I challenge the notion that moral reform was about reinscribing the divide between private and public spheres by arguing that the *Home* was a place where both white women as well as their Chinese and Japanese charges could aspire to something more than domesticity. Second, I challenge the divide through a spatial analysis, which locates the *Home* in its physical form, as a space that was situated on the threshold between the private and the public, infringing on both but inhabiting neither in totality.

Methodology

“At the Hearth of the Nation” explores the intersections of race, gender, religion, and nation in Victoria, British Columbia. Although I focus my analysis on Victoria, I also reference relevant material from other cities in the province, including Vancouver. Both Vancouver and Victoria were entry points for Japanese and Chinese populations coming from the United States and as well as directly from Japan and China. The period of study begins in 1886, when John Gardiner⁴ and Reverend John Edward Starr first began ‘rescuing’ Chinese girls, and ends in 1923. This closing date is significant for two reasons. First, the bulk of the records from the Methodist Woman’s Missionary Society, British Columbia Conference Branch Fonds are dated from 1904-1923. Secondly, it was in 1923 that the Chinese Immigration Act shifted from exclusionary policies such as the head tax, to even more expansive and systematic process of exclusion. Although the *Home* continued to run until 1942, the objectives and the demographics of the *Home* changed significantly during this period. More Japanese women and children began to enter the *Home*, and the focus, while still largely evangelistic, shifted to education, especially of young children. This shift in demographics and concern is important and worth further investigation, but is beyond the scope of this project.

On Case Studies

As I have already suggested, this dissertation is a case study of the *Chinese Rescue Home*. The *Home*, as a case study offers an in-depth analysis of relations of power that often, but

⁴ Gardiner is also known as “Gardner” and “Vrooman” in many of the documents. Unless quoting from other sources I will use the spelling Gardiner here and throughout.

not always, mirrored those in Canadian society. As Iacovetta and Mitchinson (1998) have argued, case studies “offer us a rare window on human interactions and conflict. Complex power relations play themselves out at the local level, sometimes with unpredictable outcomes” (6). With all of its diversity of artefacts, from formal reports to letters, to legal documents and carefully worded press releases and beyond, this case study holds a wealth of information about institutional practices, especially as they were applied to ‘deviant’ women. The case study, according to Berg (2009), “aims to uncover the manifest interaction of significant factors ... But in addition, the researcher is able to capture various nuances, patterns, and more latent elements that other research approaches might overlook” (318). Thus, as a case study, the *Chinese Rescue Home* opens up possibilities for studying structural institutions both as they impact personal relations and as they are informed by them. The *Home* is a compelling study not only of race relations, but of the complex relationship between the national and global, the state and the domestic realm, and the roles of race and religion in each of these.

The usefulness of case studies also lies in the fact that many of these collections are concerned with ‘deviant’ populations and thus are what Karen Dubinsky (1989) describes as “‘sites of contestation’ between the observers and the observed” (363). As such, these sources can shed light on the intricacies of disciplinary practices and forms of surveillance. The documents that I uncovered provide interesting insights into the experiences of and relationships between white, Chinese, and Japanese women that transpired within the *Home*, as well as how these relations were perceived outside of it. Although I examine the *Chinese Rescue Home* as a case study, I also pay particular attention to its material form, as the experiences and relationships that were forged within the *Home* were solidified through space.

Borrowing from cultural geographies of the home, this dissertation attempts, as Alison Blunt (2005b) suggests, to move “beyond binaries such as public and private space and

imaginative geographies of ‘self’ and ‘[O]ther’” in order to investigate the “interplay of home and identity in terms of spatial politics” (4). Gendered discourses of domesticity informed the type of physical space that was built and from which the *Home* operated. Instead of working from a strictly institutional space, those who ran the *Home* created it as a domestic space from which to domesticate their charges. Although space was determined by religious and gendered discourses of domesticity, I also argue that the spaces themselves *reproduced* discourses of domesticity, as the space dictated the acceptability of only certain types of practices. Thus, a case study which focuses on material spaces illuminates how domesticity as a discourse was reaffirmed through the spatial organization and performance of feminine roles and practices, such as sewing, cooking, cleaning and mothering.

Effective History

As a historical project, this dissertation is informed by the debates over voice and history. In “The Selectivity of Historical Representation,” David Wishart (1997) explains that “the historian does not have access to that past, only to accounts of it, and that those accounts describe only a fragment of what took place” (112). What is most often lost are the “accounts of the people most directly affected” (Wishart 1997, 113). This is certainly the case with respect to the Japanese and Chinese women who lived in the *Home*. It would be a grave mistake to claim that I have compiled a history of Japanese and Chinese Canadian women, as only glimpses of their stories are evident through the narrow lens of formal institutional records, letters, meeting minutes, official reports, Royal Commissions, and newspaper accounts. Motivations for entering the *Home* are recorded only from the perspectives of the white women matrons who painstakingly catalogued each entrance and exit. While we may never know the motivations of the Japanese and Chinese women, especially those who entered voluntarily, I have attempted throughout to draw on secondary sources, including literature and biography, to provide some

spaces to consider their stories. At best, these are piecemeal and incomplete attempts. While it is likely that most of the women who entered the *Home* during the period studied have passed away, future studies might yet uncover the stories of residents who entered and left the *Home* during the later period from 1924–1942.

Despite my inability to account for the voices and experiences of Japanese and Chinese women, I have applied a critical lens to my sources. Guiding my research is a framework that Foucault calls ‘effective history’ (Foucault 2003, 360). Jennifer Terry (1991) explains that effective history “involves what Foucault calls ‘historical sense’—a strategic awareness of points of emergence or ‘possibilities’ existing at particular historical moments in the formation of particular discourses” (56). My goal in this dissertation is to provide a systematic and historical account of the *Chinese Rescue Home* and to point to the ways in which racial and gendered truths and practices were formed and challenged through this site. As Foucault (2003) explains, “History becomes ‘effective’ to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being—as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself” (360). The discontinuities that I am tracing here are found in the interstitial positioning of the *Home* and in the ambivalences of the private/public and national/global divides.

Given that archival records are often written by those in positions of power or authority, I have adopted two strategies to lessen the ‘top heaviness’ of the sources. First, I have endeavoured to utilize multiple and diverse sources in my work. For instance, in the third chapter I draw extensively on two Royal Commissions, a report/letter compiled by Reverend Starr, as well as numerous Methodist reports and publications. The fourth chapter focuses largely on records of the Methodist Woman’s Missionary Society, but includes architectural, document, and image analysis. The fifth chapter relies heavily on newspaper accounts of court cases that reference ‘friends’ of the *Home* and explores the multiple roles of the press in documenting and

(re)framing court cases. In the sixth and final substantive chapter, I focus on both WMS records and court documents to examine ‘custody’ (habeas corpus) cases and the state’s role in determining guardianship over Chinese girls placed in the *Home*. This approach has offered a multifaceted and more nuanced understanding of not only the form and function of the *Home*, but the social, legal, and national context in which it was constructed. Although this still offers a ‘view from above’ it is, nevertheless, a more nuanced view. Further, while this history is in no way complete, what I offer here is an institutional history of the *Home* that nevertheless provides insights in the functioning of power.

A second approach I take endeavours to uncover the points of emergence or Foucauldian ‘possibilities’ by providing a subversive reading of history and questioning how these dominant accounts come to stand as truth. In this operation, an archivist/reader reveals that the dominant account is never fully capable of containing the subaltern it launches, nor fully able to stabilize itself (Terry 1991, 58). Reading subversively or ‘against the grain’ is a strategy that offers a richer analysis than reading ‘with the grain,’ but is not a substitute for the latter. As Stoler (2002) in her discussion of the colonial archive contends, we also need to read the archive “for its regularities, for its logic of recall, for its densities and distributions, for its consistencies of misinformation, omission, and mistake—*along* the archival grain” (100, emphasis in original). Building on Stoler (2002), I submit that all archival collections depend to a greater or lesser degree on hierarchies of power and therefore can and should be read as not only reflecting power hierarchies, such as hierarchies of race, gender, class, and sexuality, but also as producing them. Church archives, for instance, were littered with official reports made by missionaries and church officials at various levels of church governance, who were most often white, upper middle class men. The “consistencies of misinformation, omission, and mistake” (Stoler 2002, 100), therefore, are important indications of existing power hierarchies both outside of and

within church structures. Not all of the sources in church archives were penned by men, however: women's missionary groups most often reported directly to male supervisors, which means that there are many extant reports written by these women. Despite the fact that many of these women had more autonomy than many other white women, their claims to power were often limited to supervising or reforming those who were perceived as racially or culturally inferior. Reading these texts both with and against the grain can tell us much about the complex interplay of race, gender, and class.

Providing a critical and systematic analysis is imperative, as this dissertation relies on a diverse corpus of documents which includes published texts, photos, maps, official documents of churches and religious governing bodies, personal letters, record books, newspapers, court documents, and Royal Commissions. Although these texts are largely from British Columbia, a number of reports and texts deal with missionary work in China and Japan as well. Chang (2004) and Mawani (2008) offer detailed discussions of the ways in which racial knowledges were routinely transported within and across national borders. Thus, the sources for this dissertation highlight the ways in which the 'Chinese and Japanese problem' was always already outside of the nation, and therefore, even within 'home missions', missionaries and church organizations often borrowed from racial knowledges and practices that were imported from other national contexts.

Records and reports of the *Chinese Rescue Home* in Victoria, British Columbia were located in the Provincial Archive in Victoria as well as in the Bob Stewart Archive in Vancouver. Missionary reports and publications such as *The Missionary Outlook* were combined with records from the Methodist *Woman's Missionary Society* which include reports and minutes of advisory committee, intake books, journals, newspaper clippings, and some photographs. Most of these records deal specifically with missions to Chinese and Japanese populations, including

the *Home*. In British Columbia, the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Rare Books and Special Collection, the Provincial Archives and the Bob Stewart Archive together provide a rich source of primary documents such as the ones mentioned above. The Bob Stewart Archive has many documents related to various home missions, evangelical work that took place on Canadian soil, which ministered to these populations in British Columbia. The Methodist Woman's Missionary Society, British Columbia Conference Branch fonds dates from 1904–1923 and includes minutes related to various Chinese and Japanese missions, including the set-up of the *Chinese Rescue Home*, which, as I have noted, later became the *Oriental Home and School*. The Bob Stewart Archive also houses the *Oriental Home and School fonds*, which includes records, reports, and scrapbooks relating to the *Oriental Home and School* in Victoria. Also of relevance are the records of the Superintendent of Home Missions of the United Church of Canada, the minutes of the Methodist Missionary Society, and the *Methodist Recorder*, a monthly publication published by the Methodist Church in British Columbia. Newspapers from this time period offer community perspectives on the *Home*, transcripts of two Royal Commissions provide a national perspective, and court transcripts offer insights into the role of the state in supporting and challenging the *Home*'s authority and jurisdiction.

Discourse Analysis

One strategy to reading these documents 'against the grain' is to employ discourse analysis as a means to investigate how constructions of race and gender were produced through religious discourse and discourses of national belonging. Joy Parr (1995) explains that "experiences are not made by discourses, but discourses are the medium through which experiences are comprehensible" (165). In *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-Language Press*, Henry and Tator (2002) contend that discourse is the way in which language is used socially to convey broad historical

meanings. It is the language identified by the social conditions of its use, by who is using it and under what conditions ... [and that] it can never be totally free from the sociocultural influences and economic interests in which it was produced and disseminated (25).

Thus, the archives, as well as the documents held there, are the products of sociocultural influences that are social, political, economic, and moral. This dissertation draws from a number of sources to uncover how religious discourse intersected with racial and gendered ones to produce specific understandings of Chinese and Japanese women as foreign and potentially transformable through practices of moral regulation. Given that racial and gendered discourses played such a central role both in the *Home* and in this dissertation, discourse analysis is an important method for understanding how one comes to make sense of race, sexuality, and gender.

Jorgenson and Phillips (2002) offer some key premises of discourse analysis. These premises are: that discourse analysis is a “critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge” (5), that this approach take into account the “historical and cultural specificity” (5) of discourse, that there is a “link between knowledge and social process” and that there is also a “link between knowledge and social action” (6). Critical discourse analysis approaches discourse as forming a dialectical relationship with the social world. Further, for those scholars who use this approach discourse is viewed as “just one among many aspects of any social practice” (Jorgenson and Phillips 2002, 7). Critical discourse analysis, therefore, strives to understand the relationship between both the concrete material world and the abstract discursive world. Throughout this project, discourse analysis has been extremely useful in understanding, for instance, how the physical (material) structure of the *Home* was embedded in—indeed constructed through—gendered, racial, and colonial discourses and how the material structure fed into and reproduced these same discourses within the *Home*. The critical discourse analysis that Jorgenson and Phillips (2002) describe informs my approach.

Firstly, discourse contributes to the construction of social identities, social relations, and “systems of knowledge and meaning” (Jorgenson and Phillips 2002, 65). In addition to my focus on systems of knowledge and meaning, I am committed to highlighting the many and diverse ways in which the discursive impacted white, Japanese, and Chinese women’s lives in material ways. Therefore, secondly, my analysis will pay particular attention to the social *practices* which informed and were informed by these discourses, for as Fairclough (2000) contends, “social science should include theories and analyses of both structure and action, and of their interconnection” (42). Discourse and ideology are neither neutral nor static. Ideology, instead, is embedded in social and cultural practices and given that these practices change and (d)evolve over time, so also do the knowledges that they produce. These discourses, therefore, shape the everyday lives of individuals through the shaping of both social identity and social relations. Last, the archival sources that I use must be understood as both material evidence of discursive practices and as the discursive practices themselves. Jorgenson and Phillips (2002) contend that “discourse is both constitutive and constituted” (61). In other words, not only does discourse shape social meaning and identities, it is also shaped by the social world. The texts that I have chosen to analyze are not separate from the historical and social specificities that informed them, nor are they distinct from the policies and practices that resulted from them. Further, religious discourses cannot be understood as singular or cohesive, but must be understood as developing out of and in response to counter-discourses.

Chapter Outline

As has been illustrated here, Canadian histories, to the extent that they have included Japanese and Chinese populations, have often framed Chinese and Japanese as inassimilable or as subjects of white discriminatory practices and policies. In what follows, I utilize a plethora of sources, not to deny such exclusions, but to explore how racial power worked through exclusions

and inclusions and how these processes took place simultaneously and often operated together. Constructing the *Home* as an active space and site of production, I utilize a series of housing metaphors to theorize the domestic and domesticity as practices and processes of power. I begin in Chapter Two by building the ‘foundation’ of the *Home*, providing some historical and geographical context.

In Chapter Three, I identify the four ‘pillars’ of the regulative power of the domestic and domesticity, through an examination of the discourses of nation, whiteness, Christianity, and gender as they operated in the *Home*. These pillars not only provided the support for the *Home*, but also created it as a necessary intervention, a solution which existed as a space both outside of the nation and within it. It was precisely the intersections of the religiosity of the mission and the imaginary of the home that allowed for the transformation of (female) racial bodies into *domestic* ones (both in a national sense and in a gendered one). Chapter Four crosses the ‘threshold’ into the *Home*, to examine how domesticity was tightly bound up with motherhood and maternalism. The ‘threshold’ as a metaphor highlights how domesticity blurred the binary of public and private, for it was always on or at the threshold between the private and the public, facilitating the constant crossing over between these two domains. The domestic was both materially and ideologically framed through gendered discourses of ‘home’ and ‘family.’ Yet, as an institution, these domestic spaces were utilized by white women, and to lesser degree Japanese and Chinese women, to cross the threshold from the private to the public realm.

In the Fifth and Sixth chapters, I shift my lens outside of the *Home*. In Chapter Five, and by focusing on ‘walls,’ I consider how the parameters of the *Home* were (re)defined not only from within the *Home* but also from beyond it, as the *Home* did not exist in isolation. Here, I turn to newspaper accounts to discuss high profile civil and legal cases that involved key players in the *Home*. These cases show how important domesticity was in the moral regulation of Chinese

and Japanese women, and also highlight the importance of state and citizens as moral regulators of those who dared to remove domesticity from the transformation process. In the sixth chapter, I offer metaphors of roofs and rafters to complete my ‘reconstruction’ of the *Home*. Here, I explore the state’s role as protector and arbiter in habeas corpus cases. In these instances, the state provided a protective covering to the *Home* and its charges. The state not only acted as ‘*parens patriae*’ but also provided the framework and support (rafters) for the *Home* to take on this same surrogate parenting role. It thus reframed the *Home* as a site of refuge, rather than ‘rescue.’ The habeas corpus cases provide for a deeper analysis of the state’s role in delineating the boundaries of cross-racial contact and in defining (national) familial relations. Chapter Seven concludes this dissertation.

Chapter Two: Foundations of Stone: Victoria and the *Chinese Rescue Home*

Histories of British Columbia in general, and of Victoria in particular, have documented the successes and the challenges faced by white settlers. Over the past two decades, many scholars have added to these colonial histories, providing alternative histories of the Pacific Northwest and including the challenges and contributions of Japanese and Chinese men, and to lesser extent women (Adilman, 1992; Anderson 1991; Green 2000; Johnston 1996; Knowles 1995; Lai 1991; Mawani, 2009; Roy 1989, 2003; Ward 1990). In this chapter, I draw and build upon these histories to provide the historical foundations and context for my study of the *Chinese Rescue Home*. Specifically, my objective is to provide a broad historical sketch in order to contextualize the organizational structures of the *Home* and the attendant modalities of racial discipline that were carried out within it. To this end, I begin with a discussion of Japanese and Chinese immigration. I follow this with a brief discussion of life in Victoria. The discussion of locality points to a specific production of race, thus laying the foundation for the discussion that follows in Chapter Three. I conclude with a discussion of the *Home* and the women who ran it and resided there. This chapter highlights the historical relations of power through which the *Home* was constituted and to which it contributed.

Immigrant Foundations

Victoria was the main port of entry for Chinese immigrants. According to Patricia Roy (1989), the Chinese who were the first Asians to arrive in Canada initially came “from the declining California gold fields” and after 1860, directly from China (x). Roy (1989) estimates that “in the mid-1860s, there were about 4,000 in the colony, but that number declined to about 1,500 in 1870. The second wave of Chinese immigrants, an estimated 16,000 or 17,000, came in the early 1880s during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway” (x–xi). The first arrival from Japan came later, beginning with nineteen-year-old Manzo Nagano in 1871 (Adachi 1991;

Miki 2004). By 1891, there were approximately two hundred Japanese in Canada (Ayukawa 2008, 12). This number steadily increased. The 1901 census recorded 4,738 Japanese living in Canada; 97% of these lived in British Columbia (Adachi 1991, 13–33). In the early stages of Japanese immigration, the majority of immigrants were from the lower classes (Adachi, 1991, 13). Like the Chinese, most of the early Japanese “immigrants were unattached males, nearly all of them hoping to make quick fortunes” (Adachi 1991, 17). Most of these men took up work in fisheries, coal mines, or the lumber industry, sometimes alternating between these three industries (Adachi 1991).

There was much ambivalence among whites with regards to the arrival of Japanese and Chinese labourers. Some in British Columbia welcomed their labour, while others engaged in formal protests, including the violent and destructive Vancouver riot in 1907 (Adachi 1991; M. Ayukawa 1995; Roy 1989, 2003). Formally, as Lai (2010) recalls, as early as “1872, the BC legislative assembly passed an act to disenfranchise both Chinese and native Indians” (16). Adachi (1991) discusses the ambivalence that early white settlers expressed toward Japanese immigration, stating that “[e]fforts were made to exclude the ‘wrong’ kind of settlers; yet without them there was not an adequate supply of labour” (37). Many have argued that the riots and hostility were a result of increased concern around the economic threats that Asian labourers were thought to pose to white populations (Adachi 1991; Ayukawa 1995; Roy 1989; Ward 1990). Regardless of the reasons, anti-Asian sentiment resulted in legislation that greatly reduced immigration from China and Japan as the government imposed head taxes on the Chinese and entered into the “Lemieux Hayashi Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, which limited the number of labourers entering Canada to 400 per year” (Ayukawa 1995, 107). The enactment of such limits and exclusions significantly affected immigration, especially with regard to gender.

The head tax meant that very few Chinese women came to Canada in these early years.

Those that did come were often assumed to be either slaves or prostitutes, who needed to be ‘rescued’ and thus would end up at the *Chinese Rescue Home* in Victoria. The Lemieux Hayashi Agreement of 1908 had the opposite effect with regards to Japanese women. Because of its focus on reducing threats to labour, the “Gentlemen’s Agreement decreased the number of male immigrants, but accelerated the immigration of women” (Ayukawa 1995, 107). Many of these women came over as ‘picture brides,’ a long distance adaptation of the traditional practice of arranged marriages. These non-western marriage practices meant that these women were initially seen as morally suspicious and thus became targets of the *Home* as well.

According to the 1871 census, only fifty-three Chinese women were reported to be residing in British Columbia (Adilman 1992) when the *Home* was first opened. Although the census showed very few Chinese women in British Columbia during this period, Adilman (1992) explains that accurate estimates were difficult to discern, as even the numbers provided by the Immigration Department Records and the Canadian Census do not correspond. She also tells us that at least “100 to 200 Chinese women were imported annually from 1887 until the beginning of the twentieth century” (314). The small numbers of women entering the province was in part due to exclusionary immigration policies such as the head tax, but as the authors of *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* (1992) explain, the reason also may have been rooted in the familial pressures exerted on women residing in China. “Some villages were supported entirely by the remittances sent by the family wage earners in North America. Thus, most of the women and children stayed behind to make sure that the men would continue to send money home” (17). For women who did come to Canada,

the majority ... came from the Pearl River Delta region of Guangdong province in Southern China. Women from this area have traditionally demonstrated an exceptional independence. The people of this region had been emigrating for centuries, mostly to Southeast Asia. So going overseas was an accepted practise and the strength of the family allowed villages to function in the absence of men. Women in Southern China have traditionally worked outside of the home,

demonstrating self-reliance by sowing and harvesting crops while the men were away (Women's Book Committee Chinese Canadian National Council 1992, 18).

It was primarily these women who were the concern of the matron and missionaries who ran the *Home* during its early years. During British Columbia's transitional periods, however, Japanese 'picture brides' also became the subject of concern.

Japanese 'picture brides' entered the province for many reasons. During the sojourner stage, which lasted until 1908, Ayukawa (2008) points out that the Japanese population residing in Canada was largely male. Those few Japanese women who also migrated had been brought to assist their husbands. In the second stage (1908–1924) "... women began arriving and in doing so launched the settlement stage in the history of Japanese in Canada" (Ayukawa, 2008, 35). Some of the women who arrived were educated and from wealthy families, while others came from poorer areas. While the motivations for coming to Canada were as diverse as were the women themselves, most were startled by the conditions that confronted them. "Many were taken directly to remote lumber camps, sawmill towns, fishing villages, and untamed farms in the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan and southern Alberta" (Ayukawa 2008, 46). For those who entered through Victoria, many were first shepherded by immigration officials to the *Chinese Rescue Home*, where they awaited their grooms. Although legally married, neither the province nor those who ran the *Home* recognized these marriages, at least initially. Thus, many participated in marriage ceremonies at the *Home* before they were allowed to leave. In these early decades, the province was already deeply invested in Japanese and Chinese women's lives as they attempted to (re)enforce appropriate (white) forms of domesticity.

Life in Victoria

In 1871, British Columbia joined Canada in confederation. While Adele Perry (2001) aptly describes life in early British Columbia to be 'on the edge of empire', Victoria was located

on the outer edge, perhaps even the precipice of empire. During this period, she writes, building a white British Columbia was of primary concern in a province that was racially diverse and dominated by a resource-based economy (Perry 2001, 14). Thus, physical, economic, and moral development were important imperatives of this period. Pethick (1980) has termed 1886 to 1901 to be the 'Jubilee Years'. In 1886, the Canadian Pacific Railway finally made its way to Victoria, bringing with it the promise of expansion and prosperity. Sharon Meen (1996) observes that a "small manufacturing base was established in and around Victoria, including tanneries, sash mills, a foundry, a soap factory, a shipyard, and a gas works" (111). This meant that in addition to a large underclass who were manual labourers, especially miners and fur traders, many of British Columbia's wealthy elite also settled in Victoria. The result was a hierarchized and highly classed society. An "incredible amount of snobbery existed in early Victoria, and invariably it was directed toward ... those who worked 'in service'; those who were of Chinese origin; those who came to Victoria to earn a living in the theatre, in dance halls, or in prostitution; and those who worked 'in trade'" (Green 2000, 8). A local census for this period "showed 8,452 whites, 2,978 Chinese and 101 Indians in Victoria" (Pethick 1980, 110). Thus, it is not surprising that race in general and racial mixing in particular were of concern to Victoria's white citizens, especially the elite.

In 1878, for instance, Victoria's representatives in the House of Commons "placed a motion on the order paper at Ottawa urging that 'no person be employed on the Pacific railway in any capacity whose hair is more than five inches long'" (Pethick 1980, 91). Although these provisions were meant to exclude the Chinese, preventing them from taking white jobs, this recommendation was framed without explicit reference to race. While race and racism were sometimes implicit, other times they were much more explicit. In 1878, the provincial legislature proposed an annual tax of sixty dollars to be imposed on "all Chinese in the province" (92). In

Victoria, “the entire Chinese population ... including house servants, went on strike simultaneously, and soon afterwards Judge Gray of the BC Supreme Court pronounced the law unconstitutional” (Pethick 1980, 92). The ‘striking’ of Chinese house servants would likely have had the most significant impact on the domestic lives of white women in the province.

Living in Victoria during these early years was especially challenging for women, irrespective of race and class. For those who were wealthy, challenges included finding suitable help in the home, and the lack of availability of help due to immigration and employment restrictions meant that many upper class women were forced to take on domestic work that they would not have performed had help been more readily available. The lack of and need for white women during this period has been well-documented by Green (2000) and Perry (1997, 2001). Both have shown how poor white women from England were brought in on so-called ‘bride ships’ in order to change the racial configuration of settler society. The importation of these women was thought to be adding respectability to the province by supplying wives to single men and bringing a population that could serve wealthier families who were otherwise dependent on Aboriginal women or Chinese men to work as domestic help.

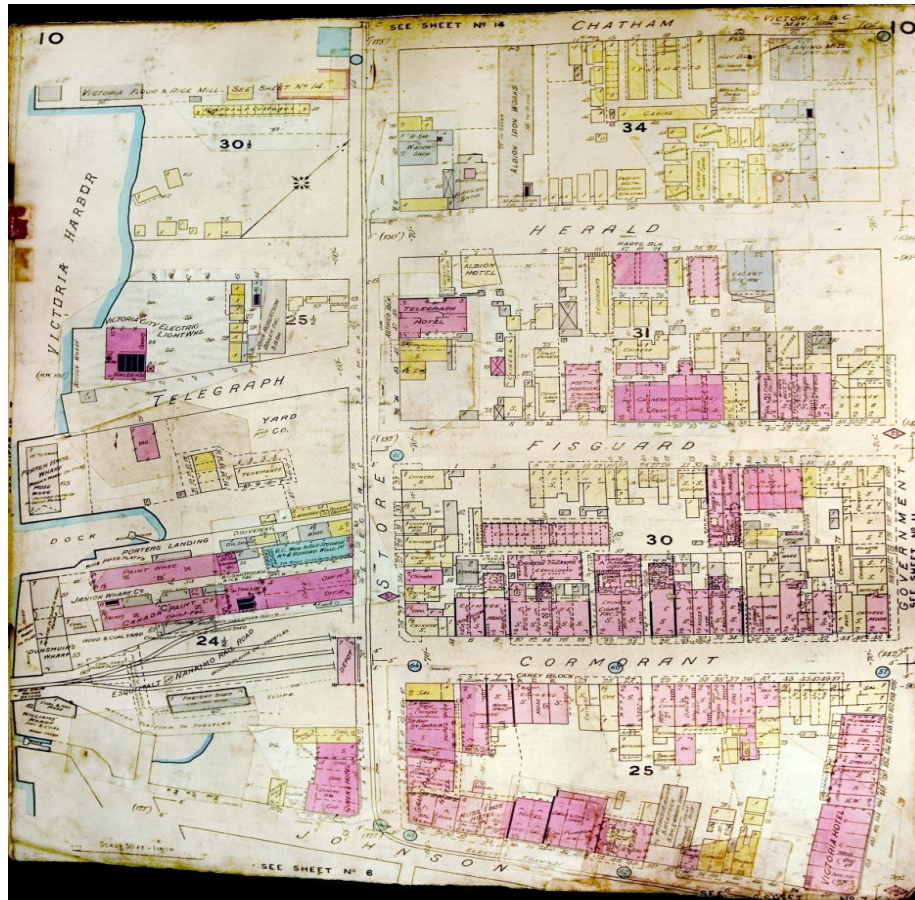
Despite the importation of white women to act as domestic help, and notwithstanding the training of young Chinese women to do the same, even wealthy and middle-class women lived very demanding lives. Many, in the absence of a full staff, had to oversee the running of large homes in a city where wealth and prestige continued to matter. Some of these women were also involved extensively in charity work and in the suffrage movement. During the early 1900s, women’s organizations in Vancouver and Victoria had far-reaching objectives in social reform. These included hospital auxiliaries, nursing, charitable societies, and other “good causes” (Cramer 1992, 59). One such charitable society that occupied Victoria women was the *Chinese Rescue Home*.

Geographies of the *Home*

Evidence shows that early missions to Chinese populations began in 1861 (Knowles 1995, 59). North American churches had a long history of missionary work in Japan and China (Gagan 1992; Pascoe 1990; Rutherford 2003). Thus, for many missionaries, Japanese and Chinese immigration to Canada did not mark their first contact with these populations. In British Columbia, the extension of this missionary work to immigrants from Japan and China was a natural progression. In the US context, Peggy Pascoe (1990) has argued that Chinese rescue missions in San Francisco developed out of the desire by women who were supporting projects in Shanghai to develop a project closer to home (13). In British Columbia the same was likely true, as ‘home mission work’ that was once reserved for Native populations was soon broadened to include first Chinese and later, Japanese populations (Gagan 1992). While not all churches (or church members) welcomed these ‘foreigners’ into their midst, some churches opened their doors to Japanese and Chinese parishioners, while others helped to build churches for their communities and ‘ministered’ to them through missions, rescue homes, home bible study, or English language classes (Rutherford 2003).

Located in the heart of Victoria, the *Chinese Rescue Home* was meant to offer a space where Chinese and later Japanese women could be accepted and transformed through white missionaries’ interventions. Originally the women were temporarily housed in the homes of their ‘rescuers’, but given that the two founders of the *Home* were men, this was only a temporary measure. Soon, a matron was hired and a home rented for the women. All of the structures that were to house these women were located outside of Chinatown but in close proximity to it, on the border between Chinatown and white business and residential communities. These locations were likely chosen because of the ease of access to Chinese women and the respectability and security of being close to the white community. By the time the work of the *Home* began, in

1886, Chinatown comprised two full city blocks, between Store Street and Government Street and between Herald Street and Cormorant Street (see Map 1 below). The original location of the *Home* is just outside of this map area and is marked on Map 2. The ambivalent location of the *Home* is noteworthy, as it was always situated in between white and Chinese settlements, this geographical reality greatly affecting both its mission and its role in Victoria.



Map 1: Victoria Fire Insurance Map 1891 (viHistory 2006)

By 1909, when the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) were building the new *Home*, Chinatown had grown to almost double its size in 1891, to include the adjacent blocks between Government and Douglas Streets. As fire insurance plans from 1885 and 1891 show, although much of Chinatown was confined to these two (and later four) blocks, racial boundaries were

certainly not distinct (viHistory.com 2006). In 1891, for instance, Chinese businesses and houses spilled onto the block east of Government Street, separated from white institutions such as the Masonic Hall only by a thin strip of grazing land. North of Herald Street was a mixture of businesses and residential, housing a wagon shop, an iron works, the Indian Methodist Church, as well as cabins marked off as either “Chinese” or “Chinese and Indian Cabins” (viHistory 2006). While the 1901 Census showed the Chinese and Japanese population to be 2,978, Japanese made up only 287 of this total (BC GenWeb 2009). Thus, it is not surprising that Japanese and Chinese lived in close proximity. Although widely referenced as ‘Chinatown,’ this area included buildings that were marked off as Chinese laundries and in between was a large building marked ‘Japanese.’ These buildings were separated on the map by a thin dotted line from a community called Chatham Terrace, which was most likely comprised of Victoria’s white citizens (See Map 2, especially the area North of Herald Street, on the East side of Government Street).

The Home (1886–1898)



42 Victoria's Chinatown: Land Utilization, 1909

Map 2: Victoria's Chinatown: Land Utilization 1909 (BC Archives 2010)

Located in the heart of the downtown area of Victoria, Chinatown was almost unavoidable, and in many ways, it became a crucial part of the city. Chinese businesses included laundry services, cigar making, groceries, and restaurants. Maps, such as the one above, show that land use was determined in racialized ways. The location of the *Home*, for example, was strategically placed. The first site of the *Home* was on the north side of Herald Street (see area indicated by arrow on Map 2), an area outside of the boundaries of Chinatown, but in close proximity to it. However, from the late 1890s until it closed in 1942, the *Home* was located in the area marked by the circle on Map 2, east of Douglas Street on Cormorant Street. This area was located near Chinatown, but was outside of its boundaries. In fact, less than a block from the *Home*, on Cormorant and Douglas Street were City Hall, the public library, and the Commercial Hotel. Although the Methodist Mission Church was positioned in the heart of Chinatown on Fisgard Street, the *Home* was not—an indication that the male-dominated Chinatown was considered dangerous for white women. Further, given that the *Home* was modeled after Victorian domestic spaces, this necessitated spaces outside of the male-dominated environs which made up Victoria's Chinatown.

White Women and the *Home*

After it was taken on as a project by the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS), the *Home's* day to day running was maintained by a matron, who was eventually assisted by teachers and other helpers as the *Home* grew and its population expanded. Other women were involved in an advisory capacity, chairing and sitting in on monthly meetings, making decisions on finances,

seeking legal advice, testifying in court cases, assessing applications for new residents, seeing to the *Home's* maintenance, and later constructing a new building for the *Home*.

Advisory Committee members were generally women from well-known, often wealthy families. For instance, Mrs. W.J. Pendray⁵ held the position of president of the Advisory Committee for many years. Her husband founded and built an empire by producing soap in Victoria (Humphreys 2010). According to the *British Colonist*, Mr. and Mrs. Pendray, both originally from Cornwall, England, moved into their “palatial” home, complete with electric fountain and elaborate ceiling scrollwork, in March of 1897.⁶ Likewise, Mrs. Emma Spencer, who sat on the Advisory Board for many years and served as its president in 1905, was well connected in Victoria high society circles, with her husband, David Spencer, having “extensive retailing interests” in Victoria (Gregson 1970, 55). While most of the women on the advisory board were listed only by their surnames (Mrs. Shakespeare, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Burkholder, and Mrs. Smith, for instance) many of the names represented were associated with prominent families in Victoria. For instance, Noah Shakespeare and John Grant were both mayors of Victoria in the 1880s; A.J. Smith held the position of Victoria Councillor; and Mr. W.H. Burkholder was a candidate for school board trustee (City of Victoria 2010). Likely, few of these women would have taken on paid employment. Instead, they took on responsibilities of the domestic realm, in their own homes and through their participation in the affairs of the *Chinese*

⁵ While not unproblematic, here and throughout this dissertation I will use names as they appear in the records. The use of titles and the presence or absence of first names, are indicative of the time period in which these records were written. These are reflective of gendered and racialized practices during this period and are retained in order to maintain historical integrity.

⁶“A Palatial Home: Mr. W. J .Pendray's Stately New Residence and Some of the Features of Its Decoration”*The British Colonist*, March 14, 1897, p. 5.

Rescue Home.

Unlike the women of the advisory committee, most of the matrons of the *Home* were supplied by the General Board of the Woman's Missionary Society. This meant that most arrived in Victoria from Eastern Canada or in a few cases where women missionaries were on furlough, from Japan and China (Gagan 1992, 170). Thus, while some had experience working with Asian populations, most did not. During the period of 1886–1925, the WMS supplied eighteen missionaries to the *Home*. While none had university training, “five women had considerable teaching experience and others had engaged in social or philanthropic activities” (Gagan 1992, 171). Most were middle aged, the average age of the matrons being thirty-seven, “possibly because the board preferred mature women for this particular type of work, which involved contact with the more sordid side of life” (Gagan 1992, 171). Finding younger women to accept the position may also have been more challenging given that the work in the *Home* was difficult and, in the early years, solitary. During the first four years, the WMS supplied only one woman, Annie Leake, to the *Home*. While Miss Leake creatively drew on friends for help, much of the time she was left to her own devices, unable to leave the *Home* unless she could find someone to stay with the girls or women in her care (Whiteley 1999, 68). After Miss Leake's tenure, it was more common for the *Home* to employ two women, a matron and an evangelist (the evangelist was later replaced by a teacher or teachers).

That the work was difficult was evinced by the fact that only one matron, Ida Snyder, agreed to a second term overseeing the *Home*. Although they were trained and supplied by the same organization, each matron brought her own approach and personality to the position. Miss

Leake was described by many as militant and independent (Gagan 1992, Whiteley 1999). Her five years at the *Home* were anything but smooth. On one occasion, Miss Leake was publically accused of abuse⁷ and on two occasions she came under criticism by the Board for her conflicts with John Gardiner, one of the founders of the *Home*. She was asked to take her furlough at the end of her five-year term, and subsequently resigned (Whiteley 1999, 69). Although there is very little information in the *Home*'s files about these women, we can gain insights into them from the reports they filed.

For instance, Miss Bowes, who served as matron in the *Home* from 2 September 1895 to December 1898, signed her reports as 'Home Mother' rather than 'Matron' as the women who previously filled this post had done. Clearly, she was embracing metaphors of home and family. Prior to her tenure at the *Home*, she was an avid organizer for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), travelling around British Columbia setting up branches in various towns and cities.⁸ Miss F. Kate Morgan, on the other hand, who started as a teacher in the school and was appointed as matron in 1899, signed her reports more formally, as "Superintendent of Work".⁹ Miss Morgan's less amiable salutation might be seen as reflective of her greater suspicion of Chinese populations, for which there is clear documentation. She strongly opposed unrestricted immigration, testifying at the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration in 1901 that she believed they were "all a menace to the public from their ways of

⁷ See my discussion of the Menzies case in Chapter Five.

⁸ Various reports in the *British Colonist* during 1894 describe her work in Victoria, Vancouver, and Nanaimo, for instance.

⁹ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1898-1899*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p.lxxxviii.

living, [and] the way they herd together.”¹⁰ She was slightly more generous toward Japanese women, stating that “I think the women of Japan are superior. There is no slavery in Japan.”¹¹ She quickly followed this, however, with a condemnation of Japanese polygamy, then proclaiming that she “would not trust a young brother or sister in the custody of a Chinese or Japanese.”¹² Of the eighteen women who served as matron in the *Home* between 1886 and 1923,¹³ some left missionary work after their tenure at the *Home*, some due to illness and others to marry. Others continued on with their missionary work in other locations and until they retired from the field (Gagan 1992).

Despite its geographical location in Victoria, the reach of the work done in the *Chinese Rescue Home* extended beyond the capital city. Much of the mission work done by the WMS in Vancouver, in fact, began as rescue missions aimed at Chinese and later Japanese women who were subsequently brought to the *Home* in Victoria. Additionally, letters and reports of the rescue mission were also sent with relative frequency to WMS groups in Eastern Canada, and to the General Board of the Woman’s Missionary Society in Ottawa which oversaw and funded much of this work.

Although this was a localized project and a domestic one, the work that was done in Victoria contributed significantly to how race and gender were constructed both provincially and

¹⁰ “Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration”, Sessional Paper No. 54, Session 1902, Ottawa: Printed by Order of Parliament by S.E. Dawson, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty. p. 38.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The following were listed in the Advisory Board minutes as ‘Matron’ or had filed matron reports which were published in the annual reports of the WMS: Annie Leake 1888–1893, Miss Morrow, 1892–1895, Miss Bowes, 1895–1898, Miss Ferguson, 1899 (January–June), Miss F. Kate Morgan, 1898–1901, Mrs. Ida Snyder, 1902–1910, Maggie Smith, 1911–1919, and Annie Martin 1920–1923. Note: Names appear here as written in the original documents.

nationally, especially in relation to missionary work. For instance, even the commissioners overseeing the *Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration* in 1901–1902 turned to the matron of the school for her expert opinion on Chinese and Japanese populations.¹⁴ This commission is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

The relationships within the *Home* must be understood within broader relations of racialized and gendered power that were operating in and that underpinned the creation of Victoria. Power, here, operated in a myriad of ways. First, the *Home* as a domestic space increased white women's power spatially within white society as it extended outside of the private realm. Second, power functioned productively to define not only the Other but also whiteness itself.¹⁵ The self-interests of white women as well as their deployment of racial discourse was varied and mired in ambiguity. While the self-interests of the white dominant group in British Columbia were arguably to exclude certain racialized groups such as the Chinese and Japanese, which many successfully did, here, the interests of white missionary women were served through the inclusion, or at least partial inclusion of these same populations. Their investment in rescuing Japanese and Chinese women and children lauded them a certain degree of power and prestige as benevolent works were viewed as evidence of moral superiority, but also as a mark of higher social and economic class.

Within the *Home* itself, white women utilized their relatively privileged positions as part

¹⁴ "Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee," March 1901, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵ For more on the relational nature of race, see, "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position," (Blumer 1958, 4) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon 1967).

of Victoria's elite to 'rescue' Japanese and Chinese women and to transform them through Christian conversion and domestic training. White women used their privilege as capital which they 'invested' in charity or benevolent work but which also offered returns in other forms of prestige and power. This was an investment that took the form of both time and money. The work that they accomplished not only reflected their privilege, because they could afford to have others fulfil their own domestic duties, but reinforced existing hierarchies of power, thus ensuring the hierarchy's maintenance. Not surprisingly, given that the WMS was committed to mission work, the records are filled with discourses of Christian charity and benevolence. However, this benevolence often manifested in ways which, although motivated by discourses of inclusion, especially inclusion into the 'family of God', reinforced and reified existing hierarchies of race by marking off whiteness as superior.

These women utilized their white privilege to gain entry into the homes of Japanese and Chinese women under the guise of evangelistic missions. Here, the domestic realm was opened to white women, not as an intimate familial space, but as an evangelical one. Entering homes was useful not only for advancing the evangelistic work that these women were committed to doing, but also for 'recruiting' new residents for the *Chinese Rescue Home*. In reports to the various WMS Advisory Committees in both Vancouver and Victoria, home visits, whether welcomed or not, were seen as markers of evangelical success. In addition to home visits, workers in the *Home* encouraged women to come into the *Home* by offering English lessons and

by admitting women whose husbands requested that they learn service skills or ‘English ways.’¹⁶ In Vancouver, the WMS sponsored cooking classes for Japanese and Chinese women as a way to ingratiate themselves with the women in these communities.¹⁷ The assumptions held by white women were that ‘English ways’ of cooking and cleaning in particular, and of white domesticity in general, were superior to those practiced by Japanese and Chinese women, and that the women who took these classes would also feel compelled to learn other important lessons, specifically religious ones. For Japanese and Chinese women, however, taking these classes had less to do with their belief in the superiority of English cooking and more to do with opportunities to learn skills that might benefit them materially—opening up opportunities for other types of work, such as cooking or service work. These types of recruitment strategies suggest that the WMS also engaged in benevolent practises that were aimed at encouraging voluntary admittance to the *Home*. Yet, these more ‘empowering’ strategies, it must be remembered, coincided with maternalistic and repressive tactics directed at less cooperative ‘inmates’. It was quite common for reports and records to refer to the residents of the *Home* as inmates, despite the emphasis on free will, for instance.

‘Inmates’ of the *Home*

Within the *Home*, inmates were not afforded the autonomy that white women claimed for themselves. As in society at large, both race and gender determined who was deemed fit to make

¹⁶ “Oriental Home Register”, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

¹⁷ “Minutes from the Advisory Committee of Japanese (Oriental) Missions,” July 1919, *Methodist Church BC Conference fonds*, 1908–1923, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

choices, and to what extent their free will was allowed to reign. While documents often referred to a resident's *choice* to be in the *Home*, those who entered the *Home* did so under a wide range of conditions. While some were recruited by the WMS women and thus came voluntarily, others were coerced. The power of *Home* officials to make choices for and to deny choices of the residents functioned at multiple levels. As Foucault (2003) points out, "[w]hat makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (308). Admission and recruitment worked through both coercion and benevolence, producing the desire for domestic betterment among Chinese and Japanese women. These new desires were based on western cultural standards of acceptable femininity and domesticity.

In the *Home*, race functioned ambivalently as a discourse and practice of benevolence. Those who ran the *Chinese Rescue Home* relied on common sense definitions of race when admitting women, although definitions of race were not always straightforward. Despite that the women of the WMS believed that Japanese and Chinese women could be saved, a sentiment not shared by many whites in the province, the fact that they saw these women as in need of moral and spiritual salvation was evidence of their own beliefs in white superiority. Further, understandings of race contributed to the infantilization of Japanese and Chinese women and justified coercive and paternalistic strategies. Although the goal of racial betterment was viewed as a practice in benevolence, this often required force or coercion until the required transformation could take place.

Understanding the types of women that were admitted to the *Home*, by whom, and under what circumstances, is important for three reasons. First, understanding who was admitted and who was refused entry provides insight into how race operated, both with respect to its limits and its possibilities. While Japanese and Chinese women, as well as mixed raced children were

admitted to the *Home*, there was some concern about admitting a ‘Hindu’ (this descriptor was a euphemism for Indian) woman to the *Home*, for instance. Second, knowing who brought the women to the *Home* provides context for understanding not only relations of gender, but also the relationships between state agencies and the *Home*. While the *Home* was run by women, many of the women who were admitted to it were brought there by men: some of these men were family members, some clergy, and others were state officials. Lastly, understanding the circumstances under which women entered the *Home* provides context for understanding the relationship between the *Home*, the community, and the state. If, as I argue, some of the women did not enter the *Home* voluntarily, the relationships and practices that were forged in the *Home* must be understood within a broader racialized and gendered context than that of missionary and convert.

While there was a myriad of reasons why women and children were admitted to the *Home*, the one main criterion for admittance was racial difference. The name of the *Home* itself, first called the *Chinese Rescue Home* and later the *Oriental Home and School*, suggests that the race of the residents mattered. Although some white women did stay at the home temporarily, this was rare and was usually limited to female missionaries who were in need of a place to stay during their travels, or workers in the *Home* who required a place of domicile. Race, although significant, did not always function in narrow or biologically prescribed ways. Mixed-race children were also admitted to the *Home*, suggesting that while race mattered, racial ‘purity’ did not. While it is impossible to know for sure how many mixed-race children or women gained

admittance to the *Home*, the *Home* register makes explicit reference to three children who were of mixed-race parentage. Emily¹⁸ was described as having an ‘Indian’ mother and a Chinese father,¹⁹ while in a second case, a six year old girl was described as half Irish with a Japanese father.²⁰ In the third case, a child was admitted with her mother, Mrs. Lim,²¹ who was described as being Swiss. What these cases suggest is that while race was important when it came to admission, in the case of mixed-race children or women, race functioned in ambivalent ways. The presence of these individuals in the *Home* suggests that they were seen as ‘Oriental’ enough to gain admittance. Yet, the fact that these distinctions were made in the record books at all suggests that racial hybridity mattered. It was not enough to allow them admittance based on their ‘Oriental-ness’. Their ‘Indian-ness’ or ‘Irish-ness’ or their ‘Swiss-ness’ needed identification in admission documents. References to hybridity were, thus, a critical part of record books and suggested not the superiority of whiteness but its vulnerabilities in a racially diverse city.

The admittance of Mrs. Lim, the Swiss mother mentioned above is, thus, worthy of some discussion. One of the few white women who stayed in the school, Mrs. Lim was married to a “Chinaman.”²² The *Home* register book explains that her husband had a first wife in China,

¹⁸ Emily is a pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

¹⁹ “Record 40,” *Oriental Home Register and Biog. 1888–1908, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 16.

²⁰ “Record 204,” *Oriental Home Register, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

²¹ Mrs. Lim is a pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

²² “Record 145,” *Oriental Home Register, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

which, in addition to her ailing health, may have been a reason for her admittance. The WMS Report in 1906–1907 explained that Mrs. Lim “was in very poor health, but she finally decided to return to her husband in Vancouver. She is a Swiss woman who married a Chinese man, and the unfortunate circumstance is that he also had a wife in China.”²³ After their initial stay in 1906, her daughter returned three years later and lived in the *Home* for a seven-month period. Both mother and daughter returned again in 1932, staying for almost a year. It is clear from this case that racial criteria for admittance did not always function in simple and straightforward ways. The Lim’s residence in what was then the *Chinese Rescue Home* suggests that for those who regulated admission, mixed-race children and a white woman who married a Chinese man could not be considered ‘white’. Although many cases were brought before the board before the women in question were allowed admission as residents, the case of the Swiss woman was handled by the matron alone. This suggests that either admitting a white woman was viewed as less dangerous or that it was simply accepted by virtue of her marriage to a ‘Chinaman’ that she could also be considered Chinese by association. Another possibility was that her mixed-race daughter was considered to be Chinese and thus gained them both admission. However, this seems less likely, as many children were admitted without their mothers.

While racial difference was certainly an important consideration for the admittance of women and children to the *Home*, how they were admitted was also significant. According to

²³ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1907–1908*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xciii.

admission records, early residents of the *Home* were often spirited away²⁴ through pretence or subterfuge from their lives of slavery or prostitution. This work was accomplished mostly by John Gardiner and Reverend Starr, the founders of the *Home*, and with the help of ‘friendly Chinamen.’ This trend of women being ‘spirited’ into the *Home* was one that continued over the years. However, the list of men who brought women and children to the *Home* broadened to include police officers, Canadian and American immigration officials, officials from the Japanese Consul, doctors, husbands, and fathers. In all of these cases, it was the domesticity of the *Home* that likely made it such an attractive and appropriate option. Husbands and fathers, thus, routinely sent their wives and daughters to receive training or obtain shelter in the *Home*.

Records from the *Home* show that in the first fifteen years, of the seventy-three women who were listed in the register, forty-seven were Chinese women and twenty-six were Japanese women. Clearly, the name *Chinese Rescue Home* was not an accurate descriptor, but it remained the official name until 1909, hinting that authorities invested little in formally distinguishing Japanese from Chinese women. Of these cases, there were fourteen whose admission records were ambiguous as to their reason for admission. Of the remaining fifty-nine, forty-seven were brought into the *Home* by men, three brought forward by a man and woman team, three were brought in by women alone and the remainder (nine) admitted themselves to the *Home* (see Table 1). For many of the women admitted into the *Home*, it was clear that they may have had little choice. While it cannot be assumed that they were unwilling or that they did not participate

²⁴ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

in the decision, the decision was usually not solely their own, as many were admitted *by* men. Even for those women who entered voluntarily, their choices in such a hostile climate were very limited. Leaving their own homes, whether they were escaping abusive ‘owners,’ husbands, fathers, or a life of prostitution, opened the risk of deportation. Thus, even for many of those who entered ‘voluntarily,’ their choices were severely constrained and the *Home* was one of the few places that they could turn.

Admittance by:	Unspecified	Male or Male-involved	Female Only	Self	Total
Number of Residents	14	47	3	9	74
For the period 1886–1901 ²⁵					

Table 1: Admissions to *Chinese Rescue Home*, 1886–1901

For Chinese women, all but one were placed in the *Home* either as a result of a ‘rescue’ or were described as fleeing from lives of slavery or prostitution. Of the twenty-six Japanese women who were registered in the *Home* during this fifteen-year period, the reasons for admittance varied considerably. Four were placed in the *Home* due to their suspected involvement or vulnerability to becoming involved in prostitution. Two were sent by a doctor so that they could receive treatment in the *Home*. Ten were placed in the *Home* due to family-related issues such as poverty or the absence of a husband or father due to work-related travel. A further six women were admitted or admitted themselves for educational reasons, the most

²⁵ “Oriental Home Record Book and Register, 1886–1929,” *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 21.

common being to learn English (see Table 2). Although the reasons differed significantly for their admission, the majority of the girls and women were admitted either through compulsion or at the very least, through the influence of another person, usually a man. This is particularly significant for Japanese women in the years that followed these early admissions, as immigration officials began placing many more Japanese women in the *Home*. After 1909, the focus shifted away from rescue and toward education, especially English language and domestic training. Not only was how women entered the *Home* important, but so too was how they were categorized.

Reason for Admission	Prostitution or Slavery	Family-related	Education	Medical	Other	Total
Chinese	46				1	47
Japanese	4	10	6	2	4	26
Total	50	10	6	2	5	73
For the period of 1886–1901 ²⁶						

Table 2: Reason for Admission to *Chinese Rescue Home*, 1886–1901

Although race was used as a descriptive category in the *Home* register, it was not a prominent discourse within other *Home* documents. However, there are a number of points that need to be made about how race operated as an organizational category which served to legitimize the power of white men and women over ‘Oriental’ women and children. Religious missions such as the *Home* can be understood as interventions meant to alleviate a threat to social order (Asad 1993, 45). The *Home*’s mandate was to order race and racial bodies. Although white women certainly engaged in evangelical missions to other white women, the degree to which they could utilize their power to constrain these women was considerably less than was

²⁶ “Oriental Home Record Book and Register, 1896–1914,” *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 21.

the case in the *Home*. For instance, in one case Chinese community members objected to the confinement of two ‘slave girls’ in the *Home*. According to the matron’s report, when threatened with legal proceedings, they simply “told them we did not bear expenses alone, and mentioned the names of our Advisory Board.”²⁷ The advisory board were clearly thought to be powerful in the community, but this declaration was not enough to discourage these Chinese community members. The Chinese men and women from whom these girls and women were ‘spirited away’ did not simply bend to the pressure that these women exerted. However, the advisory board was able to convince the lawyer representing this group of Chinese not to take on the case. Thus, as this case and court records show, even when the seizure of women was contested by Chinese men, both in and out of the courts, white women’s authority usually held fast.

White women were involved in many types of benevolent work, yet racial hierarchies guaranteed that greater control was exerted over racialized populations than over other populations. This control depended not only on racial hierarchies, but on the exploitation of ambiguities of race. On the one hand, there was a seemingly egalitarian doctrine of brotherhood and sisterhood, which was meant to erase race. On the other hand, was the assumption of racial superiority, that the “Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ was ... much more capable of controlling their instincts than other races” and therefore any “moral regulation brought to bear on these [other races] would have to be external and coercive” (Valverde 1991, 105). Moral regulation included a number of different lessons, which were applied with varying levels of force and coercion. That

²⁷ *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1902–1903*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. lxxxiv.

the moral lessons which were ‘brought to bear’ on Japanese and Chinese women who resided in the *Home* arose out of concerns with their sexuality ties in to common racial assumptions at the time that associated Asian women with sexual excess. Although many reasons existed for women to enter the *Home*, the control that white women exerted over them often took the form of control over the body, sometimes even through physical constraint. Barbed wires on fences and locks on windows and doors indicated that the ‘inmates’ at least occasionally required physical constraint.²⁸ This concern with the body was often deemed protective (for instance, the workers were protecting women’s bodies from the threat of sexual exploitation), but also took the form of coercion or constraint. Despite the fact that the women’s sexuality held such a prominent place in the work done in the *Home*, control over these women was not limited to moral instruction around sexuality.

When the WMS took control of the *Home* in 1888, five of the ‘girls’ who were in the *Home* were adult women, over the age of 21. All of these residents were considered ‘rescued’ or had run away from lives of slavery or prostitution. Although for many of the women, their age was not indicated in the *Home* register, most can be assumed to have been adults. For instance, in most of these cases the residents were women who travelled to Canada alone, and were married or widowed. Despite that most residents were adults, this did not diminish the control that was exerted by white women—there was a reason they were colloquially referenced as ‘inmates’ of the institution. That the women who ran the *Home* fought for guardianship of children left in the

²⁸ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” November, 1898, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

Home is not surprising, given the responsibility that they bore for their care. However, it was not possible to gain legal guardianship of the adults in the same way. Their authority over these women in many cases was legitimated through their placement there by men, who did have some form of legal control or social authority over them, as husband, father, or immigration official. The women of the WMS often viewed these women as dependents, thus justifying their maternalistic role. The spatial representation of the *Home* as a domestic space further legitimized maternalistic roles. The treatment of the women in the *Home* was based on racial and religious assumptions which held, first that the Anglo-Saxon race was superior, and second that maturation for inferior races could only happen through Christian instruction. The infantilization of these women through discourses of mother and child, meant, therefore, that not only were the residents in the *Home* expected to follow the rules of conduct set out by the *Home* ‘mother’ or matron; they were also expected to give over their very autonomy in crucial decision-making processes.

Portrayed as a benevolent work and as a sanctuary for victims, the *Home*, by acting as *parens patriae*,²⁹ also took on a distinctly paternalistic³⁰ dimension. Meaning ‘parent of the nation’ or ‘parent of the country,’ this doctrine was used to justify the state’s interventions into the family in cases of abuse. The state’s role as benevolent parent was mimicked by those who ran the *Home*. Here, however, I argue that the *Home* took on this role, not only over children, but

²⁹ See Chapter Seven for a discussion of the courts use of this doctrine as it was applied in the courts.

³⁰ Although the *Home* was run by women and thus the term ‘maternalistic’ might seem more appropriate, the connotations associated with maternalism and motherhood fall short of the mark here. The spirit of paternalism, as it has been applied to men’s power and authority over both children and *adult* women, seems more appropriate here.

over adult women as well. This treatment of women as children meant that freedoms that would normally be associated with adulthood were not afforded to women in the *Home*. In this way, the *Home* functioned paternalistically, both in the protective sense of the word and the disciplinary one.

The women who ran the *Home* prided themselves on *freeing* the women they saved from lives of prostitution and slavery, although, arguably, some saved themselves by running away from their ‘masters’ or ‘mistresses’, sometimes in the dead of night with nothing but the clothes on their backs. However, once liberated from these conditions, the women were subjected to a different type of ‘master’ and to new rules and regulations. This in itself was not necessarily problematic, as voluntary compliance with rules was an expectation of all institutions. However, the line between voluntary compliance and coercion was not always clear cut at the *Home*. While isolation and incarceration were not formally recognized objectives of the *Home*, a number of incidents and events highlight the use of coercion and constraint in the *Home*. First, courts, police, and immigration officials placed women and children in the *Home*, thus calling into question the voluntary nature of at least some residents’ stays. Second, reviewing records and minutes, there were multiple references to inmates ‘running away,’ ‘escaping,’ and ‘slipping out’ of the *Home*. Third, physical measures were taken to secure the *Home* and the women within it.

Even those who entered the *Home* of their own accord did not always find leaving easy. The records do not reveal whether residents were required to stay for any set length of time, only that stays in the *Home* were described as voluntary. Certainly, garnering support for the *Home*

would have been difficult if it came to light that many of the women did not wish to be rescued or that once in the *Home*, the types of lessons being taught were not welcome. The following examples from *Home* records are a clear indication that, for some at least, Christian transformation was not as welcome as the WMS often suggested. In August of 1897, Elsie³¹, a sixteen-year-old woman, was rescued from Vancouver by police and brought to the *Home*. Despite the fact that this case was described as a ‘rescue,’ Elsie did not easily adapt to her new life in the *Home*. In the following year Elsie was reported to have ‘run away’ from the *Home* on three different occasions. Despite the considerable effort that the WMS exerted on her behalf, including fighting for legal custody of her and filing a subsequent appeal, Elsie continued to run away. When she grew tired of her ‘freedom’ she would send a message to the matron of the *Home*, who would, upon the promise of better behaviour, come and retrieve her and bring her ‘home.’

While it was not always clear where Elsie went or why she left, she was at least on one occasion “harboured by ‘Laura’s’ husband” under circumstances that the WMS deemed ‘peculiar’³² This story belies common narratives that positioned Chinese women and girls as virtual prisoners of Chinese masters or mistresses. Elsie, while rescued by police from her ‘master’, ran at least on one occasion, to another woman’s *Home*, suggesting that she had ties to this woman, her husband or both, prior to her entry into the *Home*. These were ties that were discouraged once the women were in the *Home*, as evinced by later Advisory Board minutes.

³¹ Elsie is a name given to Quai Shing by those who ran the *Home*. Her case is one of four analyzed in Chapter Six.

³² “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” March 1899, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

When ‘Laura’ sought entry into the *Home*, the Advisory Committee advised that given her and her husband’s involvement in harbouring Elsie, “it was thought best not to permit her to come, except on very short visits.”³³ Thus, this case shows that although it was clearly not an easy task to keep the women in the *Home*, the advisory committee used whatever tactics possible to have them returned or to prevent other escapes, including severing their ties to their communities and relying on police involvement or that of other officials to bring the fleeing women back into the fold.

In yet another case, a Japanese woman was placed in the *Home* by her husband “to remain [for] one year.”³⁴ For Japanese men, the *Home* offered a way to dispose of or discipline errant wives. While the records only show that she was placed in the *Home* by her husband for what was to be a one-year period, during which he would pay the *Home* for her board, it is likely that he placed her there due to his suspicions of infidelity. The woman, however, was able to use the *Home* as a means of escape. According to the *Home* register, the woman subsequently escaped three weeks later, from a window and with the help of a man who had “before twice decoyed her from her husband.”³⁵ It is clear that whatever the agendas of the women of the WMS, Japanese men and women had their own motives for using the *Home*. Dealing with these many motives meant that the women who ran the *Home* had to keep tight reins on those who stayed within its walls. This is evidenced by the lengths to which women needed to go in order to

³³ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” March, 1899, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

³⁴ “Record 72,” *Oriental Home Register and Biog. 1888-1908*, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 30.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

leave. Had this woman been permitted the freedom to come and go as she pleased, there would have been no need to escape through a window. Clearly, some women entered the *Home* out of choice and were likely aware of the rules that would be applied against their movements. But what these examples show is that women were *not* free to leave of their own accord, which raises important questions about voluntary admissions and the basis of consent.

There were other indications that suggested residence in the *Home* was not based on the consent of the women involved. For instance, in November 1898, the Advisory Committee passed a motion to “replace the fence and put two or three strands of barbed wire on the top to prevent the girls escaping.”³⁶ In January of the following year, it was reported to the Board that the fences were repaired, as were the doors and locks.³⁷ This emphasis on security and on preventing escape is suggestive of the carceral nature of the *Home*. It is also evidence that the women and girls who stayed there did not readily comply with the wishes of those who ran the *Home*. Moreover, the women who ran the *Home* were not above using coercive measures to either obtain or retain their residents. In May 1908, the Advisory committee was “called together to consider the receiving of [two young girls] into the *Home*. ... [The mother] came to the Chinese Home bringing with her the eldest and youngest daughters [aged fourteen and four] and asked permission to leave them saying she could manage the other two at home. She promised to

³⁶ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” November 1898, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

³⁷ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” January 1899, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

pay for their board if possible at the rate of \$50 each per year.”³⁸ It was only after the woman signed a paper agreeing that, should she be unable to pay the board, she would leave the girls to help in the *Home* for two years after they “had attained the age of 14,” that the Advisory Committee agreed to receive the two girls into the *Home*.³⁹ Here, the women did not consider the rights of the girls to consent to these measures. Instead, they imposed a possible two-year sentence of labour (help in the *Home*) upon them. Despite signing the contract, however, the woman came back one year later and removed her children from the *Home* without interference.

Clearly, the *Home* functioned on more than rescue alone. The assumptions that motivated this work were clearly evangelistic, but evangelistic motivations do not provide an explanation for why such extreme measures were often necessary to constrain the residents of the *Home*. Drawing from the work of Uday Mehta, Bashford and Strange (2003) posit that isolation and other exclusionary practices were motivated by the conflicting rationales of “[p]rotection, punishment, prevention, cure, correction, restoration, and purification” (6). Many of these rationales certainly underwrote the interventions that took place in the *Home*. Rescue work was designed to protect Chinese and Japanese women from the evils of prostitution and slavery. Further, it had the added benefit of also protecting vulnerable white populations. As Bashford and Strange (2003) contend, “forced isolation ... was implemented both to protect the confined and to provide *protection from* the confined” (6). Additionally, as one record book labelled “Bad

³⁸ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” May 1908, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

³⁹ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” May 1908, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

Women” suggests, the *Home* also had a distinctly punitive function which necessitated the distinction between vulnerable victims, reformable women, and ‘bad women.’ Further, *Home* registers show many women were admitted into the *Home* as a means to prevent them from falling into prostitution. For instance, one record states that the woman in question “came into the home to escape going to San Francisco into an immoral life.”⁴⁰

While these types of records may suggest that those who ran the *Home* acted to prevent immorality by participating in ‘confinement-as-prevention,’⁴¹ it may also suggest that many of the women and children were in fact put into the *Home* because they were viewed as potentially dangerous.⁴² What I am suggesting is that Japanese and Chinese women and children were viewed as posing a potential threat to the social fabric and therefore this danger or threat had to be stemmed. While it is true that some of the women and girls that were rescued were living as prostitutes or slaves, this was certainly not the case for all or even most of the residents. Given that Japanese and Chinese women and children came to the *Home* for many different reasons, only the commonality of racial difference has explanatory power for understanding the perceived threat that these women and children posed. Here, ideas of ‘Oriental’ excess or deviance marked Japanese and Chinese bodies off as potentially dangerous. Thus, even those women who came to learn English or domestic service skills were subjected to moral scrutiny.

⁴⁰ “Record 47,” *Oriental Home Record Book and Register, 1886–1929, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 21

⁴¹ For more on confinement as prevention, see Alison Bashford and Carolyn Strange, “Isolation and exclusion in the modern world: an introductory essay” in Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford eds. *Isolation: Places and Practices of Exclusion*, New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 7.

⁴² Bashford and Strange (2003) make clear that by “the twentieth century, an array of legally mandated exclusionary practices classified and contained not only the bad, the sick and the mad but those deemed racially inferior, the intellectually unfit and, importantly, the *potentially* dangerous” (3).

Some women came into the *Home* because of the threat of domestic violence, while a few Japanese women were placed in the *Home* by the Japanese Consul with only the explanation that they “needed the help and training of the *Home*.”⁴³ Others were placed in the *Home* by immigration until it could be determined if they were to be allowed to stay in the country. Usually they were released only after they were married in the *Home*, or deported back to Japan. Other women were accepted into the *Home* at the request of husbands or brothers, either for educational purposes or because of the danger of possible or perceived immorality. All of these women were seen as potentially dangerous, some by virtue of their ignorance, but most were viewed as sexual or moral threats. This threat was best addressed through domestic interventions, Christian conversion, or, in some instances, through legal marriage. Sometimes, however, training, conversion, and marriage were not deemed to be sufficient forms of regulation. According to the *Home*’s register, one woman was deported after being married in the *Home* because she was thought to be “living a doubtful life,”⁴⁴ likely, because it was suspected that she was sexually promiscuous or unfaithful to her husband.

Some children were also placed in the *Home* because of the danger that their mothers were thought to pose to them. For instance, several children were admitted by fathers under the rationale that the mother was ‘bad,’ thereby putting the children at risk to also become ‘bad.’ The assumption was that if left to their own devices, Chinese and Japanese women were potential

⁴³ “Record 42 and 43,” *Oriental Home Record Book and Register, 1886–1929, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 19.

⁴⁴ “Record 191,” *Oriental Home Record Book and Register, 1886–1929, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 67

(sexual) threats not only to themselves, but also to their children and to wider society.⁴⁵ In her study of the Chinese rescue mission in San Francisco, Pascoe (1990) found that mission workers ignored evidence that some Chinese women entered prostitution knowingly, preferring to believe they were “powerless victims of evil men” (53). However, the records of the *Chinese Rescue Home*, are more ambivalent than what Pascoe (1990) reports. While the ‘victim’ discourse was a common one, so too was that of the ‘bad woman.’ Descriptions of the ‘bad woman’ or ‘bad mother’ were evident both in lists kept of these types of women, but also in the descriptions of those who refused help or ran away. The links between proper domesticity and morality were evident in that ‘improper’ sexuality was often equated with the inability to properly mother.

The *Home*, in some ways, parallels the sanatoriums that Alison Bashford (2003) discusses in “Cultures of confinement: Tuberculosis, isolation and the sanatorium.” In the sanatorium, those confined were both infected patients and carriers—those who were infected and suffered from the ailment, but also those who showed no sign of disease. Like the sanatorium, the *Home* confined both the dangerous prostitute and the potentially dangerous women—the morally and sexually ‘fallen’ but also those who were deemed by courts, police, husbands, or immigration agents to be *at risk* of becoming prostitutes. This risk was not simply the risk that a prostitute posed to herself, but also the risk she posed to the wider community and the nation. Therefore, like tuberculosis, immorality was viewed as a disease. The danger of contagion, for instance a ‘bad’ or immoral mother, was enough of a risk to justify confinement or isolation of contagion.

⁴⁵ In the following Chapter, I discuss how prostitution was seen as a risk not only to the women who were viewed as victims of this trade, but also to white men as well.

Once in the *Home*, the women and children underwent treatment or inoculation against immorality, not through medical interventions, but through religious and domestic ones. The disease of immorality was associated with so-called ‘inferior races’ but was understood as treatable through the transformative powers of the Christian faith coupled with domestic training of the body.

As one of the *Home*’s journal entries explained, the residents were brought to church each Sunday and a “morning worship opened the school” each day.⁴⁶ Here, “correction, restoration and purification” (Bashford and Strange 2003, 6) were central goals of the matrons. Even the mentally ill were thought curable through the religious ministrations of those who ran the *Home*. In the minutes of December 1913, for instance, the advisory committee described what they called a “great case” in which “a girl ... had been brought down from Chilliwack suffering from some mental trouble, [and] we decided to keep her for a few months in order to do her good and reclaim her.”⁴⁷ Clearly, Christianity was deemed an antidote to the gendered and raced threats that Japanese and Chinese women were seen to pose. This spiritual antidote was paired with physical domestic training to further inoculate these women against future immoral behaviour.

Conclusion

In this chapter, my goal has been to provide the historical foundations for this dissertation, as well as to provide some organizational context for the *Home*. By providing a

⁴⁶ *Oriental Home Register and Biog. 1888–1908, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

⁴⁷ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, December, 1913, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

brief history of Japanese and Chinese immigration, I have highlighted the ways in which immigration policy provided the bedrock upon which the *Home* was built. Given the *Home's* location, I have also provided some of the historical and geographical context which dictated not only where the *Home* would stand, but who would build it and inhabit it. Geography alone does not sufficiently explain the power relations that took place in the *Home*. Thus, I have also provided a brief overview of the *Home's* objectives: how (and by whom) Japanese and Chinese women were admitted and how they were received once admitted. Having laid the historical and geographical foundation for this dissertation, Chapter Three interrogates the gendered, national, and global discourses of domesticity and delinquency that legitimized and grounded the work of the WMS. These discourses would eventually become the pillars upon which the *Home* would rely for strength and support.

Chapter Three: Pillars of Domesticity and the ‘Chinese Problem’

A free people will never be constituted or held together by any iron band. They must be held together by something that is powerful enough to assimilate and purify and elevate and unify all those discordant elements that may come within its range.

(Lemuel Moss, Baptist minister, cited in Chang 2004, 137)

In the opening chapter, I argued that discourses of domesticity and the domestic realm were enmeshed in the relations and the regulatory practices within the *Home*. In this chapter, I ask how and why the nation was invested in this work and question the underlying discourses that made it possible. I use the term ‘domestic’ in two ways. Drawing on two Royal Commissions, and a letter written by Reverend John Edward Starr, one of the founders of the *Home*, I first use the term to make connections between state concerns and religious ones. The chapter begins with a brief overview and analysis of the two Royal Commissions to highlight the perceived domestic delinquency of Chinese and Japanese men and women. Here, I use the term domestic to think about nation as a domestic space that is juxtaposed against the foreign bodies of Chinese and Japanese women. Both the *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* (1885) and the *Royal Commission to Investigate Chinese and Japanese Immigration into British Columbia* (1900) investigated concerns raised by white community members about Japanese and Chinese populations, the threat they were seen to pose to the (white) nation, as well as the growing hostility towards them. The *Report* on the 1885 commission was 731 pages and included testimony from many of Victoria’s clergy and missionaries. The report of the second commission was 430 pages and, like its predecessor, included transcripts of evidence taken during a two-and-a-half month inquiry. Although these commissions have received a great deal of scholarly attention (See Mawani 2009; Roy, 1989), they form the backdrop for my analysis and provide some crucial context to an intriguing proposition sent by Starr to Mrs. E.S. Strachan, president of the Woman’s Missionary Society (WMS).

Second, I use the term ‘domestic’ as a way of engaging with the letter that Starr wrote to the WMS. Here, Starr asked the society to take control over the *Chinese Rescue Home*. Throughout this letter, Starr highlights what I refer to as the ‘four pillars’ of the *Home*. These pillars were religion, nation, whiteness, and gender. These pillars provided strength and support for the *Home*. Starr’s elucidation of the goals of the *Home* provides entry into how the same discourses that were prevalent in the Royal Commissions also came to inform the moral regulation of racialized bodies. Within the *Home*, these pillars were tethered together by domesticity. Thus, I examine how those who ran the *Home* were keen to transform the lives of domestically delinquent Chinese and Japanese women through religious imperatives that would allow them to be assimilated into the ‘family of God,’ and in some cases, the nation itself. Gender played an important role in defining these goals and in prescribing who should carry them through. Although the *Home* had initially been the vision of two men, Reverend Starr and John Gardiner, it was crucial that women fulfilled the promise of this work. Thus, the women of the WMS were the ones who ultimately defined the ‘moral citizen’ and applied this definition in both an evaluative and a regulatory way upon Chinese and Japanese women’s bodies. Thus, the very subjects who were framed by the Royal Commissions as domestically delinquent were to be domesticated within the domestic realm of the home and the nation. Reading these three documents in tandem thus allows for connections to be drawn between global discourses, national imperatives, and local practices.

Domestic Delinquents

In *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (2008) contend that the “nineteenth century was the great age of global mobility” (23). They explain that “[a]lthough the freedom to ‘dwell in any country’ was ... a privilege increasingly reserved for whites, more than 50 million Chinese embarked for new lands in these decades, an equal number

of Europeans and about 30 million Indians” (23). In their ground-breaking book, Lake and Reynolds (2008) explore how ‘white men’s countries’ were created through the “transnational circulation of emotions and ideas, people and publications, racial knowledge, and technologies” (4). While their goal is to track this transnational circulation and movement of racial discourses, this chapter focuses on their sedimentations and settlings. The types of racial discourses that appeared in the *Royal Commissions*, for example, dealt with ‘foreign’ bodies, both within Canada and beyond it. The distinction between foreign bodies and domestic ones is important, as Lake and Reynolds (2008) remind us. ‘White men’s countries’ were created not only by barring ‘foreign’ bodies, but by *defining* them as foreign. Assimilability was a question of whether the foreign could be made domestic (23). In the two *Royal Commissions*, there was considerable disagreement on how to deal with foreign bodies. However, many agreed that Chinese and Japanese populations were inassimilable. Writing about Orientalist discourses, Edward Said (1978), explains that “texts can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality that they appear to describe” (94). The reality that racial knowledges produced or created was constructed in relation not only to national imaginaries but also global ones. The *Chinese Rescue Home* was built on and engaged with similar national and global questions of moral character to those found in the *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* and the *Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration*.

This section will examine how domestic compatibility was measured through national and global discourses of race. The first commission, the *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* (1885) drew extensively on discourses of ‘racial problems’ such as the ‘Chinese problem,’ which were transported from other national jurisdictions. The second, the *Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration* (1900) drew on similar discourses. However, there was considerable ambivalence as to whether Canada should allow continued immigration

from China and Japan. Two rationales underwrote support for their continued entry. First, it was argued that ‘foreign’ bodies should be allowed entry into Canada so that white missionaries could continue to enter ‘foreign’ lands. Second, ‘foreign’ bodies were deemed acceptable within domestic borders under certain conditions, none of which included assimilation into white society. Even those who supported Chinese and Japanese immigration to Canada did not support their assimilation, as evidenced by the two Royal Commissions discussed here.

Commissions of Inquiry have recently become an object of social, historical, and legal investigation. As Mawani (2009) argues, Royal Commissions were part of “legal-knowledge production and of juridical power” (26), identifying Chinese as internal and external enemies. Writing on the problem of Chinese prostitution, Mawani (2009) explains that, by 1914, “prostitution had been newly conceptualized as a racial threat that was both *internal* and *external* to the settler regime. ... The biopolitical concerns of the colonial state became increasingly fixated on the (foreign) yet internal enemies” (109, emphasis in original). Chinese prostitutes were framed as domestic insurgents and as domestically delinquent. The foreignness of these internal enemies was borne out in the approach adopted by the *Royal Commission* in 1885. Here, the ‘Chinese problem’ was framed as a national problem, one that Canada was forced to deal with, but one whose origins were to be found outside of the nation. In fact, although the first three considerations of the 1885 *Royal Commission* were concerned with social and trade relations in British Columbia, concerns that were of a global nature, the fourth and final consideration is illuminating as it related to “the moral considerations which arise out of the

residence and contact of the white people with Chinese here and *elsewhere*.”⁴⁸ These moral considerations, especially as they related to the ‘residence’ of Chinese, centered on their perceived assimilability. If they could not be assimilated, the Commissioners argued, the Chinese must be dealt with in such a way that would not obstruct the work of missionaries who travelled abroad. In the *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*, the Chinese were defined as both a national and global problem.

As the preface to the 1885 *Royal Commission* indicates, commissioners consulted with governments and witnesses from across the world. During “the enquiry at San Francisco in 1876, evidence was taken respecting the Chinese immigrant in all parts of the world from San Francisco to Melbourne; the subject literally surveyed ‘from China to Peru,’ and the Commission of the Canadian Commissioners called for all information attainable respecting it.”⁴⁹ This commission was quite clear that the ‘Chinese Problem’ was not solely a Canadian one, but one that spanned the globe. As Lake and Reynolds (2008) observe in their discussion of Chinese migration, “[n]ineteenth-century migration created new identities and new ways of being in the world. Opponents of Chinese migration forged a sense of transnational community, identifying white men under siege, men whose sovereign right of self-government was threatened, not just by the Chinese, but by distant metropolitan centres of power” (28). Given their presumed similarities, the ‘Chinese problem’ in the United States was to serve as a model and prescription for Canada, “for the present of California may prove the likeness of the future of British

⁴⁸ “Report on the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration report and evidence” Printed by order of the Commission, 1885.p. vii. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 1–2.

Columbia.”⁵⁰ The United States was, thus, a model that was often referenced in both *Royal Commissions*, as well as in missionary literature. The response of the US to Chinese immigration was seen both as a series of mistakes that needed to be avoided as well as a model to emulate. The distinction between a domestic problem and a foreign one was blurred for although Chinese were viewed as racial problems within Canada, they were also viewed as a problem that spanned the globe.

That Chinese bodies were problems even in China is evidenced by both the discussion of Chinese ‘character’ and by discourses that maintained that it was the duty of whites to improve the moral character of these problem subjects. The 1885 *Royal Commission* contained a large section which described in detail the “character of the Chinese in China.”⁵¹ Especially relevant here were discussions of Chinese women as victims of the tyrannical ‘Chinaman’. Here, the Commission argued that the ‘Chinese Problem’ was not a uniquely Canadian one, but was transplanted or imported. According to the Commission, “The position of women in China is deplorable; the oppression of the system of concubinage... is so great that affianced maidens have committed suicide to save themselves from marriage with its tyrannies and jealousies. ... They can be discarded; sold; and made the slaves of keepers of houses of prostitution.”⁵² Although it was in March 1887 that the plight of Chinese girls and women was first brought to the attention of the readers of *The Missionary Outlook*, a publication of the Methodist Church of

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. xi.

⁵¹ “Report on the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration report and evidence” Printed by order of the Commission, 1885.p. xxxix.

⁵² “Report on the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration report and evidence” Printed by order of the Commission, 1885.p. liii.

Canada, it is clear that the 1885 *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* had already anticipated that such a problem would eventually emerge. In fact, their report seemed to foreshadow the circumstances that led to the eventual publication of this story. The commissioners had warned the Canadian government that the “Chinese are the only people coming to the continent the great bulk of whose women are prostitutes (sic).”⁵³ According to the Royal Commission, the “evidence is that Chinese prostitutes are more shameless than white women who follow the same pursuit, as though the former had been educated for it from the cradle.”⁵⁴ The innate immorality of Chinese women was especially evident in *mothers*, who ensured even their children’s immorality. Focused on San Francisco, the Royal Commission framed Chinese prostitutes as threats to white populations both in terms of disease and their corruption of “little boys.”⁵⁵ Women were clearly a concern to the commission, not only because of their supposed immorality and domestic delinquency and their lack of conformity to white standards, but also because of the threats that they posed to the sexual propriety of white families and homes.

Although Chinese women’s bodies constituted a problem within the nation, a larger problem was believed to exist outside of the nation. The state was concerned with foreign bodies within the nation and with facilitating a more global moral suasion. The globality of the Chinese problem arose in a different context in the 1902 *Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration*. Discussing the ‘moral and religious aspects’ of immigration, the Commissioners

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

drew on testimony from a number of witnesses belonging to the Christian community, including ministers from the Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches in Vancouver and Victoria as well as from a teacher at the *Chinese Rescue Home*. The Commission found that “the ministers and clergy... with very few exceptions were opposed to further immigration of Chinese or Japanese labourers.”⁵⁶ Given that most of these men and the sole woman were interviewed precisely because of their long histories working with Chinese men and sometimes women, this was somewhat surprising.

What is most interesting, however, was not their rejection of would-be Chinese and Japanese immigrants, but the ways in which the discussion was framed around global issues of white mobility and dominance. Here, the concerns with borders were not limited to those who could be admitted, but also centered on the free movement of white bodies. Thus, the moral issue of refusing entry to Chinese or Japanese immigrants stemmed not from questions of racial exclusion, but from how missionaries could then justify their own excursions into China and/or Japan. After going on record to say that “as a matter of self-preservation some steps ought to be taken immediately to limit their coming or to prohibit them altogether,”⁵⁷ Rev. W. Leslie Clay, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria, was questioned by the Commissioners in the following way:

Q. Would not the whole race be much better off if the Chinese were left alone and kept within their own walls in China? – A. I do not see how we could keep them within their own walls and seek to enter within those walls ourselves. ...

⁵⁶ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration : session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 22.

⁵⁷ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration : session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 23.

Q. Would they not be justified in asking us to leave them alone when we exclude them? – A. I think they would.

Q. Would it be desirable in the interests of the white race to have the Chinese remain within their own walls and have no intercourse with the white people in any shape or form? – A. No, I do not think that would be desirable. I do not think we would be working for the best interests of the world at large in adopting that course.

Q. I should like to know how you can reconcile the one thing with the other; that is how you can expect to go into China unless in justice you should allow them to come into your country. – A. Certainly. I say we cannot stop them coming in when we wish to go into their country. I have suggested that the whole matter might be arranged by a treaty between the two Empires; that the number of labourers passing from one country to the other should be limited to a certain number in each year.⁵⁸

Here Clay's testimony illustrates that the issue of Chinese immigration was an issue that had to be considered not only in terms of domestic interests, but also global ones.

Clay's suggestion that limits be placed on immigration in *both* directions was framed as one of justice and fairness. However, this suggestion was also firmly entrenched in classed and raced assumptions. The Chinese labourers who were to enter Canada from China were clearly of a different sort than the white labourers who were proposed to enter China from Canada. In both cases, the Chinese were framed as a population in need; in the case of Chinese immigrants, this population was in need of moral and economic sustenance *in* the West, and in the case of Chinese nationals the need was for spiritual nourishment *from* the West. Thus, the policing of borders was tightly bound up with concerns regarding global racial dominance and white superiority, concerns which were also prevalent, although on a smaller scale, in the *Home*.

The testimony of Reverend Elliot Sproule Rowe, a Methodist minister in Victoria, who

⁵⁸ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration : session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 24.

advocated the prohibition of Chinese immigration, also focused on global concerns. When asked: “Do you think having regard to the same amount of labour expended that you are any more likely to get converts here than in China?” Rowe responded, “I think there is as much chance of converting the Chinese in China as there is for converting them in Victoria.”⁵⁹ Thus, if Chinese could be easily converted in China, there could be no reason to allow them entry into the country. Bishop Perrin of Victoria took a similarly global approach to the issue. While he did not advocate outright prohibition of Chinese immigration, he explained that he thought “the present immigration [was] ... not a desirable one for the country, because they are not the best representatives of the race.”⁶⁰ Here, the issue of immigration was framed not only as a racial problem, but a class one as well. However, he did contend that, “we have a distinct mission to go to China because our religion is the universal religion. If they are here we have a duty to perform. The majority of white people are higher in morality than the Chinese.”⁶¹ Equating whiteness and Christianity with morality served to set the Chinese population apart as immoral and in need of white intervention. As Joseph Henning (2000) has argued in his discussion of Japanese mission work, “the only alternative to Christian missions was perpetual heathenism. These beliefs gave purpose and power to the missionaries. They, and they alone, had been chosen; only they could convert and civilize the heathen” (Henning 2000, 40). Both Rowe and Bishop did not wish to lose contact between China and Canada, but contended that it was

⁵⁹ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration : session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 25.

⁶⁰ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration : session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 27.

⁶¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration : session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 26.

Canada who must breach the border between the two nations for the moral betterment of China.

Although this was an opinion that was shared by many clergy, for those who worked with Chinese in Canada, the global possibilities of home missions were, in fact, important considerations of their work. While it was clear that many of the clergy felt that they had a global obligation with regards to the conversion of non-Christian peoples, this global obligation did not prevent them from viewing Chinese immigration as a problem. Even Miss F. Kate Morgan, a teacher and evangelist in the *Chinese Rescue Home*, agreed. “I don’t think immigration unrestricted is advisable. It is not so to the Chinese, and I know it is bad for the country. From what I know of Oriental character, I think better Christian teachers can be made in China than here.”⁶² Again, recommendations to limit Chinese immigration were linked to something in the *character* of Chinese immigrants which dictated that they were better left in China. That Miss Morgan continued to work in the *Home*, however, suggests that Chinese *women* might have been viewed as more amenable to domestic interventions.

Reverend Canon Beanlands of Victoria, although he did not oppose immigration, had a similar view. However, while he believed that more success might be found in converting Chinese populations in China, he did not oppose their coming to Canada, and in fact advocated a very distinct type of immigration. Like Miss Morgan, he was also concerned with the domestic realm. When asked if it was “in the interests of a country to have an immigration of her people here who will not assimilate”, Rev. Beanlands replied that it was, as he “should always like to see them as a servile class.”

⁶² Ibid. p. 38

Q. From which you could draw help? – A. Yes.

Q. No intention of elevating? – A. I do not see it is our business in the least.

Unlike Perrin and Rowe who saw it as a Christian duty to elevate the Chinese, at least in terms of their religious training, Beanlands was less concerned with this aspiration. But, when asked if he thought this servile class could go to heaven, Beanlands magnanimously replied “Oh, yes; we have no class distinction there.”⁶³

That Chinese should be allowed in heaven clearly did not mean that they should be allowed full citizenship within Christian nations. These discussions were more than discursive interventions into how Chinese and Japanese populations were to be understood, but would eventually become part of the larger project which tested these claims upon their bodies. This larger project included limiting immigration in the case of Japanese immigrants and head taxes and outright prohibition in the case of Chinese (Miki 2004; Roy 1989; Ward 1990). It was not only the state who was implicated in these projects. As Taylor (2010) contends, the “state, though not the only agent of moral geography ... sets the stage and the terms for competing or complementary actors” (307). The roles of the state, especially as they took the form of Royal Commissions, were crucial in shaping how the those who ran the *Home* and others outside of it worked as agents who contributed to the shaping of moral geographies.

Pillars of Domesticity

The first Royal Commission discussed here took place just two years before Reverend John Edward Starr wrote his September 1887 letter to the Woman’s Missionary Society (WMS)

⁶³ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration: session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 29.

requesting their help. Although the letter was signed by Starr, there was very little in the document that spoke directly to and of the author himself. Other sources, however, indicate that he was a Methodist minister, was married, had contributed financially to the *Home*, and had helped in the rescue of at least one girl who resided there by the time this document was written. His involvement in the founding of the *Home* was only the beginning of his advocacy work on behalf of children. According to Hogeveen (2007), Starr was appointed as the first commissioner of Toronto's juvenile court in 1911. He describes Starr as "a large bodied man with a sympathetic heart who was a friend to all who knew him. Given the court's mandate and the novel principles of social welfare inspired justice embedded in the JDA [Juvenile Delinquents Act], it is fitting that a minister would be appointed judge" (613). Although Starr would eventually become a representative of the state, prior to assuming this role he was "the pastor of the Berkeley Street Methodist Church. He had been interested in children's work for most of his life. In addition to his pioneering efforts with organizing Toronto's Children's Aid Society, Starr was actively involved with the YMCA" (Hogeveen, 2007, 613).

Intertwined throughout both Royal Commissions were discourses of religion, nationhood, and whiteness. Gender was also central to the discussion. These discourses became the pillars which shored up, strengthened and supported the *Home*. Although based on similar ideologies as those demonstrated in the Royal Commissions, in the *Home*, these discourses were tied together explicitly by a common element: domesticity. In the Royal Commission's discussion of immigration, the nation was juxtaposed against the foreign threat, the 'Chinese Problem.' The nation was also one of Starr's concerns, but for Starr, the juxtaposition of foreign and domestic could be bridged through processes of domestication. This domestication took whiteness as its model. Thus, although the Royal Commissions privileged whiteness as a basis for exclusion, the same privileging of whiteness in the *Home* became the standard for *inclusion*. In order for

Chinese, and later Japanese, women to embody whiteness, a (racial) transformation needed to first take place through religious conversion. Certainly, religious considerations were of paramount importance during the Royal Commissions, discussion revolving around the opening of borders to support evangelistic endeavours. Within the *Home*, Christian evangelism was also seen as a fundamental imperative, but this was an imperative which would begin within Canadian borders and which, at the same time, would challenge them. While many of those who were interviewed during the Royal Commissions did not view Chinese and Japanese as compatible with the nation, Starr believed that Chinese and Japanese *women* could be transformed through religious conversion. Thus, gender was an important consideration in the success of the *Home*. If Japanese and Chinese were viewed by the Royal Commissions as incompatible with the domestic, the *Home* had the corrective. Domestication was tied to gendered ideologies of proper domesticity which were instrumental in creating domestic citizens and thus, women were instrumental in this process. In what follows, I will provide examples from Starr's letter and the *Home's* records to draw connections between these pillars of domesticity and what often seemed like contrary discourses in the Royal Commissions.

The National Pillar of Domesticity

Just as the origins of the 'Chinese problem' became fodder for public debate, so too did potential remedies. While many, including a missionary who worked in the *Home*, called for the expulsion of Chinese prostitutes from the nation, others were committed to overseeing their redemption and transformation within the nation. As in the Royal Commissions, the nation was a theme that took on primary importance in defining the *Home*. Starr's report highlighted two important assumptions that underpinned the founding and the maintenance of the *Chinese Rescue Home*. First, by locating the 'Chinese Problem' outside of the nation, his letter signalled the foreignness of this mission, despite its location in Victoria. Second, the letter suggested that

possible solutions to the Chinese problem included expulsion and/or transformation and domestication through the powers of God. The *Home* was posited as a site of transformation, not only to save the souls of this ‘heathen’ population, but also to domesticate their minds and bodies. These religious interventions would guarantee at least partial entry into the nation, for once domesticated, Chinese and Japanese women could presumably find spaces of belonging within the nation. The goals of the *Home* can provide insight into what it meant to be properly domestic, as the *Chinese Rescue Home* was seen as one solution to the problem of foreign bodies.

Unlike some ‘home missions’ which were directed at white women or white communities (such as missions directed at the French or missions for ‘delinquent’ women), the *Chinese Rescue Home* addressed questions of foreignness. This particular mission work offered the women of the WMS an opportunity for cultural ‘travel’ and an engagement with Otherness without ever leaving home. Although the Chinese problem was conceived as a global one, the women of the WMS were afforded opportunities to deal with ‘foreigners’ within their own communities. The significance of foreignness was evident, for instance, in early reports of the WMS which initially included local work with Japanese and Chinese populations under the headings of “The Chinese Work” and “The Japanese Work”—headings which were previously reserved for work in Japan and China. It was not until 1902 that the reports listed this work under the heading “Chinese Work, British Columbia”.⁶⁴ Often mission work undertaken with

⁶⁴ “Twenty Second Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of The Methodist Church, Canada (1902-1903)”, Toronto: William Briggs, Methodist Book and Publishing House in the United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

Chinese and Japanese populations was sandwiched between ‘foreign’ work and ‘Home missions,’ which also included French and ‘Indian’ (First Nations) populations. Given that the *Home* was located in Victoria, missionaries did not constitute it as ‘foreign.’ Yet, they did not initially view the *Home* as a home mission, as its focus was directed at a ‘foreign’ population. In other words, the *Home* occupied another ambivalent space between the national and the domestic.

Starr’s letter also provided ample evidence that Chinese women who were housed there were viewed as inherently ‘foreign.’ Unlike the Royal Commissions, however, he expressed some ambivalence as to their perceived inassimilability. In the *Home*, discourses of the ‘domestic,’ as both home and nation and as opposed to the foreign were intertwined. In her discussion of antebellum America, Amy Kaplan (1998) makes the argument that “the *domestic* has a double meaning that not only links the familial household to the nation but also imagines both in opposition to everything outside the geographic and conceptual border of the home” (581, emphasis in original). Here, Kaplan (1998) contends that the domestic, in both senses of the word, was defined against foreignness, in particular against “racial demarcations of otherness” (582). However, the *Home* was a much more ambivalent domestic space. While the *Home* defined itself in opposition to foreignness, it also housed the very foreignness that it defined itself in opposition to. In order to address this contradiction, Chinese and Japanese women were required to undergo processes of ‘domestication,’ which were deemed possible only through the transformative powers of God.

Domestication, according to Kaplan (1998) “is related to the imperial project of civilizing, and the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery” (582). Kaplan argues that in addition to demarcating the foreign from the domestic, the home also “contains within itself those wild and foreign elements that must be

tamed” (582). Civilizing the ‘savage’ and making the foreign body into a domestic one meant engaging processes of assimilation. While many argued that Chinese and Japanese were not assimilable, once in the domestic realm these processes of assimilation had to be engaged. In some cases, the success or failure of these processes was used to determine whether Chinese and Japanese women would be allowed to stay in Canada. Their suitability was determined, not by Canada’s willingness to accommodate *foreign* bodies, but through assessments of whether these bodies could successfully be transformed into domestic subjects. Japanese and Chinese women in the *Home* were evaluated on their domestic (national) compatibility through assessments of their willingness to embody familial domesticity. Successful transformations did not guarantee that the women could, or even should, stay within the nation’s borders, however.

An important goal of the *Home*, according to Starr, was to “train and educate such of these girls as evince an aptitude for the work to become Bible Women among the Chinese Women either here or in China.”⁶⁵ Here, Starr focused on the important role that Chinese ‘Bible Women’ might hold both in their home communities and in China. The journey from prostitute to Christian missionary, in this case, was not a journey toward domestic citizenship. It was clear that these new Christian missionaries would take a circuitous and global journey which would return them to their communities in China and Japan, albeit in new form. There was no question of them evangelizing in white communities. Despite their transformation, Chinese women could only evangelize in ‘foreign’ (as measured against whiteness) fields. While the ability to perform missionary work was evidence that the transformation of the Chinese prostitute was complete,

⁶⁵ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

Chinese women could never aspire to the moral authority afforded to white women within the nation. The initial transformation of the Chinese prostitute or slave girl was only possible through the interventions of white men and women, including Starr and the WMS. The suggestion that Chinese and Japanese women could now be trusted to take on this important evangelical work (albeit in a limited way) was clear evidence of their acceptance into the ‘sisterhood’ of God, if not always into the nation.

Invisibility of Race: Whiteness as the Second Pillar

The privileging of whiteness was evident not only in the Royal Commissions, but in the segregation of Victoria as well. That the *Home*, which openly promoted cross-racial contact, was able to exist in such a racially and economically divided Victoria was not due to a weakening of white privilege, but was, rather, a direct result of it. Certainly, the *Home* was a site where the everyday regulations of race were suspended, at least partially. But, cross-racial contact was only tolerated so that Chinese and Japanese women could be remade into the white image. Therefore, the work of the *Home* demanded an understanding of the malleability of race.

Although prostitution and slavery were framed as gendered and racial problems associated with Chinese women and with their domestic delinquency, in the documents and reports of the *Home* race rarely appeared in obvious or straightforward ways. While it could be argued that the actions of the WMS originated in racist beliefs about Chinese and Japanese populations as inferior and in need of saving, direct and explicit references to race were uncommon. Very rarely were Chinese and Japanese women explicitly described as *racially* inferior to whites. Yet the absence of these discourses did not mean that race was absent from the work that female missionaries did in the *Home*. While in the Royal Commissions, race was seen as an immutable category and thus justified claims that Chinese and Japanese populations were

foreign and incapable of assimilation, the work of the WMS was concerned primarily with their domestication and inclusion in the ‘family of God.’ One tactic to deal with this incommensurability was to claim that race did not matter in God’s family. At the same time, religious missions arose out of beliefs in the cultural and religious inferiority of other ‘races.’ Therefore, the work of missionaries was shot through with fundamental tensions that appeared as they sought to subvert, transform, *and* reify race.

Writing of the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS), Derek Chang (2004) argues that “Even as movements toward segregation, disfranchisement, and exclusion called on a somatic, or biological definition of race to demarcate the boundaries of citizenship, ... the ABHMS articulated an alternative vision of the nation in which Christianity stood as the primary standard for inclusion” (134-135). Inclusion, however, did not mean an outright dismissal of discourses of difference. As Chang explains:

Although missionaries rejected the growing movement toward restriction and exclusion, they often found themselves caught in a process that required the delineation of social and religious hierarchies. Conversion was predicated on the ‘inevitably pejorative nature of missionary constructions of heathenism’ at the core of evangelical calls for social and religious uplift and transformation. The emphasis on *difference* threatened ultimately to undermine missionaries’ more egalitarian aims (135).

Although the focus shifted away from discourses of race, home missionary discourse on racial questions focused around changeable social or cultural factors (138). Thus, biological racial discourses were seldom or overtly employed. Yet differences from whiteness demanded a transformation in order to be resolved, so missionary work continued to reinforce racial difference (141), with biological understandings of race manifesting as a focus on cultural behaviours (see also Stoler 2002).

If *cultural behaviours* could be transformed or reformed, then racial inferiority, while it

would not and perhaps could not be fully erased, could at least be somewhat ameliorated. Cultural differences, as racial differences, were mobilized to mark the inferiority of Chinese and Japanese women. For Chang (2004), who draws on the work of Ann Laura Stoler (1992), “[c]ultural attributions—provide the observable conduits, the indexes of psychological propensities and moral susceptibilities seen to shape which individuals are suitable for inclusion in the national community” (139). While the term ‘cultural difference’ did not appear verbatim in the documents I studied, it was clear that missionaries preferred this *type* of distinction that focused on ‘culture and environment’ to distinctions of biological racial difference. For instance, Reverend Alexander Brown Winchester, in his testimony to the Royal Commission, explained that making comparisons between Chinese and whites was difficult to do, because any differences were due to different moral standards and to the conditions under which they were expected to survive in British Columbia, especially the “isolation and social ostracism”⁶⁶ that they faced. Further, he explained that the superiority of Chinese immigrants in Toronto to those on the West Coast was due largely to their better treatment by white society.⁶⁷ In other words, moral superiority was, for him, determined environmentally. It was, however, largely measured against white, western standards.

That white women were chosen as the racial model to emulate was an assumption of unquestioned and Eurocentric privilege (see Pascoe 1990; Singh 2000). Even when Chinese or

⁶⁶ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration: session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 36.

⁶⁷ Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration: session 1902. Ottawa : Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902. p. 37.

Japanese women went on to careers as missionaries, this was seen as simply a continuation of the original work that white men and women oversaw. Japanese and Chinese women, thus, were characterized as a new generation of missionaries. In this way, the work of white women might be seen as simply an extension of their reproductive labour; here they produced a new generation, not of white children, but of Christ's children. It was their whiteness that guaranteed their fitness to be the mothers of the nation. It was this whiteness which was to be the model to emulate within the *Home*.

Even in its earliest incarnation, transformations were already evident within the *Home*. The changes in the residents were initially described as physical transformations. Dressing the girls in European clothing was one of Starr's earliest suggestions to the WMS. According to Starr, the women's clothing had been exchanged for donated 'European' clothes. Their physical masquerade, then, as white women was the first step in their moral and cultural domestication. The girls in the *San Francisco Chinese Rescue Home*, he reported, were not dressed in European clothes. Starr insisted that not only did the girls in the *Home* prefer these clothes, but it was also cheaper and had the added benefit of producing invisibility and disguise. Thus, for Starr, race seemed to be easily transformed through the adoption of western clothing. When Mr. Gardner "took them the other day thro (sic) The City for a row on 'Th Arm' ... their own people did not recognize them in their European clothes," he wrote.⁶⁸ Thus, the goal of physical transformation had two important effects. First, the transformation of these women moved them closer to white

⁶⁸ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

domesticity through their emulation of it, and secondly, it had the effect of severing them from their former selves and their former lives. If they could no longer be recognized, they could not easily return to the ‘foreignness’ of the Chinese community. Western clothing became a tool of domestication, marking the boundaries not only between the foreign and domestic, but, as will be argued in the next chapter, between the domain of female domesticity and the predominantly male public realm.

The privileging of whiteness was also apparent in another way. The first goal of the *Home* that Starr revealed in his letter was concerned with how the *Home* would protect the white community from the corrupt influences of Chinese men. This goal was to strike at the economic system which supported slavery and prostitution and was aimed at bankrupting the procurers (or procuresses) and Highbinders⁶⁹ who subjected these girls to such conditions. This was accomplished by removing the source of their income, their slaves and their prostitutes. Starr explained that the “[c]ash value of the girls we have now in the home to their procurers, is over \$10,000.00.”⁷⁰ ‘Rescuing’ the girls did not only reduce the cash flow that procurers made through the prostitution of these girls, but also depleted their inventory. Starr’s initial focus on the effects as they were felt outside of the *Home* was an indication that the most important goal of the *Home* was to rid white Victoria of the racial threat that Chinese posed. That Chinese women might be transformed into national citizens was a by-product of this process.

⁶⁹ This allegedly criminal organization, according to the 1885 *Royal Commission*, was particularly sinister, as it “would be disposed to aid the law, protects the keepers of brothels, and undertakes, it is said, for money, assassinations” (Report on the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration report and evidence” Printed by order of the Commission, 1885. p. lxxxii).

⁷⁰ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

Global Transformations: Christianity as the Third Pillar

While the privileging of whiteness was the grounds for racial transformation, Christianity was the tool for ensuring the success of such a transformation. With the second goal Starr shifted his attention away from economic matters and directed it instead to religious ones. Here, he focused on the transformations that had already taken place in the Chinese women and girls in the *Home*. According to Starr, “In their habits they are clean—in their tastes even refined and quick to learn alike household duties and the English language” and their gratitude “is enough to wring tears from a stone.”⁷¹ Although their movement to the *Home* was crucial for this process to begin, the changes were brought about not through a change in geography, but through religion and, as Starr’s focus on ‘household duties’ suggests, through domestic training as well. Here, it was Christian love that was believed to hold the potential for change, while training solidified it. The Chinese, and later Japanese, were seen by missionaries as assimilable only through Christian faith. Only once Japanese and Chinese women had embraced Christianity could they enter into the ‘family of God’ and become part of the nation as domestic citizens.

Religious language of brotherhood (and sisterhood)⁷² was prevalent throughout Starr’s letter. On the third page, Starr referred to the rescued girls as “Christ’s sisters and mine”, the following page he referred to them as “our Almondeyed (sic) sisters”, and in the final paragraph, he appealed to the WMS in the following way: “The god who is Your father and the father also of your yelloskinned (sic) sisters guide you in your deliberations upon this new pressing work,

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² These familial metaphors will be taken up more fully in the next chapter.

stimulate your faith and nerve you to sturdier efforts and grander endeavors on behalf of Heathen Womandom.”⁷³ Although two of these three instances referenced race in describing their new ‘sisters’, it was clear that once in the *Home*, the transformation of these Chinese women and girls from ‘heathen’ to ‘sister’ meant a religious transformation from foreign to domestic.

It was only through religious conversion that the racialized body could become transformable, controllable, and easily subjected to moral regulation. Without moral regulation, there would be no way for these women to enter into the family of God or the nation. While the change that was to take place was a spiritual one, the physical transformation was important, as changes to the body meant that the body was then more amenable to its place in the ‘family of God.’ True sisterhood was only possible once both physical training and spiritual conversion were complete. Much like a pet is ‘domesticated’ into the family home through physical training, the *foreign* body here, was made *domestic* through physical, religious, and spiritual training. As one might expect, the second goal of the *Home* was to Christianize and convert the girls who were rescued. This goal highlighted an important and sometimes contentious issue, and that was the issue of consent and free will. Central to the transformation was the girls’ *desire* to be converted. According to Starr’s letter, “they are all anxious to hear about Jesus.”⁷⁴ Christian conversion and Godly transformation, then, had to be desired by the subject and was not something that could be imposed. With their desire assured, the field had been readied and now the transformation was simply a matter of the planting the seeds.

⁷³ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

⁷⁴ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

The Christian metaphor of sowing seeds, which would later bear the fruits of one's labour, was a common one. In the 1923–1924 report, for instance, the *Home* matron referred to the *Home* as “part of the Master's vineyard.”⁷⁵ This metaphor also appeared in the minutes of both the WMS in Vancouver and in Victoria. In the context of a domestic and familial space, this metaphor took on distinctly sexual undertones, as women planted the (male) seed of Christianity into the passive and receptive (female) bodies of Japanese and Chinese women. The WMS vigilantly watched for signs that their ‘seeds’ had borne fruit. The seed here, of course, was Christianity, the soil the mission field generally and Japanese and Chinese bodies in particular, and the fruit, new Christian subjects. Further, the planting of seeds was seen as only the beginning of a process, whereby the eventual fruits of their labour would themselves plant seeds which would in turn bear fruit. In this way, the work of the *Home* became, in a sense, global. The seeds that they planted were expected to bear fruit and reseed not only the Chinese and Japanese communities in Victoria and British Columbia, but also in China and Japan.

Another poignant example of the harvest metaphor was found in an obituary published in 1898, a clipping of which was found in the *Home Register, 1888–1908*. The clipping began with the following: “There is always something especially interesting in the first flowers, first-fruits of any season. But when the Master walks in his garden, and selects from among those he has given us to tend, how our hearts thrill and our heads bow in worship and wonder! Christ has

⁷⁵ *Forty Third Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1923–1924*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p.cxx.

chosen Daisy from among the ‘Chinese girls’ in Victoria”⁷⁶ Here, the mission field was represented as a garden which white women had been chosen to tend, and the young woman, Daisy and the other Chinese girls, as the fruits (or flowers) of their labour. Thus, even the name ‘Daisy’ which had been given to the girl by an agent of the *Home* was significant. This language was an indication that white women considered themselves to be authorized by God to tend to and cultivate these Chinese ‘girls.’

Once the seeds of Christianity were planted, evaluation would become one of the goals of the *Home*. As alluded to earlier, this evaluation was, in many instances, legitimized and required by the state, especially where the state had been instrumental in the placement of Japanese and Chinese women in the *Home*. Here, candidacy for citizenship (social, if not legal) was measured through two of the ‘sacred performances’ of religion which were of great concern to the women of the WMS. These included baptism and Christian marriage. Baptism, perhaps one of the most prominent symbolic metaphors of transformation in the Christian religions, was clearly a marker of success for the WMS. For believers, baptism signalled the washing away of sin, and the clean (and pure) body which arose (symbolically, if not literally) from the water. As applied to Chinese and Japanese women, this symbolic cleansing may have had even greater nationalistic implications as it was a marker of Christian brotherhood (or sisterhood) in the family of God. It was, therefore, a washing away of colour (and race) in an attempt to unite all believers into this colourless (white) family. That baptism was one of only seven categories used to identify

⁷⁶ “Daisy” in the *Oriental Home Register and Biog. 1888–1908*, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

residents and track their progress shows its importance to those who ran the *Home*. However, of all of the categories which were used to track the progress of the residents though their stays in the *Home*, baptism was perhaps the least used column. In the first fifteen years of the *Chinese Rescue Home* (1886–1911), only 15 of the 156 residents who stayed in the *Home* were baptized. The rejection of baptism by Japanese and Chinese women suggests that while in the *Home*, Japanese and Chinese women were not simply passive subjects. These women made significant choices, perhaps chief among them their rejection of baptism, despite its importance to Christianity and to the women who ran the *Home*.

Although the number of baptisms was relatively few, when they did occur, baptisms were celebrated as markers of success and were used to justify increases in funding to missions and missionaries themselves.⁷⁷ After two baptisms were reported in Vancouver, for instance, the advisory board for the *Home* recommended a grant be given for a “native worker” in this area.⁷⁸ The Vancouver WMS group also focused on baptisms as markers of success. Again referencing the seed sowing metaphor, one report stated that the “first fruits are being gathered at Steveston and Sap [Sapperton], a woman having been baptized at each place.”⁷⁹ Baptism, thus, signalled the maturation of the Other into the brother/sisterhood of Christ.

Baptism and Christian marriage as markers of success were also a form of mimicry.

⁷⁷ *Oriental Home Register, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

⁷⁸ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee,” December, 1903, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁹ “Minutes from the Advisory Committee of Japanese (Oriental) Missions,” January, 1913, *Methodist Church BC Conference fonds, 1908–1923*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

According to Bhabha (1994), “in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (122). Baptism marked the Other as “almost the same, but not quite” at the same time that it marked the triumph and superiority of whiteness. Japanese and Chinese converts could, as Bhabha (1994) suggests in another context, repeat the rituals of Christian baptism and marriage, but they could not represent them (125-126). Domestication was always a partial project. Chinese and Japanese women might learn English and ‘English ways’ but never *be* English, nor could they be considered fully Canadian even if they were allowed to enter or remain within the nation’s borders.

Despite that Chinese and Japanese girls and women could never achieve nor embody true whiteness, success of mission work was measured through the degree to which these women could and did mimic not only Christian beliefs and what Asad calls “the sacred performance” of religion (Asad 1993, 53), but also the degree to which they could attain the trappings of ‘Canadian’ (read white) domesticity and citizenship. Thus, religious conversion continued to be the primary concern of those who ran the *Home*. Of those who were raised in the *Home*, some went on to become missionaries in their own right, and it was often reported that young children who attended the kindergartens in Vancouver and the school at the *Home* influenced their parents’ beliefs. In Vancouver, for instance it was reported that “good work had been accomplished, perceptible in one way by the interest taken by the Chinese Mothers where formerly they seemed entirely indifferent.”⁸⁰ In Victoria, “some of the parents are ready to

⁸⁰ “Minutes from the Advisory Committee of Japanese (Oriental) Missions,” July 1918, *Methodist Church BC Conference fonds*, 1908–1923, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

acknowledge the Christ's love, as seen in their little ones"⁸¹ Not only were children fertile grounds for the seeds of Christianity, they were a way to gain access to parents, and mothers in particular.

Norman Knowles (1995) documents a similar situation in his discussion of Japanese missions. He explains that the "superintendent of Japanese missions, Rev. F.W. Cassillis-Kennedy, viewed the arrival of women and the creation of family units as an ideal opportunity for evangelization" (64). The superintendent was cited as saying that the children "will in ten years time be the parents of the new generation and if the Canadian church does her duty by the oriental [sic] children entrusted in her care now, the future generation will have a strong leaven of Christianity. Through the children the present day mothers and fathers can be influenced and some of them Christianized" (in Knowles 1995, 64). Here, the family unit was seen as a key site of intervention for the *Canadian* church to access and shape new domestic citizens. The Canadian church was feminized as it intervened into the familial and the domestic realm in order to reach these children who might potentially influence not only their parents, but were also expected to sow the (biological) seeds for a whole new generation of Christian Canadians. The metaphor of seed planting can be understood as an ultimate transformation—that of barren soil to growing and reproducing fruit or trees. The transformation, thus, was not only about the overcoming of a congenital deviance, but extended to the giving of life itself.

⁸¹ "Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee," August 1914, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

Pillars of the Community: Women and Domesticity

While missionaries routinely engaged in seed planting metaphors, this type of metaphor took on particularly gendered meanings in relation to women. The planting of seeds was reproductive work which was to be tied to the domestic realm. Given that this work was concerned with Chinese and Japanese *women*, domestic spaces were integral to these endeavours, as were the white women who would reign over them. The late nineteenth century, as well as the early twentieth century marked a time where clear gendered lines were drawn in public space. Especially in urban environments, men occupied the public sphere and women were restricted to the private sphere for much of their adult lives. As Barbara Riley (1992) has argued, the idea of a ‘domestic science’ was introduced or considered as early as 1900 as a way to ensure not only that women remained in the home, but that they took seriously their role there. Thus, clearly the state had an investment in policing the boundaries of the home, as well as what was acceptable behaviour within it. For many women, the only years in which they were able to work outside of the home were the years between finishing their formal education and before marriage. Acceptable careers for these women were often limited to teaching, nursing, and other ‘caring’ professions. Thus, becoming a missionary was, for some women, an opportunity for travel and to acquire independence that they might not have experienced otherwise. The Methodist Woman’s Missionary Society (WMS) provided this opportunity for some.

The intention to form a missionary society for women was made public in the periodical

The Missionary Outlook in January 1881.⁸² The Methodist women made clear their intentions both here, and later in the WMS constitution, to bow to the authority of the male-dominated Missionary Society and to “raise funds in such a way as will not lessen the General Income. Conflict of authority would be disastrous.”⁸³ Therefore, it was suggested that “any Branch Society ... devote its funds to the support of some existing interest” and only when “the Branches become sufficiently numerous to warrant the organization of a General Society, the objects of such Society can be widened and the funds be more completely at its own disposal.”⁸⁴ Only after the women could prove themselves through grassroots organization were they to be permitted to formalize their own organization. That the Methodist women in Canada were anxious to gain this autonomy was clear. In April of the same year, the “Woman’s Work” section of *The Missionary Outlook* contained the following missive:

We are waiting, as patiently as we can; for tidings that Women’s Branch Societies have been established in many of our Circuits. What are the women of our churches doing in this matter? Almost every denomination in the United States has its Woman’s Missionary Society. The Baptists and Presbyterians in Canada are following suit, and the Methodists are lagging behind. We utter no needless warning when we say that unless the Methodist Church bestirs herself, her pre-eminence in missionary zeal and liberality will soon be a thing of the past. Other denominations will outstrip us in the race.⁸⁵

This call to action highlights not only the women’s anxiousness to gain autonomy and formal

⁸² This intention arose out of a proposal which was introduced at the General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1878. See “The Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada” in *The Missionary Outlook*, Vol. I., No. 5. May, 1881, p. 13.

⁸³ Sutherland, A., “A Woman’s Missionary Society” in *The Missionary Outlook*, Vol. I., No. 1. January, 1881, p. 3.

⁸⁴ Sutherland, A., “A Woman’s Missionary Society” in *The Missionary Outlook*, Vol. I., No. 1. January, 1881, p. 3–4.

⁸⁵ “Woman’s Work” in *The Missionary Outlook*, Vol. I., No. 4. April, 1881, p. 10.

recognition, but also to establish supremacy denominationally. Thus, the missionary ‘race’ provided women with an outlet, not only to fulfil their desire for autonomy, but to participate in this global race for souls.

Only one month later, the waiting was over. Although their grassroots organizing was not initially successful, the women were not willing to abandon their desire for a Woman’s Missionary Society. The Methodist women, therefore, resolved that “*Whereas*, experiment has proved that Branch Societies are not likely to be formed to any large extent, until there is a General Society through which they can operate directly in the Mission-field; ... That immediate steps be taken to organize an Association to be known as The Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada.”⁸⁶ Despite hopes that Branch Societies would, for some time, fall under the purview of the larger Missionary Society, the WMS was formed to “employ suitable female labourers for Mission work as occasion may require; apportion the funds of the Society for the support of its agents.”⁸⁷ Power was not absolute, however, as Article VI of the provisional constitution provided that the “Society shall work in harmony with the authorities of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada and be subject to their approval in the employment and remuneration of Missionaries or other Agents, the designation of fields of labor, and in the general plans and designs of the work.”⁸⁸ The WMS, their decisions and their finances, would fall under the purview of the male dominated Missionary Society. The gender

⁸⁶ “The Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada” in *The Missionary Outlook*, Vol. I., No. 5. May, 1881, p. 54.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

segregation of missionary societies would also influence the types of work that could be accomplished by each group.

The goals of the WMS, according to its constitution, were to “engage the efforts of Christian women in the evangelization of heathen women and children; to aid in sustaining female missionaries and teachers, or other special laborers in connection with mission work, in foreign and home fields; and to raise funds for the work of the Society.”⁸⁹ Further, separate auxiliaries were to be formed with the same goals, with all money sent directly into the coffers of the General Society. Women’s Missionary Societies, according to Henning (2000), “counted more members than any other mission-movement and were among the largest reform organizations of the nineteenth century” (48). In the United States the “Methodist Episcopal Church alone counted 50,817 auxiliary members in 1878 and 123,488 in 1894” (49). Likewise, in Canada, the Woman’s Missionary Society (WMS) would soon have an active membership, and like their American sisters, Canadian women would find in these organizations “important new professional opportunities. In mission boards and auxiliaries, women drafted constitutions, elected officers, raised funds and published magazines”(48). While many women were content to participate in auxiliary work at the local level, raising funds through membership drives or fundraisers, writing to and receiving letters from missionaries overseas, or putting together gift hampers for various home missions, others took more active roles in the women’s branch of the General Society. This sometimes afforded them opportunities for extensive travel to oversee

⁸⁹ Constitution from the Eighth Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1888–89, Toronto: William Briggs, p. 165.

home mission work across Canada and report to the board. Others still took on the role of missionary, travelling extensively to foreign fields with the goal of evangelizing the ‘heathen races.’

But foreign missionary work was not a career that was accessible to all. Potential candidates were required to meet several stringent requirements. According to the constitution of the WMS, a missionary candidate had to meet seven criteria. First, she had to believe herself to be called by God into foreign mission work. Second, her ability to work as a missionary in a foreign field had to be demonstrated through her “Christian usefulness at *home*” (emphasis mine).⁹⁰ Third, she was required to “declare her intention to make foreign missionary work the service of her *effective years*, and agree to give at least five of these years of continuous service, as a *single woman*, to the work of the Woman’s Missionary Society, unless prevented by ill health” (emphasis mine).⁹¹ She was also required to provide references regarding her scholarship and it was preferred that she have experience in either medicine or teaching. Age requirements required candidates to be between twenty-two and thirty years of age, although “intellectual training, with facility in acquiring languages, a remarkable ability for Christian work, may be considered as a sufficient deviation from this rule.”⁹² The sixth requirement was that candidates should show “financial and executive ability and power of adaptation to circumstances” and

⁹⁰ Constitution from the Eighth Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1888–89, Toronto: William Briggs, p. 172–73.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

lastly, her health must be deemed satisfactory before she could be accepted.⁹³

It is clear that becoming a missionary through the WMS was not an easy or straightforward process. These requirements meant that only women who were young, healthy, formally educated, or who at least demonstrated intelligence, could apply to the missionary field overseas and all of the criteria were in line with societal expectations regarding women's work. For instance, by allowing only single women to apply, missionary work would not disrupt a woman's 'natural' calling to her home and family. Yet at the same time, missionary work for women was to be modelled on her 'natural' or biologically endowed abilities associated with home and family. Given these requirements, only a few privileged women were afforded the opportunity to travel overseas and to engage in missionary work with the WMS. For others who did not qualify, membership in a WMS auxiliary or advisory committee was often a way to participate, albeit from a distance. Participation in home missions also provided opportunities to women who often did not qualify for foreign missions. For those who were not in excellent health or were already past an age which was considered ideal for women missionaries, less glamorous and arguably less prestigious opportunities were to be found in home missions. The WMS sponsored a number of home missions before Reverend Starr approached them about taking on the *Chinese Rescue Home*.

Reverend Starr's letter to the WMS emphasized the importance of domestic spaces. He began with a description of the physical structure itself. The building was described as "a one-story 8 room frame building situated upon Fredrick St. in close proximity to the parsonage... this

⁹³ Ibid.

plainly and only partially furnished but withal comfortable and as rents run cheap.”⁹⁴ The *Home* was a plain and unremarkable place, but one that was presumed to offer safety, hope and most importantly, domesticity. Despite its humble and plain aesthetic value, the domestic realm was to be a safe haven, insulated from the dangerous conditions outside of it.⁹⁵

An important goal of the *Home* was to prepare the girls for “household duties in case of marriage.”⁹⁶ Starr reported that there were seven girls in the *Home* between the ages of eight and nineteen, that two more, age seven and nine, he hoped would be rescued again. Another girl had been married to an “industrious Christian Chinaman who helped to rescue her”⁹⁷ and provided her with a good home. Training the girls in household duties, thus, was meant to prepare them for their hopeful destinies as wives of ‘Christian Chinamen.’ But it also had the added benefit of making them more marketable as domestic servants. Inclusion could only come after conversion—a change manifest not only by a profession of faith but by the subject’s adherence to Christianity *and* middle-class values (Chang, 2004, 137). In the *Home*, these values were feminized as they took the form of domesticity. It is also impossible to discount the usefulness of this training to the *Home* itself, as there would then be no need to hire someone to do the household chores.

Given his focus on the domestic realm, it is not surprising that Reverend Starr appealed to

⁹⁴ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, Sept 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

⁹⁵ For a more comprehensive discussion of the house itself, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.

⁹⁶ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, Sept 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

women to run the *Home*. In this report, Mr. Starr implored the WMS to take on an active and important role in the running of “‘The Home’ for rescued Chinese girls in Victoria”. The outlook of this fledgling work, he said, was “dreary enough unless the Women of the Methodist Church in Canada come to the Home’s Help [sic].”⁹⁸ It is significant that Starr did not appeal to the General Missionary Society, but instead directed his pleas to the women’s branch. Although founded by Starr and John Gardiner, it was clear from the outset that reforming women was the domain of women’s work. Even before the WMS took over the *Home*, a matron had been hired to deal with all aspects of the domestic realm and of domesticity itself.

Not only would white women significantly affect the lives of women in the *Home*, they also influenced the type and degree of state support. In his letter, Reverend Starr described the withdrawal of state support to the *Home*. The first ‘rescue’ was accomplished by Gardiner, who Starr described as a deeply religious man, a son of missionaries and himself a “missionary of the Methodist Church among the Chinese.”⁹⁹ This ‘rescue’ was of a nine-year-old slave girl, who “‘had her wrists broken, her back whipped until it ran sores and the sores irritated and burned with lighted tapers by an old hag of a procuress because the girl failed to bring in as much money by soliciting and prostituting herself as her procuress or keeper thought she should.”¹⁰⁰ Gardiner, with the help of the Chairman of the Police Committee rescued both the nine-year-old and a second girl. As a result, word spread of a “‘Jesus Man,’ ... who would help them away

⁹⁸ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

⁹⁹ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives). Gardiner would later be implicated in a number of very public court cases, which is the subject of Chapter Five.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

from their slavery and protect them.” However, after this first rescue, police refused to assist Gardiner and instead he was forced to rely on “friendly Chinamen” to “make an appointment with the girls and spirit them away.”¹⁰¹ Once the women of the WMS took over this project, however, the state’s support of and interventions into the *Home* increased, indicating the state’s protective stance toward white women and their support and recognition of women’s authority in the domestic realm. It was beyond the domestic realm, however, that their moral reach extended.

For many women engaged in this type of outreach, benevolent work was not only about imposing moral order on other women, but also providing moral guidance to white men (Pascoe 1990). In British Columbia, Adele Perry (2001) argues that white women were seen as having the potential to “reconstruct individual white men and, in doing so, transform British Columbia’s colonial society as a whole” (139). Moreover in *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885–1925*, Marianna Valverde (1991) makes a similar argument about central Canada. In the west, home mission projects, as Pascoe (1990) maintains, “began to symbolize, not just female benevolence, but also female opposition to the male-dominated social order that characterized emerging western cities” (13). Starr’s discussion of the chief of police’s refusal to help likely would have signalled a need for the moral authority of women and therefore may have encouraged the participation of women in the administration of Chinese rescue. Thus, through the fracturing of the moral authority associated with whiteness, white

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

women were interpellated¹⁰² by a call for their special brand of moral authority. By shifting the domain of morality to the domestic, Starr propped up the moral authority of Christian women over and above men. For the WMS women, this provided an opportunity to increase their authority, not only in the private sphere, but outside of it as well.

The job of matron was a highly responsible position; as an institutional setting the *Home* required a keen manager. Instead of emphasizing a managerial role, however, Starr described the matron in distinctly gendered language. The requirements for the matron were linked to professions that were deemed suitable for women; mothering, teaching, nursing, and missionary work. As mother of the *Home*, the matron was to act as both housekeeper and moral authority, training the young girls and women to be ‘good women.’ As teacher, she was required to ensure that the female residents were schooled in the English language, and her missionary work would require her to Christianize and then train the interested residents to become Bible Women. Not only was the role of matron limited—if not in actual power then certainly in definition—to traditional female roles, but these traditional roles were to be transmitted with alacrity to the Chinese and Japanese residents as well. Thus, it was not enough for any white woman to fill this position. This position needed a woman who could fulfill religious, racial, and gendered expectations. If the matron was to be the citizen after whom Chinese and Japanese bodies were to be modelled, then she had to be the epitome of Victorian womanhood.

¹⁰² Here, I am borrowing from Althusser to underscore how the space of the Home functioned as ideology to ‘call’ some and exclude others. See Althusser’s (2001) chapter, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*.

Conclusion

British Columbians were invested in building a white province and nation, and the Royal Commissions are certainly evidence of this (Ward, 1990). However, Starr's letter compels us to consider that the influence of whiteness, Christianity, and gender upon the nation was much more complex than readings of the Royal Commissions might suggest. In his letter, Starr offered several suggestions for running the *Home*, should the WMS agree to take control of it. The first suggestion regarded the selection of a "good Matron," the current matron being "not as tidy as she might be and has not the ability to give the girls even the rudiments of English education."¹⁰³ Instead, Starr contended, the *Home* required a "whole souled warm hearted consecrated Christian woman... [so that] these girls could be speedily Christianized and converted."¹⁰⁴ In this single suggestion, it is clear that the *Home* was to be defined by four important pillars. The privileging of nation is evident in Starr's discussion of how Chinese girls and women were to be transformed from foreign to domestic. This required a 'whole souled' woman who was fully devoted to the *Home*. The *Home* therefore, was not simply to be an employer, but a calling. This was further emphasized through Starr's use of the word 'consecrated', implying not only Christian belief, but a deep commitment. The matron's ability to educate the 'girls' in English is an indication of the privileging of whiteness. Further, the future matron was required to be warm hearted, signifying an emotive, and thus feminized, role that she would be expected to take on.

¹⁰³ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

¹⁰⁴ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

In Victoria, the interventions of white men and women into the lives of Chinese and Japanese women were directed at their domestication. First, Chinese and Japanese women, through Christian salvation, were to be made into domestic citizens. Although no one offered full or unconditional acceptance into the nation, Christian salvation, it was argued, would transform these women into models of white Victorian womanhood and thus allow them to stay within the nation. Second, women were also domesticated in another sense of the word. Japanese and Chinese women were initially viewed as domestically delinquent. Seen as sexually deviant, Japanese and Chinese women were, therefore, constructed as outside of proper (domestic) womanhood. Their presence in the (sexual) marketplace needed to be controlled and managed through their re-placement and training within the domestic realm. The *Chinese Rescue Home* was a project that would both challenge and reinforce what it meant to be a woman in British Columbia. In the next chapter, I examine how the spaces of the *Home* constructed the type of work that women could pursue, while also shaping the various aspirations of white, Chinese, and Japanese women.

Chapter Four: Crossing the Threshold: Interrogating the Space and Place of Victoria's *Chinese Rescue Home*

In the previous chapter, I outlined how the *Chinese Rescue Home* built on and challenged contemporaneous discourses of the 'foreign body' and its relation to domestic spaces. In this chapter, I develop this point further, to show how the physical structure of the *Home* supplemented the institution itself, especially the ways in which it challenged the binaries of foreign and domestic. Crossing the threshold of the *Home* allowed white women access to foreign bodies within the national (domestic) context. But it did more than this. The *Home* constituted a threshold *between* the foreign and domestic. The *Home* also challenged the public/private binary. Although the *Home* was formulated as a domestic space, it was also an institutional setting. The material spaces of the house produced the *Home* as what Blunt (2005a) calls both a "material and an affective space" (506). Thus, the *Home* provides space for an analysis of how gendered discourses, especially discourses of motherhood and family, acted as discursive viaducts through which the spatiality of the *Home* was transformed into embodied practice.

Shelley Mallett (2004) writes that, "Home is variously described in the literature as conflated with or related to house, family, haven, self, gender, and journeying" (62). Inspired by her observations, this chapter teases apart several of these concepts as a way to foreground the importance of the domestic realm in the work of the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS). Specifically, I analyze both house and home using structuralist and poststructuralist approaches. Here, I examine the spaces of the Victoria's *Chinese Rescue Home* as material and symbolic spaces of reproduction and resistance, which I argue were bound up with women's moral authority. Below, I provide an analysis of both house (physical space) and home (discursive space) to draw connections between racialized and gendered spaces and discourses. To do so, I

first perform analyses of four of the images found in the *British Columbia Archives* which were taken of the *Home* and of those who dwelled within it. The goal is to ground my later discursive analysis in a more material one. I examine not only photographs, but also the architectural design of the house to elucidate the links between meaning making and material practices. My second mode of reading is to draw links between these physical spaces and the types of discourses and practices that were found within them. I pursue this through an examination of *Home* record books, Advisory Committee minutes and official Woman's Missionary Society reports.

In this chapter, I offer a genealogy of the *Home*. Foucault (2003) describes genealogy as operating “on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times” (351). These documents are used to record events, “not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution but to isolate the different scenes where they engage in different roles” (351). My goal, here, is to trace the disjuncture, discontinuity and multiple meanings of the *Chinese Rescue Home*. Instead of tracing a linear narrative through time, I look for both connections and ambivalences through an examination of multiple sources. Useful here is Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad of perceived, conceived and lived space. Although each theorization of space is unique, these must be understood in dialogue with one another in the production of material and symbolic spaces.

As a material and symbolic space, the *Chinese Rescue Home* was certainly not a new or unique type of institution. Protestant women in the American West joined together in the 1870s “to try to establish female moral authority” (Pascoe 1990, xvi). Rescue homes were one of the projects that allowed white women a degree of power and moral authority that they could not obtain elsewhere. Modeled after a Victorian Christian home, these rescue homes did not openly disrupt the “‘separate spheres’ that middle-class Victorians assigned to men and women” (33) as they simply extended the ‘natural’ influence of women as wives and mothers. These homes,

therefore, extended women's power, primarily in ways that did not challenge the power or authority of white men. White women's power, thus, was mostly limited to the power they had over racialized women and to a lesser extent, men.

Conceiving Mother-land: 'Constructing' the *Home* as a Signifying Mechanism

Over the last decade, the home has become a site of intervention for many scholars, including cultural geographers, historians, anthropologists, and sociologists. Duncan and Lambert (2004) describe the home as "perhaps the most emotive of geographical concepts, inextricable from that of self, family, nation, sense of place, and sense of responsibility toward those who share one's place in the world" (395). The house, as a physical manifestation of home, was tied to family and nation. It was a conceived space, planned and ordered in very particular ways. How the *Home* was constructed is important, as it was the space of the *Home* that allowed for the crossing of both physical and symbolic thresholds. The house, itself, stood as a gendered material site and metaphor of empire (motherland) and of family (mother). Although it is impossible to completely tease apart 'house' from 'home', here I will be referring to the house as the physical building (structure) in which members of a home, usually a family, reside. In defining 'home', I build on one standard definition which states that the home is: "the focus of one's domestic attention" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, Home 2010). The home is simultaneously the space to which one's domestic attention is addressed and the *act* of focusing one's domestic attention. A house (the structure) only becomes a home once domestic attention is directed toward it through action (agency) and/or through language or ideas (discourse). Although it is clear that home and house are mutually constitutive and thus impossible to fully separate, I make this distinction as an analytical one, meant to identify the ways in which structure shaped discourse and action and how these same discourses and actions also helped to shape the 'construction' of the structure itself.

Pascoe (1990) has argued that “Home mission women interpreted the ‘home’ as the ideal Christian home of Victorian rhetoric” and that “women had a special ‘mission’ to sustain Protestant moral values by rescuing female victims and teaching them to emulate the family and gender roles of white, middle-class Victorian culture” (6). Building on this point, I examine the *house*, as the materiality of home spaces, to uncover how the physical space of the home played a role in furthering these goals. Drawing on the work of Foucault, Razack (2002) argues that space is “fundamental in any exercise of power” (10). She points to the importance of space, explaining that “to denaturalize or unmap spaces.... we begin by exploring space as a social product, uncovering how bodies are produced in spaces and how spaces produce bodies” (17). Thus, the spaces of the *Home* organized and enabled certain social practices, allowing possibilities for what could and could not take place within its walls. It was precisely the materiality of the *Home* that influenced how it would be run, by whom, and also who could reside within it. In other words, the building produced *meanings* for those who encountered and resided within that space, including the emotive and affective ties that ‘home’ elicited during this time.

Little is known about the first structure that accommodated the *Chinese Rescue Home*. The only information available pertains to its size. The initial structure was described to be a small, “one-story 8 room frame building situated upon Fredrick St.”¹⁰⁵ In January 1888, the WMS moved their residents to the house shown below (see Figure 2). It was from this house, at

¹⁰⁵ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

100 Cormorant Street, that the WMS would operate the rescue mission for the next 20 years.

Although very little was written about how this site was chosen, it is clear from the picture below that it was originally constructed as a ‘home.’ While it is probable that the WMS chose to use a house, as opposed to a more institutional type of building, because amenities, such as bedrooms and cooking and cleaning facilities, would already be present in a house, the decision to pursue this site and not another was not inconsequential or accidental.



Figure 2: *Chinese Rescue Home*—British Columbia Archives C-07913

In the earliest report of the *Home*, Reverend Starr suggested that should the WMS take on this project, that there was “a house better located and in every way better adapted for a ‘Home’

which the owner would divide into the compartments necessary.”¹⁰⁶ What is significant here is that Starr did not suggest a ‘building’ but specifically referred to a house. A house, according to Starr, was “in every way better adapted for a ‘Home.’”¹⁰⁷ While this use of the word ‘Home’ may not seem surprising given that throughout the document Starr referred to the rescue mission as ‘The Home,’ this is the only place in the document where he referred explicitly to the mission as a ‘Home.’ Here, he was not referring to the actual institution, but instead to the function of the institution. There seemed to be no question that the more appropriate space for rescued *women* was in the home. According to Perry (2001), it was not uncommon for men in early British Columbia to live in group households. However, the conditions of these households were very different from those in the *Home*. Men who shared a residence with other men were more likely to live in rough bunkhouses, tents, or cabins where domesticity took the form of simple survival. Cooking was often done outdoors over fires and cleaning took place on the river’s banks (Perry 2001, 21–36). A house for women, however, was always already imbued with the discourses and practices of home and domesticity, as the physical structure of the house was mobilized to produce gendered ways of behaving.

The house shown in the photo above, taken on 24 May 1906 (Figure 2), was well maintained and had a simple charm with its wide decorative veranda and the ivy covered posts flanking the front entrance way. The colonial style of the *Home* was a reminder of the historical legacy of empire, the wide veranda and decorative finishing reminiscent of Victorian values of

¹⁰⁶J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

home and hearth. The small picket fence in front of the house was most likely a later addition to the *Home*. In 1898, a motion was passed to replace the original fence and put strands of barbed wire atop to prevent escape.¹⁰⁸ On the fence bordering the left side of the house, remnants of what appears to be the barbed wire remained. The remnants of a carceral past were abridged, but not erased from view, a reminder perhaps, of how tenuous the residents' freedom really was.

While the house itself was the central feature of the photo, spilling out onto the front veranda and into the street were the residents and staff of the *Home*. Unlike some of the later photos which resembled school pictures, this photo had a less formal or institutional feel. Although the women and children were properly dressed, they were lined up somewhat haphazardly, much like they might have been in an informal family photo. The children were not organized by age cohort as they would have been in a school photo. Instead the children were foregrounded, with the women taking their place outside of, but always in the shadow of the house. Thus, the photo highlighted the house as a place to which the women were tied, sometimes harnessed to the home by the babies or small children they carried. What the photo also highlighted were the possibilities embodied in the children who stood not only outside of the house's shadow, but outside of the fence altogether. As is clear from this photo, the building that housed this institution was far from institutional in form. It resembled in every aspect a home space.

Only two years after this photo was taken, on 8 December 1908, the women and girls

¹⁰⁸ "Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee", November, 1898, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

were moved to a new and larger facility, built on the same lot as the first on Cormorant Street. (The numbering system in Victoria changed sometime after 1905 and thus the new address was 732 Cormorant St.).¹⁰⁹ This building was designed by prominent architects Hooper and Watkins and built for the WMS for the purpose of housing the *Chinese Rescue Home*, which was renamed after the move. The minutes of the November 1909 meeting of the advisory committee explained that “in view of the fact that we have Japanese as well as Chinese in the Home, and that the term ‘Rescue’ has a tendency to prejudice certain classes, especially the merchants, against our work, it was proposed by Mrs. Snyder that the name be changed from ‘*Chinese Rescue Home*’ to ‘*Oriental Home and School*’”¹¹⁰ Although the idea of a ‘rescue’ mission had lost favour with the merchants, the word ‘home’ had obviously not lost its currency. Significantly, the word ‘home’ was the only remnant of the original name that remained.

If the previous house was reminiscent of colonial times, the second house, built expressly for the purpose of housing the residents of the *Home* had a much grander appeal. This house, which was to become the home of the *Oriental Home and School* until it closed,¹¹¹ was designed in the style of the Georgian manor home. By the time the house was being planned and constructed in 1907 and 1908, Georgian architecture had long since gone out of fashion. However, its appeal was most likely not just fashion, and perhaps not even function. The appeal of Georgian architecture was also likely emotional. Most popular during the eighteenth century,

¹⁰⁹ “History of Japanese in Oriental Home, Victoria BC”, WMS Bob Stewart Archive, 1959.

¹¹⁰ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, November, 1909, *Oriental Home and School fonds*: 1896–1914, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹¹¹ The Home closed its doors during WWII when its residents were moved to Saskatchewan as part of the Japanese Canadian internment process. By this time, the Home only housed Japanese women and children.

the Georgian manor elicited memories of colonial conquest, but was also a material reference to the metropole. As Morgan (2004) explains, Georgian homes were “less about shelter than what a house looked like, and the more it looked like England the better” (38). Here, there were different types of global connections at play within the *Home*: in this case these connections had to do with the *Home*’s ties with England. The rescue home was certainly not the only example of Georgian architecture in Victoria, but the symbolism of its design was, in some ways, unique from the other Georgian houses.



Figure 3: Oriental Home and School—British Columbia Archives C-07927

Another Georgian style house in the area was the historic Craigflower Manor (See Figure 4). Built in Victoria, in the 1850s, as part of “Hudson’s Bay Company’s obligations to Britain to support colonization,” (VancouverIsland.com 2010) this Georgian Manor house had direct ties to British colonization. Built almost fifty years after what is now recognized as the end of the Georgian era of architecture (Morgan 2004), this house was styled to reflect those strong ties to the metropole through the signifying of colonial ties that the Hudson’s Bay Company had to England. Although Victorian architecture, the architectural ‘fashion’ during this period, would have also signalled the company’s ties to the metropole, the use of Georgian architecture was

most likely the result of both cultural and aesthetic factors. First, a certain amount of architectural ‘lag’ in Canada might be expected, as much of Victoria’s architectural aesthetic was influenced by American and English design. As Segger (1979) notes, design was often borrowed from the United States through the transplantation of American and British architects as well as through their architectural travels, especially to the south. However, this lag may reflect more than a reluctance to embrace changes in architectural styles. Second, then, the shift to Victorian architecture in the United States was reflective of a period of “explosive change. ... the growth of democracy and nationalism, technology and the transformation of old agricultural economies, the movement of people to cities and across oceans” (Morgan 2004). It was a reflection, not only of change, but of prosperity. ‘Stick Style’ homes, popular across the border in Seattle during this period, were deliberately more decorative than Georgian architecture. In Victoria, it seems that nationalism was less about prosperity and independence from the metropole. An infant city, Victoria depended on the motherland in ways that cities such as Seattle did not. Segger (1979) explains that “in the post-World War One years ... the popularity of neo-Georgian and Eastern Colonial house types is indicative of an age struggling to find security and identity by reaffirming the historical roots of Western society as a civilization with dignity and traditions” (47). Thus, Craigflower Manor’s architecture reflected the colonial moment, embodied by Georgian architecture.



Figure 4: Craigflower Manor - British Columbia Archives A_01435

That the *Chinese Rescue Home*, built over fifty years later, was also styled after a Georgian Manor home seems more surprising. This home was funded by a charitable organization and not a colonial company. One must ask, then, why the same style of architecture, which was now a full century out of fashion, was chosen as the architectural design. The answer, I suggest, was also to establish links to the metropole. Architecturally, Craigflower Manor found its ties in the company's economic relations to England, while the *Home* was tied to England by its moral imperatives. Missionary women's investments in establishing in themselves a Victorian moral authority resulted in the material form of the Georgian Manor. The Georgian Era directly preceded the Victorian Era and was a time of Christian revival. For Methodists, the Georgian era marked the period in which the denomination of Methodism had its roots. What this house represented was not only Victorian moral values associated with the home, but also the values of Methodism that predated the Victorian era. Thus, both the motherland of empire and the fatherland of religion were 'married' through the physical structure. Christian aspirations, identity and practice, were quite literally built into the material space of the *Home*. The Georgian Manor house may have conjured up ties to both colonialism and to religious roots, but it also

conveyed something more.

A closer comparison of these two Georgian houses also reveals a few obvious differences. While the Georgian home that was built as part of the Hudson's Bay project had strong architectural features, the later constructed *Home* took these features and only intensified them. The box-like style of the Georgian Manor house was exaggerated, as was its grandeur. Instead of a wooden construction, the *Home* was constructed out of brick, perhaps signalling the strength of commitment of those who built it. What is more remarkable, however, was how overstated the home was, both in its size and detail. While the double porch, dormers, balustrades, and decorative trim did make the house more homey, these features also connoted wealth. Given that this was a Christian charitable institution, the scale was overly extravagant. The records, however, suggest that the exterior of the house was not intended to represent wealth, but to represent the scale of benevolence. In the "Report of the Chinese Rescue Home" (1907–1908) Matron Ida Snyder reported as follows:

We express our gratitude for the beautiful and roomy new home and school which is being built for us, and are looking forward with pleasure to the time when it will be ready. I am sure any of you who are privileged to come west and visit our school will be proud of the building, and we workers hope that the work will grow to all the possibilities of the building.¹¹²

Not only did she see this house as a place of hospitality, but also as representing the increased potential for evangelistic work. Thus, space reflected and shaped the aspirations of the women who ran the *Home*.

¹¹² *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1907–1908* Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xciii

This house represented far more than Christian benevolence, however. The home's brick walls and high fences did more than keep the residents sheltered; they also represented safety and sanctuary. Crossing the threshold into the *house* meant entering a home. The decorative trim and the plethora of windows transformed what might otherwise have been seen as an institution into a home. Thus, the spatiality of the home acted as both a mode of governance and as a space of opportunity for white, Japanese, and Chinese women. First, a house represented the Victorian ideals of home and family, ideals that the women sought to instil in their 'inmates': in this way, the *Home* worked to govern and instil Victorian type familial relationships in the girls and women, while also reinforcing the importance of these same ideals to the women who enforced them. Second, the construction of a home space also acted as a mode of governance through the reproduction of racialized, gendered, and classed roles. This was achieved through the *Home's* use as a training facility for Chinese and later Japanese women as wives and/or servants. Lastly, the *Home* functioned as a site in which the aspirations of both white women and their charges could take place. It served as a sanctuary not just for the Chinese and Japanese women who sought shelter there, but also for white women who sought to escape the confines of the private sphere. White women and their Japanese and Chinese charges crossed the threshold into this pseudo-domestic realm for many reasons and although their choices were limited by the spatial context of the *Home*, many found room within its walls to internalize the transformations imposed on them, learning new skills in the process.

Hearth, Home, and Motherhood Perceived

The physical space of the *Home* facilitated certain roles and was open to only certain residents. Razack (2002) explains that perceived space "emerges out of spatial practices, the everyday routines and experiences that install specific social spaces. ... Through these everyday routines, the space comes to perform something in the social order, permitting certain actions and

prohibiting others” (9). Thus, the numerous discourses of house and home allowed for both the reproduction of racialized and gendered roles as well as their potential subversion. If the *Home* functioned much like the private sphere, both materially and metaphorically, how did white women engage the public sphere? Metonymy was a tool that facilitated the crossing of thresholds between the public and the private realms. Metonymy is “a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated” (Merriam Webster Dictionary, Metonymy 2010). While the house signalled a deep and enduring relationship between the metropole and colony, its reference to *home* also metonymically signalled another gendered relationship, that of mother and child. The distinction between house and home was complex and often difficult to make. While these two terms were often conflated in the texts I examined, with both house and home representing the material building, the word ‘home’ conjured up associations or attributes that reproduced gendered relations. The home was an affective space which influenced and in some cases dictated the types of behaviours and emotions that were acceptable and to be cultivated.

Despite that the residents of the *Home* were often referenced in the records as “inmates,” they were also considered as part of a larger family. These discourses of filial relations are manifest in the photograph below (Figure 5) which represents some of the early workers and residents of the *Home*. The formality of the photo, with a backdrop of trees and nature, a decorative carpet, and a plant to the right, suggests that the *Home* did not fully mirror an institutional setting, but was modelled on a familial and domestic one. Taken in 1910, this photo represented the ideals of the Victorian home and family. For one, the modest dress of the white workers was evident on a smaller scale in the young women and children in the photo—thereby highlighting the influence of these women. So too were the hairstyles and postures. The three white women on the right of the photo stood tall, towering above their subjects, clearly

representing authority. The only other white woman in the group was shown seated with an infant cradled in her arms, representing and modeling motherly behaviours and expectations. However, this ‘family’ also subverted the values of Victorian morality (see Pascoe, 1990), in that Victorian ideals did not include the mixing of races that was taking place in these photographs.



Figure 5: Home and School Group—British Columbia Archives C-07926

Within the context of a British Columbia that was marked by anti-Asian sentiment (Roy 1989; Ward 1990) and fears surrounding mixed race contact (Mawani 2009), this photo stood in stark opposition to these realities. In his influential discussion of colonialism, particularly the relationship between sex, culture, and race, Robert Young (1995) describes colonialism as a ‘desiring machine’ which “produced its own darkest fantasy—the unlimited and ungovernable fertility of ‘un-natural’ unions” (98). The resulting ‘hybrid’ was evidence of the ambivalence of discourses of race which simultaneously marked out the Other as both repulsion and desire. Framing the ‘hybrid’ as a product of this ‘dark fantasy’ provides a compelling departure from contact narratives that have focused on inclusion and exclusion. Here, the Other was transformed from Other, not into self, but into a hybrid, into something different. The missionary’s

relationship with the Other had to move beyond contact in order for such a transformation to take place. Thus, in the case of the *Home*, the relationships were not a product of the ‘dark fantasy’ of colonialism but of a ‘white fantasy.’ This fantasy entailed a non-sexual relationship that would (re)produce the racial hybrid in the white image, not through birth, but through a religious re-birth and transformation. The racial Other was to be introduced into the ‘family of God’ through the adoption of a white ‘mother’ and a celestial father. This was best accomplished within the realm of domesticity associated with a home-like institution. Domesticity was tied to women’s moral authority, but also to their (re)productive capacity. The home (and the *Home*), therefore, was the ideal space to produce new Christian subjects.

The physical space of the *Home* shaped the types of (familial) relationships that could be formed within its walls. Examples of this were abundant in the many familial references in the minutes of the advisory committee, publications written about the work, and in the formal reports of the WMS. Although the *Home* family may have threatened ideals of whiteness as the foundation of the Victorian (and Canadian) ideal family, heteronormativity was still its foundation. In the absence of a man in the house, a surrogate father stood in his stead. The *Home* completed the family metaphor by substituting God as father to all. Thus, the racial Other had the potential to become reborn not through sexual mixing, but through an adoptive relationship. This blended family meant a partial erasure of race, save for its physical manifestation, a washing of the racialized soul that made it ‘white as snow.’ Of course, adoption into the family of God certainly did not mean equality between Chinese and Japanese women and their white

‘sisters.’ Racial equality would mean the work of the WMS was no longer necessary. Regardless, references to God’s family and Christian sister/motherhood were pervasive in documents and reports. One report, for instance, claimed that “We try to impress on all that this is God’s Home, and that we must act as His children.”¹¹³

That God stood in place of man as head of the house was due to the fact that the male figure in the *Home* was limited to a celestial one. Indeed any adult male was seen to be out of place in this realm of domesticity. The sanctity of the home was constantly at risk from outside (male) threats to the women’s sexual purity. According to Victorian familial ideals, the only acceptable male in the home was husband, father, or brother. Given that no blood relationship tied these women together, any male was viewed by the matrons as a potential sexual threat to those who were not daughter, sister, or wife. Thus, the sexuality of the girls and women was governed and protected through the *Home*’s expulsion or rejection of even male *children* of a certain age. While the WMS did on occasion accept male children into the *Home*, they did so only reluctantly and circumspectly. For instance, one father applied to have his children, “four boys and four girls between the ages of 2 months and 11 years”¹¹⁴ admitted to the *Home*, as their mother had recently died. In the agreement that the father signed, he “promised to leave the boys in the Home two years and the girls 6 years at the close of which period he was at liberty to take them to China with him for a visit.”¹¹⁵ The Advisory Committee asked that a new agreement be

¹¹³ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1916–1917* Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. , xcix

¹¹⁴ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, August, 1909, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

drawn up, whereby “the four girls and the boys of 3 yrs and 7 yrs be admitted”, however, it was “thought unwise to admit the eldest boy, he being ten years of age”¹¹⁶ Despite that the oldest child, a girl aged eleven, was to stay in the *Home* for six years, or until she was seventeen, the decision was to refuse entry to the younger, ten-year-old boy, who would only be in the *Home* for two years. Likewise, in another case, Joe,¹¹⁷ two and a half years old, was admitted with his two sisters after it was determined that their “mother was bad.” Although his older sisters stayed in the *Home* until the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five, respectively, Joe was required to leave at age eleven because he was deemed “too old for the Home”.¹¹⁸ These gendered decisions were clearly based on the perceived need to govern and protect the sexuality of the young women in the *Home*. Thus, the domestic spaces of the *Home* were preserved through the exclusion of all males, save very young children. This male threat also points to the ambivalences around Chinese and Japanese femininity. Although many painted these women as threats to men and boys, here they were vulnerable and in need of protection, especially the younger girls and women.

These familial relationships should not be reduced to religious discourses of God as father and all others as His children. There was much more to these familial discourses than Christianity. To begin, these discourses were highly gendered. White women were aspiring to model their Victorian family values to their ‘inmates.’ Further, the sense of family likely

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Joe is a pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

¹¹⁸ “Records 80,81,82” Oriental Home Record Book and Register, 1886-1929, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 32–35.

provided Japanese and Chinese women with a sense of community and inclusion which may have tempered the fact that they were also being tightly regulated. Thus, family was a term that was frequently applied to the residents of the *Home*. The photo below (Figure 6), for instance, was labelled “The Oriental Home Family”. Interestingly, as highlighted in Chapter Three, Reverend John Edward Starr, writing to the WMS used the familial discourse of sisterhood in his petition to this group. Yet, once the WMS took over the running of the *Home*, a shift took place to a different type of familial discourse, that of mother and children—marking a new hierarchy of power.



Figure 6: Oriental Home Family—British Columbia Archives C-07922

Mothering, although it was of vital importance to those who ran the *Home*, was not a discourse that was evenly or consistently utilized. Nor was it grounded in common sense understandings of biology or nature. Here, motherhood was deployed as a mode of governance, affording white women a way to reproduce Victorian womanhood in their charges. Joan Sangster (2004) writing on the Toronto Elizabeth Fry Society (EFT), explains that “[m]aternalism is a flexible and fluid ideological concept that underpins and justifies a wide variety of political and social agendas” (231). Further, she explains that EFT reformers saw “women’s familial roles as

‘essential to the social order’ and believed their socialization as women and mothers gave them ‘special insights in reform campaigns directed at women’” (Sangster 2004, 231-232).

Maternalism, thus, was both a justification of white women’s roles and a skill which was to be instilled in the girls and women in the *Home*. Discourses of motherhood, however, were not always straightforward. When one resident of the *Home*, Jeanie,¹¹⁹ requested that her child be allowed to enter the *Home*, the discussion was concerned with whether or not her husband would be willing to pay board for the child.¹²⁰ In fact, when Matron Ida Snyder “failed to make any satisfactory arrangements with Jeanie’s husband about their little daughter” the child was not allowed to enter the *Home*.¹²¹

There was no discussion of moral issues such as the ethics of keeping a mother from her child, nor of the naturalness of this mother’s desire to be near her child. Perhaps this was because the *Home* had become surrogate mother to Jeanie, thus marking her not as mother but as child. Alternatively, it may have been assumed that motherhood was something only white women *naturally* experienced, making it necessary for them to model it for their racialized charges. What is clear is that her role as mother was secondary to the cost of allowing the child to enter the *Home*. The final decision may have been due to the advisory board’s recommendation, but was enforced by the determined matron, Snyder. Snyder, who was more drawn to working with children than working with the more challenging adult women, refused to let the child enter

¹¹⁹ Jeanie is a pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

¹²⁰ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, May 1901, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹²¹ Ibid.

without promise of board being paid.¹²²

It was almost a year before records show that Jeanie's daughter had been allowed to enter the *Home*. "Mrs. Snyder reported that [Jeanie's] little girl was an inmate of the Home and that her father paid \$2 dollars a month towards her board."¹²³ Her admittance set an important precedent and another child was reunited with her mother on the same terms. Although the payment of board seemed to be the deciding factor in both of these cases, the matron provided an additional rationale. She explained that "the presence of the little children made the place seem more *natural* and home like for the elder girls beside it gave them an opportunity of training them in the care of children."¹²⁴ The matron's reference to the naturalness of children in a home is interesting for two reasons. First, she did not state that the presence of children *made* the place more natural and homelike, but instead that it made it *seem* more natural and homelike. This distinction shows clearly that despite efforts to make the house a home, this was a process that required labour. It was an environment that needed to be created by Chinese, Japanese, and white women. Second, and related to the first point, the admittance of these children was intended to facilitate the training of these young women in mothering. Mothering, thus, was not understood as inherent in the biological relationship between mother and child, but instead was a particularly Western trait (See for instance, Diduck, 1993) which needed to be imparted to the *Home's* residents in order to make their transformations complete.

¹²² *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1902–1903*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p lxxxv.

¹²³ "Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee", April 1902, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, emphasis mine.

The familial language of mother and home was apparent in the WMS Reports as early as 1896. In an article entitled “Chinese in British Columbia” the author reported that the “Girl’s Home in Victoria has had a year of checkered experiences, as to numbers, but has abundantly shown the value of its existence, if only as the gathering place for the spiritual nurture of those who have married from it, and who constantly need and receive a *motherly* oversight.”¹²⁵ Likewise, two years later, the WMS reported that “[u]nremitting care and toil have been the portion of the Home-Mother, but she has not been without evidence of the Lord’s presence and acceptance of her labours.”¹²⁶ Here, the discourses of both home and Christian motherhood were joined, bringing together the institutional with the familial. The ‘unremitting care and toil’ echoed discourses of the Victorian wife and mother. It also made clear that this type of mothering was not seen as natural, but as a labour that required constant and continuous care.

In 1899–1900, once Ida Snyder took on the role of matron, the family metaphor was often used in yearly reports. Snyder, a no-nonsense woman, accepted the challenges of running the *Home*, often with unconventional techniques. For instance, Gagan (1992) recounts a story of how Snyder developed her own strategy for weaning one Chinese woman from opium. Her approach was to substitute cigarettes for opium, which she then rationed so that she could gradually wean the woman off of the tobacco. Her strategy worked well until the woman stole Snyder’s secret supply. The woman was punished by Snyder consigning “the remaining tobacco

¹²⁵ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1896–1897*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. lxxiv, emphasis mine.

¹²⁶ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1898–1899*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xxviii, emphasis mine.

to the stove.” (174). Despite her abrupt and strict demeanour, Snyder still referred to the women in the *Home* as family. In 1898, she reported that there was only one girl in the *Home* when she arrived but “in January, [she] had a family of nine, six of them Chinese, and three Japanese.”¹²⁷ Sometimes, her references to family were not as straightforwardly endearing. “The year began with seven and closes with eleven inmates,” Snyder began in her 1902–1903 report. She continued her tallying of the ‘inmates’ but exchanged a carceral language for a more familial one, stating that “there have been five additions to our *family*”¹²⁸ The following year, Snyder opened her report again with reference to family, reporting that “we have a family of thirteen dependent upon us for protection.”¹²⁹ Here, family was certainly not about sisterly relationships, but about a mother and her dependents. The family became a site and a practice of governance. This trend of reporting family size continued to be a yearly practice for many years to come. In fact, in some cases the annual reports took on the tone of family letters, reporting the seemingly mundane and private, rather than taking on the tone of an institutional report.

The 1906–1907 report began as follows: “We took our family of thirteen out camping for six weeks and found the tent very acceptable, and especially so as tents could not be rented here this summer”¹³⁰ The 1913–14 report, written by Matron Maggie Smith, closed with “We have all

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1902–1903*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. lxxxiv.

¹²⁹ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1904–1905*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. lxxvi.

¹³⁰ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1906–1907*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. lxxxviii.

been kept busy with our large family of happy children, and kept happy ourselves”.¹³¹ Again, the discourse of mother and children is prevalent, if not entirely clear. Although the matron referred only to the children in the *Home*, in 1913 of the twenty five residents admitted, forty percent were women over the age of nineteen. Clearly, infantilizing the residents helped to secure the metaphor of mother and children as a reality. But family was not simply a discourse that was employed to describe the residents of the *Home*. It was also a device used to justify the placement and regulation of women and children in the *Home*.

In the 1909–1910 report, Matron Snyder told the story of a young suicide victim who never made it to the *Home*, describing her as a “[p]oor little homesick, motherless waif! Taken from her own family and sold from one family and city to another till death set her free”.¹³² The matron highlighted the case of this young ‘motherless waif’ not as a way to emphasize the dangers and traumas faced by this young woman, but to highlight the importance of the *Home* in sparing others from this same fate. Loss of family, she implied, especially one’s mother, was tantamount to death without the intervention of institutions such as the *Home*. Having family to care for them was not enough for the young children. A father, for instance, despite his familial relationship to his children was not viewed as an appropriate caregiver by those who ran the *Home*, even when he had a home and access to the necessary financial resources for their care. A mother, particularly a ‘good mother’ was key. In homes where a ‘good mother’ could not be

¹³¹ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1912–1914*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xcvi.

¹³² *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1909–1910*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. lxxi, emphasis mine.

found, the *Home* became a substitute. This privileging of white women as the appropriate guardians is compelling given that during this period, the courts often deemed the father to have ultimate rights and responsibilities over his children and their mothers, as is discussed in Chapter Six.

The discourse of motherhood and home often went hand in hand. As the following report highlighted, those who ran the *Home* took motherhood very seriously. Families, as Strong-Boag (1995) suggests, “have always proved sites of negotiation. ... Family relationships have attracted attention from clergy, doctors, psychologists, social workers, and politicians.” Fitness to parent was based on a diverse set of criteria from experts who promoted the ideal of the nuclear family (Strong-Boag 1995). Having (or being) a biological mother was not enough. According to the 1923–1924 report, “the Children’s Aid Society placed in our Home two little Chinese girls whose mother is entirely unfitted to be their guardian.”¹³³ While the report did not indicate why the mother was deemed unfit, Matron Annie T. Martin, clearly identified the ‘bad mother’ as a fate worse for a child than one who was deceased.

Our hearts went out in a very special manner to these poor little helpless ones, who cannot yet realize the tragedy of their home. An orphan with sweet home memories is blessed indeed beside these *worse than motherless children*, whose memory of home must always bring shame and resentment – Truly the Lord is mindful of His own, for it is marvelous how pure these little ones seem to have been kept. They remind one of water-lilies growing in a stagnant pool, which, in spite of their sordid surroundings, retain their snowy whiteness.¹³⁴

It was only through the benevolence of the Lord that these ‘water-lilies’ could remain pure in the

¹³³ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1923–1924*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. cxix.

¹³⁴ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1923–1924*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. cxix, emphasis mine.

presence of a mother who, like the stagnant pool, was deemed unclean and thus unworthy of motherhood. It was the Christian God who was the true father of the child; the flower plucked from the stagnant pool leaving no ripple as it was transplanted from one home to another. The paragraph that followed this passage highlighted a more preferable scenario. Matron Martin explained that “[m]ore fortunate in their home life were two sweet little Chinese girls ..., who if they remember at all, will think of a mother who was tender, kind and pure, though not a professing Christian at the time of her death.”¹³⁵ For those who ran the *Home*, an orphaned child was seen to be more fortunate than one whose mother was morally ‘bad.’ Children were considered ‘orphaned’ even if they had lost only their mother, as mothers were viewed as primarily responsible for the well-being of children. See, for instance, Swift’s (1995) discussion for a detailed analysis of women’s roles in ‘child neglect.’

In 1916–1917, six young girls were admitted to the *Home* after the death of their mothers.¹³⁶ While many children were placed in the *Home* after the loss of both parents, others were also admitted by fathers who had either lost their wives to illness or who deemed their living spouses to be incapable, either through illness or moral defect, of raising their children. Given the familial atmosphere of the *Home*, it was probably much easier to convince fathers to place their children there. Acting as a surrogate home for children, rather than an orphanage, the placement may also have seemed a less permanent solution. Other children were ‘rescued’ either by state officials or *Home* workers. Much like the Children’s Aid Society in nineteenth century

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1916–1917*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xcvi.

Ontario, many of the children in the *Home* “were not orphaned, abandoned, or abused, but rather were from ‘undesirable’ homes” (Diduck 1993, 466). Further, as Diduck (1993) and others have argued, the ‘desirable’ home and family was based on the “promotion of a ‘model’ mother” which was “performed by middle-class, and consequently usually white, women” (466). Although some ‘wayward’ parents were able to eventually reclaim their children, many remained in the *Home* for most or all of their childhood and/or adolescence.

The following passage from the WMS reports of 1920–1921 highlighted the successes of one such orphaned child, Abby¹³⁷, who had been in the *Home* since she was only ten months old. Her mother was admitted by her husband in March 1901, while he was trying to secure enough money to travel to San Francisco. She stayed only one month, but returned with her daughter in January of the following year when the baby was six months old, remaining four more weeks. In May of the same year, the baby was placed in the *Home* when her mother was taken to hospital. The mother died the same night. Her father paid the child’s board until his death, when the girl was nine years old. The following report was written when Abby was approximately 20 years of age:¹³⁸

[Abby]..., who graduated from the Normal School in May, has entered upon her duties as public school teacher of our Home. She holds a first-class certificate and has taken up her work in a very capable and earnest manner. We have been delighted with the spirit of helpfulness she has shown and feel she will make a true missionary. Perhaps we may be forgiven if we have a little feeling of pride, for she is truly a product of our Home, having been here since she was a few

¹³⁷ Abby is a pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

¹³⁸ Oriental Home and School Record Book, Record 75, page 30–31 *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

months old.¹³⁹

The women who ran the *Home* took great pride in Abby's success. Abby was truly a testament to the motherly care that she received in the *Home*. In fact, Abby's case was not unique among children who were raised from a young age in the *Home*.

Although many of the women educated in the *Home* did not receive the type of education that Abby did, for some, especially ones who spent all or most of their childhoods in the *Home*, missionary work was a goal that was encouraged and celebrated. In the following account by Matron Annie Martin, it becomes evident just how deeply engrained this project was.

Perhaps the most interesting addition to our family was our dear little adopted baby ... who was left motherless when only one month old. Though such a little mite she pleaded strongly for herself by her very helpfulness. We *could* not say no. ... We hope our dear baby may grow up to be a joy to all who are interested in her. We call her our 'little missionary.'¹⁴⁰

This child stayed in the *Home* from 1920 until 1939, but existing records do not indicate under what circumstances she left. When she was only months old, this little's girl's future was already charted by the matron and staff. But not all 'family members' received the same education or opportunities.

Domesticity and the Domicile

Although there were certainly a number of 'success stories' where young women

¹³⁹ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1920–1921*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. cxxiv.

¹⁴⁰ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1920–1921*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. cxxiv.

graduated into gendered professions, working as nurses, teachers, or missionaries, most of the women who passed through the *Home* did not follow this course. For many young women, especially those who came to the *Home* as adolescents or adults or who were deemed to lack the aptitude for higher education, training in service work was intended to provide them with useable life skills that would allow them to generate an income, and which had the added benefit of making them more attractive as marriage prospects. For them, the threshold between the private and public realms would be much more difficult to cross. Even work skills would guarantee that they would remain confined to the private realm as they performed service work in other women's homes. Thus, cultivating these work skills became a central mandate of the *Home*. Here, work included the performance of domestic duties and thus provided free labour within the *Home*, allowing it to 'partly sustain itself.' As one administrator suggested early on, if the girls were "clever at fancy work or were a knitting machine secured, there would be money in knitting."¹⁴¹ Putting the women and girls to work was always framed as voluntary helpfulness, or in some cases, as a way to fill their leisure hours.

Miss Bowes was matron of the *Home* from 1895–1898. Before becoming matron, Miss Bowes was president of the Victoria Branch of the WMS. In her 1895–1896 WMS reports, she explained that "in winter the girls spend their leisure filling orders for knitting, children's underclothing, etc. In summer they mend and help make articles for the Home."¹⁴² Gendered

¹⁴¹ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

¹⁴² *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1895–1896*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. 24.

expectations were literally built into the spatial organization of the houses in the form of kitchens, parlours, and sewing rooms. The adage ‘a woman’s work is never done’ was doubly so in the *Home*. The work that the women and girls were expected to do arose out of two imperatives. First, given that the *Home* was envisioned not as an institution or even a boarding house, but as a domestic space, the women and girls were expected to contribute as family members to its cleaning and maintenance. Work such as sewing and knitting were regarded to be useful training for the women. Thus, even during holidays when the girls and women were away from the confines of the house, work remained a central component of their daily lives.

In 1916–17, for instance, Maggie Smith reported that the girls’ training continued during their summer camping trip. “We are not idle,” she explained, “for besides the ordinary work, there are always improvements to make, sewing (we bring a machine), Red Cross knitting, and this year, the girls have already earned over \$20 picking fruit. We feel our summer at camp fits us for our year’s work, and keeps us strong and well.”¹⁴³ There was no mention of whether the ‘girls’ were allowed to keep their earnings, but what was made clear was that work was an important component in their transformation. Here, the bodies of Chinese and Japanese women and girls were transformed through their docility (Foucault 1995, 136), but in very gendered ways. Thus, transformations were not viewed as instantaneous, but instead as ongoing projects which required constant work—both on the part of the transforming Chinese and Japanese women and on the part of white women.

¹⁴³ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1916–1917*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xcvi.

The women in the *Home* were trained in a number of innovative ways which contributed to the financial upkeep of the *Home*. Weddings, for instance, became an important source of revenue for the *Home*. It had long been a site for many Japanese and Chinese weddings. But, in 1911, the *Home* began hosting receptions as well. According to Matron Smith, in 1911 the *Home* “had three Japanese wedding receptions in the Home; they furnish everything, we lay the tables, and our girls serve.”¹⁴⁴ Here, the expertise of white women in ‘laying the tables’ was supplemented by the labour of the *Home*’s residents. The following year, three large receptions were held. Although some of the weddings that took place were those of residents from the *Home*, most of these marriages included Japanese or Chinese brides and grooms from the larger Victoria community. The labour of Japanese and Chinese women helped to sustain the *Home* financially, although it was more often framed as part of the women’s ongoing training.

The privileging of western practices was apparent in the training that Japanese and Chinese women received. Dressing the women and girls in ‘English clothes’ became not only an important assimilation tactic, but also a training exercise in skills such as sewing, for instance.¹⁴⁵ In 1899, Ida Snyder referred in her report to the women in the *Home* as workers and identified her own role as that of superintending. She explained that she quickly “began to realize the real difficulties a matron has to contend with in superintending work, when the workers do not know what to do or how to do it, and added to that, do not understand one word of what is said to

¹⁴⁴ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1911–1912*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. lxxxvi.

¹⁴⁵ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1899–1900*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xciv.

them.”¹⁴⁶ In other words, the instruction of these transformative domestic skills was often impeded by their lack of English language skills. Nonetheless, the language barrier was not the only barrier. The matron explained that it “is a very practical piece of work even teaching them to make fires. One of my Japanese girls was two weeks learning that simple process, for Oriental-like, she persisted in putting in the coal first.”¹⁴⁷ The work of unlearning would work to dissociate the girl from her ‘Orientalness’. The physical space of the house became a training ground for the cultural and racial ‘whitening’ that was to take place. The geographical and historical context in which the house was situated deemed that western ways of approaching both gender and work would and should be adopted. Further, the very process of transformation further buttressed these processes: the western, or ‘English’ way of approaching work was necessary, not only to legitimate the mandates of transformation, but to facilitate the successful transition of the young women to the outside world, especially for serving work in other English homes.

The *Home* mimicked the Victorian home both through its structure and through the discourses and practices which were produced therein. Creating a family was not only discursive. Much physical and emotional labour went into creating the home and the family within it. Despite the familial discourse within the *Home* and the instillation of practices of westernization, the young women who left the *Home*, were never seen as fully Western or white. Their transition to the outside world was tied to the realities of race, gender, and class outside of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1899–1900*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xciii.

the *Home*. This is not to say that these realities did not exist to a lesser degree within the walls of the *Home* itself. Yet, these realities were buffered or softened by the familial discourses within its walls. Ambivalence was apparent in these familial discourses: despite being included as part of the Christian family, they would never become part of the white one. Therefore, the protection of the *Home* could only extend so far. Moreover, the training that took place within the house was meant to prepare the girls and women for very specific roles outside of the *Home*.

In 1899 Matron Snyder of the *Home* reported that “Most of the Japanese women who were with us have taken positions as servants when leaving the Home.”¹⁴⁸ One young woman, ‘Belle’ entered the *Home* after being rescued from a brothel at the age of nineteen. She stayed for two years, and was then “hired out” as a servant and it was reported that she was “giving satisfaction” in the home where she worked. She eventually left the *Home* for the East, to work for a Mrs. Snyder in the East, and she was eventually married there.¹⁴⁹ Other women having been hired out to do domestic or service work were also described as “proving most efficient helps”¹⁵⁰ or “giving good satisfaction,”¹⁵¹ although some were “a great disappointment.”¹⁵² Records show that in many cases, the matrons of the *Home* negotiated servant positions for the residents of the *Home* for whom suitable marriage partners could not be found. Training women

¹⁴⁸ Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1899–1900. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xciv.

¹⁴⁹ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, July 1905, *Oriental Home and School fonds*: 1896–1914, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁰ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, April, 1913, *Oriental Home and School fonds*: 1896–1914, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵¹ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, June, 1897, *Oriental Home and School fonds*: 1896–1914 *Oriental Home and School fonds*: 1896–1914, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵² Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1899–1900. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xciv.

to be servants, however, was not only the prerogative of those who ran the *Home*. Many Japanese women, for instance, were placed in the *Home* by husbands or fathers to learn service skills, or as one report put it, “English and English ways,”¹⁵³ so that the women could work with their husbands or fathers in English homes. Despite the classed and racialized assumptions that underpinned the mandates of the *Home*, Japanese and Chinese men and women utilized the services offered in the *Home* as a way to improve their own economic and social positions. The *Home* also offered white women ways of advancing their own aspirations. Completing Lefebvre’s triad, then, the next section will examine how the women who resided within the *Home* lived this space as they interpreted “perceived space (spatial practices), and conceived space (representations of space)” (Razack 2002, 9) in ways which both embraced and challenged gendered, racialized and spatialized norms.

¹⁵³ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1913–1914*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. xcvi.

Beyond the Threshold: Aspirations in the Lived Spaces of the *Chinese Rescue Home*



Figure 7: Woman's Missionary Society - British Columbia Archives E-01216

The women pictured in the above photo (Figure 7) were delegates to the Woman's Missionary Society conference in 1912. Far from being confined to their homes, these women were involved not only in running missions such as the *Chinese Rescue Home*, but in other forms of charitable work as well. Certainly for those who were involved in administering the *Home*, the house itself conjured up expectations regarding the roles that white women were to play, roles of surrogate mother, nurse and teacher. However, the house also offered spaces from which to resist gender imperatives of the time and aspire to new heights. Despite its size, the house was not fundamentally different from the private spaces where many women lived and worked. It was precisely the home-like atmosphere that allowed the women working there to further their aspirations without disrupting common expectations of a woman's place in social and economic hierarchies. At times the women of the *Home* used 'social skills' that had been developed in the private realm to further their objectives in the public one.

In order to maintain their power and prestige, the WMS women who oversaw and ran the

Home participated in an active campaign to establish the importance of their work both internally, at the level of the Missionary Society, through the recording and reporting of ‘success stories,’ and externally, through the publication of their work. Every success of the *Home* resulted in prestige for the women who ran it. Therefore, white women were quick to promote their successes. The women of the *Home* used creative strategies to earn them the recognition they desired. For instance, Miss Bowes of the *Home* submitted a marriage announcement to a local newspaper. This announcement described the dress of the bride and groom, as well as particulars about those in attendance. The second half of the wedding announcement, however, said less of the marriage and more of the *Home* and its mandate:

Mr. and Mrs. Sam are the eighteenth couple married from the Home, all of whom are comfortably settled and in the enjoyment of the blessings of Christian citizenship. This speaks well for the work of the Home and affords a strong claim for the continued support and sympathy on the part of the Christian people of this city and province at large. Every one of the 18 women thus settled in peaceful and reputable homes of their own, have been won from a state of slavery to which death itself would have been infinitely preferable.¹⁵⁴

Framed as a wedding announcement, this article was about far more than the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Sam. The announcement strategically applauded the work of the WMS, while at the same time attempted to garner support from the ‘Christian people’ of Victoria and British Columbia. This evangelistic project depended on white women’s ability to juxtapose these newly transformed Chinese and Japanese women against the foreign Others that they once were, through the equation of Christianity with citizenship. The record book also included other such

¹⁵⁴ *Victoria Daily Times*, Thursday, December 26, 1895, p. 5.

clippings of events at the *Home*. Although the women of the WMS probably did not have influence in the (typically male dominated) realm of print journalism, this strategic form of advertising drew on and promoted skills that women, as social planners, had acquired through a lifetime of domesticity. By utilizing avenues that were typically the domain of women, such as wedding announcements and other social events, the WMS were able to publicize their work, subverting, but not entirely disrupting, gender boundaries. The publicity was important for two reasons. First, funding for the *Home*, although primarily obtained through the Missionary Society, was also dependent on local donations and support. The *Home* required support from the local community, as it was into the community that many of their charges went as domestic servants. Second, the publicity of the work fed the aspirations of the white women for whom the *Home* offered independence and prestige in a community where white women often lacked both.

Interest in the work that the WMS did in Victoria did not just earn them prestige in their local communities, but nationally as well. The Mission Board in Ontario, for instance, sent a letter to the Advisory Committee inquiring into the work being done in Victoria. At another meeting, letters were read from women in Plainfield and Claremont, Ontario, expressing interest in the work being done in the West. These letters garnered much attention by the advisory board and this interest in their work sparked an additional plan, the discussion of which occupied the board for five months. It was proposed by the board that they “get some photos of the girls as well as the Home and [offer] ... them for sale to the Mission Boards and auxiliaries in the east as a possible means of bringing the Home and its work more prominently before the friends, at the

same time affording a source of income to the society.”¹⁵⁵ The women also suggested that they advertise the sale of these photos in the “Guardian and Outlook”¹⁵⁶. The inclusion of the ‘girls’ in the photos would likely have made this ‘home mission’ much more ‘marketable’ through the introduction of this ‘foreign’ element, especially in a context where racial hierarchies underpinned the very logic that sustained such work. The success of mission work offered the women of the WMS both recognition and respect in their communities. Therefore, making their work public often occupied these women’s time. The question becomes, how was this success measured?

Measuring Success

While the public narration of ‘success stories’ was a prominent feature in the work of the WMS in both Vancouver and Victoria, what is also interesting here is how success was conceived and measured. ‘Success’ was often measured in creative ways that reflected some of the motivations of the WMS women as well as their assimilationist assumptions. Success stories were prominent throughout the various reports and the *Home* registers, but so was their quantification. Many of the reports offered to the Advisory Committee of the *Home* included the numbers of women that were visited in the community and the numbers of houses entered for these purposes. The following is an excerpt from Matron Morgan’s report in June 1897:

¹⁵⁵ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, May, 1896, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁶ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, August, 1896, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives. (The Guardian probably referred to The Christian Guardian a weekly Methodist Newspaper and The Outlook may have referred to the British publication Church Missionary Outlook which was published from 1841–1972).

[D]uring [Morgan's]...recent visit to the mainland she found 10 Chinese women in Vancouver, and entered 3 new homes. She also found 7 Japanese women and arranged with Mrs. [illegible] to meet with them once a month. In Westminster she visited 5 homes. At Steveston she met 13 Japanese women with whom she held a meeting. She also visited 2 Japanese women in Moodyville.¹⁵⁷

In January of the following year, her report took on a similar tone showing that she had, “made two trips to the Mainland and Nanaimo during the [quarter] and entered 6 new homes in Victoria following to circumstances over which she had no control she only visited 42 families altogether. Total number of visits made 366.”¹⁵⁸ Here, the use of numbers told a particular story of the expansiveness of outreach—while, in significant contrast, the reception or responses of the women visited was rarely mentioned. This tendency to quantify success through the number of home visits erased the potential subject of conversion, and instead objectified her; the success here was that of the white woman missionary, not of the outreach work itself.

In addition to outreach work, the running of the *Home*, its financial undertakings and the maintenance of working relationships with local auxiliaries and boards, as well as the General Board in the East, occupied much of the time of the women involved in the WMS. The matrons also worked closely with teachers and evangelists within the *Home* as well as with the residents and community members. Additionally, matrons and advisory committee members dealt with tradespeople during the construction of the new *Home*. The influence of the various matrons and other *Home* workers often extended outside of the spaces of the ‘home’, as they were often called upon to work closely with lawyers as they took up court cases seeking to retain

¹⁵⁷ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, June 1897, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁸ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, January 1898, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

guardianship over some of the residents. Although not a government-funded institution, the administrators of the *Home* worked closely with many government agents. They interacted regularly with police, immigration officials, and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, one representative was called to testify at the *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*. These relationships were important not only for the success of the work—for instance many of the women in the *Home* were placed there by government agents—but also for adding legitimacy and prestige to the work. Rescue work was not always purely altruistic; many of the women involved in reform work or rescue work were often already influential women in their communities and many saw this type of work as a way to gain or increase status and influence (Pascoe 1990).

The work that white women did cultivated whiteness as authority and power, despite that there were limits for white women. While the women who oversaw the running of the *Home* were certainly able to exert only limited power, their *moral authority* had few limits. As Pascoe (1990), Burton (1994), and Perry (2001) have argued, although women may have had limited or in some cases no power in other realms such as political or economic realms, in the area of morality, women's authority usually went unchallenged. This moral authority found its roots in the domestic roles that women played. According to Hunt,

The association of women and morality was readily linked back to the more prosaic domesticity when women were ordained to have responsibility for the moral training of the young. Yet this distinctive moral identity of women also offered a form of intervention in the public realm on condition that the public dimension be conceptualized in religious or moral terms (Hunt 1999, 95).

White women, thus, benefited economically and socially from their mission work. However, white women were not able to escape gendered expectations completely.

In January of 1908, when the General Society donated a lot for the purpose of expanding

the *Home*, the women felt it necessary to appoint two new ‘associate members,’ both men, to the executive. When in April of the same year a special meeting was called to accept tenders for this project, the men took control of the meeting, including opening the meeting in prayer, a task routinely done by the chair of the committee. Likewise, in May of 1911, when the discussion of selling land was brought up, “a committee of gentlemen were named to consult” with the Advisory Committee.¹⁵⁹ In November of the same year, another special meeting was called regarding the sale of the lots, with all members present. Also in attendance were “a committee of gentlemen composed of Mesrs. [sic] Spencer, Burkholder, Adams and Pendray, the opinion of the gentlemen being needed regarding the sale of two fifty feet [sic] lots,” and the gentlemen were further “empowered to communicate with different agents.”¹⁶⁰ These men, then, acted as bridges between the domestic or private realm, and the market or public realm. Despite that the women felt inclined or compelled to consult with and ‘empower’ men on financial matters, these women continued to wield a great deal of power in even these matters. When in the following year their real estate agent approached the Committee, stating that “he found it difficult to find a buyer on account of the deal being such a large one and advised the committee to allow it to be divided into two lots in order to make the sale an easier matter”, the committee gave him the authority to do so, without any of the previously named gentlemen present.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, May 1911, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶⁰ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, November 1911, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶¹ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, March 1912, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

Although the women of the WMS might bow to the authority or expertise of men in some regards, their public deferral to men was not always quite what it seemed. When the Advisory Committee brought men into the meeting to discuss financial matters, their advice was sometimes sought on other matters and was not always taken. In June, 1907, when the Committee discussed the “necessity for larger and more improved premises” they brought in a “Dr. Sutherland, Revs. Dean Thomson, Turner and Adams, also J.W. Hooper the architect” to advise them on the matter.¹⁶² While still in the meeting, a discussion took place regarding the admittance of a ‘Hindu woman’ into the *Home*. During the discussion ‘Dr. Sutherland’ offered them a “word of caution” on this matter, after which the women decided to turn the matter over to the Executive board to make this decision.¹⁶³ Given that these women routinely made these types of decisions on their own, this decision to turn the matter over to the Executive board may have been a tactic designed to placate Dr. Sutherland, as the decision to admit this woman had already been made at an earlier meeting and she was subsequently invited into the *Home*, an invitation she eventually declined.

Sometimes, the relationships forged within the *Home* or in relation to the work done there afforded women opportunities for work outside of the *Home*. In 1898, for instance, the *Home* lost a valuable member of their staff when the matron, Miss Bowes, took a position in Vancouver

¹⁶² “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, June, 1907, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶³ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, June, 1907, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

as “police matron and City Missionary.”¹⁶⁴ White women were also able to extend their power by challenging Chinese and Japanese men’s legal rights as slave owners, guardians and parents or their matrimonial rights as husbands.¹⁶⁵ The domesticity of the *Home*, thus, provided legitimacy to white women’s sometimes very public roles. But, the walls of the *Home* also provided spaces which supported the aspirations of Japanese and Chinese women as well.

Escaping Oppression/Escaping the Home

While the *Home* offered an escape from the private realm for many white women, it also offered a means of escape for Japanese and Chinese women. Thus, crossing the threshold of the *Home* often meant freedom from oppressive circumstances, whether slavery or prostitution, for many of the early residents. Once in the *Home*, they were certainly subjected to other relations of power, as white women sought to evangelize and train them in Victorian morals and Christian values. For many, however, these interventions, while not always welcome, were often regarded to be preferable to prostitution, slavery, domestic abuse or unhappy marriages. One woman, Margaret Chan, recounts her journey to the *Home* in the following way:

My aunty was not good to me—always beat me, made me do all the work. My uncle was good. My aunty’s so cruel. ... Finally, they were going back to China, and they going to sell me to some people with a lot of children—so I run away to the Oriental Home. I was thirteen and a half, maybe fourteen (Women's Book Committee 1992, 28).¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, November 11th and November 21st, 1908, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter Six for a discussion of some of these cases.

¹⁶⁶ In the book *Jin Guo*, from which her story is taken, Margaret Chan gives her birth year as 1902. However, the records of the *Home* indicate she was only eleven years at the time, having given her birthday as April 1906. If her birthday was indeed 1902, she was likely 15 years old when she was admitted in April of 1917. It is possible that she hoped she would be treated better in the *Home* if she was thought to be younger, as younger women were often offered more educational opportunities.

Chan travelled alone from Vancouver to Victoria and was admitted to the *Home* in 1917. She recounts that she was required to attend church three times a day. Chan remained in the *Home* until she graduated from high school in 1923. While Chan does not disclose how she came to hear about the *Home* from Vancouver, once there she used the opportunity to obtain an education, eventually going on to ‘normal school’ to obtain her teaching certificate. She was even able to borrow \$50 from the *Home*’s teacher so that she could return to Hong Kong to get a teaching job (Women's Book Committee 1992). In this case, life in the *Home* offered opportunities that would not have been possible for Chan had she not run away from Vancouver.

For many Japanese women, the *Home* may have offered a door to autonomy. In her book *Hiroshima Immigrants in Canada, 1891-1941*, Michiko Midge Ayukawa (2008) explicates some of the reasons why Japanese women from Hiroshima came to Canada. While a variety of factors certainly contributed to the influx of Japanese women, for many, becoming a picture bride was a way to fulfill dreams of adventure (40-42). According to Ayukawa (2008), for some at least, the men who met them at the docks were not their motivations for travelling to Canada. Marriage was the only way for most Japanese women to travel to the West. Ayukawa (2008) recounts the following story of Ishikawa Yasu:

Until the age of twenty—which was old by the standards of the day—Ishikawa Yasu, whose siblings teased her about her homeliness, had not had any marriage proposals. She made up her mind to go overseas to practise midwifery, to earn a lot of money, and to prove her worth. However, ... she learned that she could go only as a bride. ... She recalled: ‘I had no idea what kind of person I had married, and what kind of life he was leading. Anyway, I had my heart set on coming here, and that was all I could think of. That was my dream, and I thought things would turn out all right. I was just a child, you see.’ (Ayukawa 2008, 41)

Most who travelled to Canada as picture brides had never seen the men who were to become their husbands and knew of them only through letters or recommendations by family members and friends. While most were not surprised by the men who met them, some were. Some of these

men were older; others were ‘feeble-minded’ (Ayukawa 2008, 41). Others were also abusive or neglectful. What surprised many of these women was the isolation and back-breaking work that was expected from them. “Isolation and hard work was their common experience. They faced harsher lives than they had ever imagined in Japan,” writes Ayukawa (2008, 46). It was these conditions that sometimes led women to seek shelter in the *Home*, for not only did the *Home* offer the means to escape abusive relationships, it also held the promise of sociality and a break from the physical toil that was their daily lives.

While some women voluntarily sought shelter in the *Home* in order to escape unhappy lives, others came to further their own aspirations in a white dominated nation. Some of these women exited the *Home*’s threshold quickly after they entered. This dual-crossing of thresholds is an indication that for some the *Home* was a stop-gap measure, allowing Chinese and Japanese women a space of refuge while they planned other types of escape. Once freed from their lives outside of the *Home*, some wives, prostitutes and ‘slave girls’ also used the *Home* as a temporary shelter from which they would soon escape, some to other men, others to Japan or China, and still others to cities like San Francisco, which the *Home* workers believed to be a hotbed of prostitution. Although the *Home* clearly privileged marriage and Victorian moral authority, it also offered some women respite to leave the confines of their domestic lives when it was deemed to be unhappy and dysfunctional. For women who found themselves without husbands, either through death, divorce, or abandonment, the *Home* also provided an alternative approach to isolation or widowhood, broadening the very few options that were available.

Many of the residents entered into the *Home* for reasons that were not deemed acceptable to those who administered and managed it. According to the minutes of 30 March 1900, “A Japanese woman had been taken into the home, but it was found her only motive was to learn English & lead others astray. She was therefore allowed to go after a trial of ten days.”¹⁶⁷ While it is unclear what led the Advisory Committee to believe she was there to lead others astray, clearly her motives for being in the *Home* were not compatible with the motives of those who ran it. The fears of the matron that this woman might lead others astray points to real concerns about alliances that were forged within the *Home*. This is borne out in the multiple stories of women who fled from the *Home* together. Thus, the *Home* might be surmised as a place where social relations and alliances were forged between the women who resided there.

The advisory board minutes also told the story of one woman who was brought to the *Home* against her will by her husband and then subsequently used the opportunity to make her escape. In 1919–20 one matron reported that “A Chinese woman, a third wife, came to us in the fall, but as we had every reason to believe she wished to go with another man, who had a wife in China, we encouraged her to return to her husband after two months stay here.”¹⁶⁸ As this example indicates, the policy of privileging marriage was not as straightforward as might be expected. On the one hand, those in the *Home* decried the practice of Chinese men having multiple wives. On the other, they encouraged this woman to leave the *Home* and return to such

¹⁶⁷ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, March 1900, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶⁸ *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1919–1920*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. cxi.

a scenario because of fears that she might be tempted into an adulterous relationship. Chinese women used the *Home* to empower themselves in other ways as well: in at least one case a woman, while in the *Home*, was able to negotiate a contract with her husband and his family before she agreed to return to her own home.¹⁶⁹ Claiming that she was badly treated by her mother-in-law, this young woman, “Mary”, who the *Home*’s records show to be twenty years old, was taken by her father to the *Home* for shelter. Nine days later, a contract was signed by her, her husband, and her father-in-law, after which time she left the *Home*. The four-page document, kept within a folder marked “Miscellaneous” in the *Home*’s records, promised that the father-in-law would “provide a home and domestic arrangements” for his son and the young woman, including “furniture, furnishings and equipment ... as will be approved of by the party of the third part [“Mary”] as sufficient and satisfactory.” Further, the document promised a monthly stipend be paid to the couple. Under these conditions and upon promises that they would be free from interference and cruelty, the woman returned to her husband.¹⁷⁰

Given that many in the province believed Chinese and Japanese populations to be inassimilable, the interventions by WMS women and other mission workers offered the women the promise of belonging.¹⁷¹ The *Chinese Rescue Home* was a space of ambivalence, imposing restrictions upon Japanese and Chinese women while simultaneously affording them a space/site of community and sociality. The *Home* was not simply about providing services for Chinese and

¹⁶⁹ “Agreement” in (Miscellaneous) *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives)

¹⁷⁰ “Agreement” in (Miscellaneous) *Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives)

¹⁷¹ For more on belonging and religious affiliation see Knowles (1995).

Japanese women, but it was about the imagining and re-imagining of the self in a *national* domestic context. It was about erasing difference as a way to assert superiority of the self through its embracing and transformation of difference into sameness. Japanese and Chinese women could never fully be at ‘home’ or equal within the *Home* without undermining the project itself. Welcomed into the *Home*, they were required to mimic and revere those who welcomed them, as well as distance themselves from that which made them ‘strangers’ in the first place. But they could never be released from the ‘strangeness’ upon which the project had been founded. Thus, the transformation was less about movement from stranger to friend, than it was about the redefinition of the stranger as the ‘friendly stranger,’ one who might be trusted, but never fully known.

This promise of being accepted, albeit as a friendly stranger, may have been an important motivation for Japanese and Chinese participation in mission activities. However, despite what was seen as mimicry or assimilation by many, as Knowles reminds us, participation in mission programs did not necessarily mean that Japanese and Chinese communities embraced Christianity wholeheartedly or uncritically.¹⁷² As has been shown, mimicry or adherence to rules in the *Home* may have been less about the values instilled in the women who resided there, and more about the opportunities that these women embraced in exchange for their compliance.

¹⁷² According to Norman Knowles, these programs were “designed to introduce Japanese women to the basics of Christianity and Canadian techniques in everything from parenting to sewing. ... The success, however, reflected less an acceptance of Christianity than a desire to escape the isolation and loneliness of domesticity” in “Religious affiliation, demographic change and family formation among British Columbia’s Chinese and Japanese Communities: A Case Study of Church of England Missions, 1861-1942”, in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 1995, Vol. 27, Issue 2. Kindergartens were especially appealing as, “For Japanese [and Chinese] families in which both parents worked, the mission kindergartens and day schools provided an inexpensive form of day care and a quality education for their children” in Knowles, “Religious affiliation”.

While the success of the *Home* may have been measured by white women by the numbers of women they reached, success for Chinese and Japanese women was achieved through availing themselves to opportunities for education and skills that often translated into respectability and financial rewards.

Conclusion

Blunt (2005a) aptly describes the home as “a material and an affective space, shaped by everyday practices, lived experiences, social relations, memories and emotions” (506). Despite its public mandate, the *Chinese Rescue Home* was no exception. Constructed in its material form as a Georgian manor house, the *Home* reflected and transmitted values associated with the British motherland and the Methodist fatherland. Offering an easily traversed threshold between the private and public realms, the *Home* conjured up notions of family and motherhood, which were reproduced in the training of Chinese and Japanese women as wives, nurses, teachers, missionaries, and servants. However, the *Home* also provided shelter for both white women and their charges while they dreamed and aspired to reach new places where they might otherwise have never been allowed to go. Those who crossed the threshold into the *Home* were afforded certain freedoms precisely because the *Home* was situated on the threshold between the foreign and the domestic and between the public and the private.

Built as a house, the *Home* encouraged women to model highly gendered roles for their charges. However, the space also provided white, Japanese, and Chinese women opportunities to further their own goals and aspirations. The women of the WMS used their moral authority to both police and protect the sexuality of Japanese and Chinese women through their confinement in the *Home*. Once in the *Home*, these white women had the power to make important decisions regarding not only the behaviours of the women while they were there, but regarding their futures as well. Decisions regarding when the girls and women were ‘allowed’

to pass back across the threshold to enter into service and to what homes they could go were made by the *Home*, as were decisions regarding who they might marry. The women of the WMS acted as guardians, albeit not always legal guardians, and, in some cases, took on decidedly maternal roles to these girls and women. Thus, home spaces allowed for increased power for white women. Although much of this power was limited to domestic spaces, the *Home* allowed women to cross the threshold from the domestic relationships to more formal relationships of institutional guardianship and moral reform. Likewise, despite their appearance of dependence, Japanese and Chinese women engaged in dual-crossings of thresholds as they used the spaces of the *Home* to serve their own ends.

Within the *Home*, the domestic realm, thus, played multiple roles, limiting and empowering the women within its walls. The work here was largely supported by those outside of the *Home*, as will be shown in the two chapters that follow. In the next chapter, I will argue that despite the support and prestige often offered to those in the *Home*, the relationships that were formed within the walls were seen as special and did not translate into support for similar ‘projects’ outside of the *Home*. Asian-white relations that were forged outside of the *Home* were viewed with considerable suspicion. Here, the state and her citizens worked together to delineate what was acceptable with regards to cross-racial contact, as well as familial ties.

Chapter Five: Outside the Walls of the *Home*: Men, Marriage, and Morals in the Public Arena

The space of the *Home* was an exceptional one¹⁷³ in that it allowed for carefully managed and intimate cross-racial contact. Within the walls of the *Home* cross-racial contact was seen as not only acceptable, but desirable and necessary to fulfill the project of Christian conversion and transformation. Ideologies of nation coalesced with discourses of gender, whiteness, and Christianity to produce domestic spaces of moral and racial transformation. Cross-racial contact was legitimized for two reasons. First, women were viewed as moral authorities and it was in their roles as moral regulators that they were able to intervene into the lives of Japanese and Chinese women. Second, the domestic realm was viewed as the most appropriate place for such interventions. The domestic realm was not only crucial because it reinforced the private/public divide. It was also the ideal space to domesticate these women, as it allowed for the physical training in proper womanhood/domesticity. Dealing with cross-racial relationships outside of these walls was more complex and therefore required further negotiations.

Moving outside of the *Home* and following its relationships and representations in newspapers and other documents provides a clearer picture of how and why the *Home* was exceptional when it came to cross-racial contact. By examining public responses to the work done in the *Home*, as well as the reactions of the community and the state to one man who attempted to take on a similar role, this chapter highlights how the absence of women's moral authority delegitimized these attempts. This chapter examines three related cases, two hearings

¹⁷³ See Balibar 2010 for a discussion of spaces of exception.

and one high-profile ‘kidnapping’ case, to highlight how state and civil agents worked to closely police cross-racial endeavours outside of the *Home*.

The cases cover an eighteen month period, from February 1887 to August 1888.¹⁷⁴ The first two hearings dealt with accusations of police corruption. John Gardiner, one of the founders of the *Home*, on two separate occasions accused Police Commissioner Charles Bloomfield of failing to carry out his duty. The first accusation stemmed from the Commissioner’s failure to help the *Home* in its rescue of two women and the second concerned Bloomfield’s failure to detain or arrest Walter Menzies, once a ‘friend’ of the *Home*, following accusations of kidnapping levelled against him by Gardiner. The third case focuses on the Menzies case. After he was finally apprehended, Menzies was charged with kidnapping two of the *Home*’s residents and then selling them, one in the US and one to a Chinese man in Victoria, although these charges would later be amended. By providing a discursive analysis of the coverage of these three cases in two newspapers, *The Victoria Daily Times* and the *British Colonist*, I first show how the state’s role in rescue work was ambivalent during the period when the *Home* was run primarily by men.¹⁷⁵ Second, I examine the public’s role in policing racial and gendered boundaries when the state failed to intervene in what was seen to be unsanctioned cross-racial contact. Lastly, the importance of marriage to the *Home* is juxtaposed against the court’s treatment of it to draw attention to the shifting meaning of ‘rescue work’ and the ways in which this work was legitimized through its association with women. These cases all highlight just how

¹⁷⁴ See Appendix for a timeline of the events discussed in this chapter.

¹⁷⁵ While court records are not available for the cases discussed here, a more thorough discussion of other court proceedings follows in the following chapter.

important discourses of the domestic and of domesticity were to this type of work. The relationships between the state, the public and the *Home*, as this newspaper coverage reveals, were not unidirectional. While the state played an active role in defining the domestic, this chapter also highlights the complex ways in which citizens attempted to discipline the state and other citizens, while at the same time being defined and disciplined by the state. It is important to emphasize here that the state applied its force not only through its power to act, but also through its refusal to intervene.

Within the walls of the *Home*, racial difference was contained, managed, and, by some accounts, transformed through the formation of familial ties. Thus, very little intervention was necessary from outside of the *Home's* walls, unless women and girls left before the supposed transformation was deemed complete. In these cases, attempts were made, sometimes with the assistance of the police, to bring these women back, to keep them at 'home.' Once the women and girls were deemed ready to leave the *Home*, gendered, racial, and class boundaries were maintained through their placement in service positions or back into the Chinese, and later Japanese, communities, most often as wives to Christian Chinese or Japanese men. However, in the absence of white women's (Christian) moral authority, similar forms of cross-racial contact were treated with fear and suspicion. This fear and suspicion required that more force be applied (and from more directions) in order to police the boundaries of race. Thus, outside of the protective walls of domesticity the preservation of boundaries of race and gender meant that those who crossed these boundaries were subject to moral regulatory projects in the form of both

public censure and state intervention. Defining the limits of the outside ‘walls’ of the *Home* also tell us much about how the inside was defined.

The State of Ambivalence¹⁷⁶

In February of 1887, a police committee inquiry was launched, seven months before Reverend Starr would write to the Woman’s Missionary Society (WMS) asking for their assistance with running the *Home*. A key player in this case was John Vrooman-Gardiner, henceforth referred to as Gardiner. Gardiner, the son of missionaries,¹⁷⁷ was known as a deeply religious man who in addition to being a “missionary of the Methodist Church among the Chinese,”¹⁷⁸ described himself as employed in the customs house. “I teach the Chinese, and was the principal person to start the home for Chinese girls,” he explained.¹⁷⁹ Gardiner also acted as an interpreter and translator; in one instance, he translated documents for the courts which were subsequently used as evidence in a case in which he was the purported victim. In his capacity as collector of customs, Gardiner had the “power to refuse the landing of a prostitute”¹⁸⁰ and thus was able to easily persuade or coerce Chinese women to enter the *Home*. His practice of ‘spiriting’ women away from ‘prostitution dens,’ as well as his control over their entry into the

¹⁷⁶ Given this chapter’s reliance on news accounts, it is important to note that I do not view newspapers as neutral sources. Their actions, whether they took the form of reporting or exposé, were practices of power. Drawing on Foucault’s (2003) definition of power as “a productive network that runs through the whole social body” (307), I suggest that the newspaper not only produced accounts of these cases, but shaped public opinion about them and more specifically about what constituted appropriate cross-racial contact, such as was to be found within the *Home*. Conceived in this way, newspapers might thus be considered as active texts, as both shaping and shaped by public opinion and sentiment (Smith 1990).

¹⁷⁷ Both of Vrooman-Gardiner’s parents were missionaries for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in China.

¹⁷⁸ J.E. Starr to E.S. Strachan, September 1887, *Oriental Home and School funds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives).

¹⁷⁹ “Police Court” *British Colonist*, January 18, 1888 p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

country made him an enemy to some Chinese community members. In fact, two Chinese men were accused of conspiring to murder Gardiner for these very reasons. Eventually, the men were acquitted, largely because questions were raised regarding the validity of Gardiner's translations. In addition to attending raids on houses of prostitution, Gardiner also made use of connections at the local jail in order to interview Chinese women who were arrested by police.

The subject of the first police inquiry was as follows. It seems that Mr. Gardiner, who had begun to 'rescue' Chinese women and girls from 'slavery' or 'prostitution,' upon learning that two young Chinese women had been taken into custody, went to the barracks and interviewed the two women. What he discovered was "that they were girls who had been brought here a year before by a procuress and that they were kept in a house of prostitution."¹⁸¹ Gardiner then communicated these facts to Police Commissioner Bloomfield, explaining that it was his intention to "rescue these girls from the dens."¹⁸² It was Bloomfield's reluctance to aid Gardner in his quest to rescue these women that caused Gardiner to levy charges of corruption against him, resulting in this hearing. During the inquiry that was launched to deal with these accusations, Gardiner testified that after discussing his intentions with Bloomfield, Gardiner then proceeded to obtain an order of guardianship from the Supreme Court. But as Gardiner explained, despite his requests that Bloomfield sign an affidavit, Bloomfield failed to show up for the meeting. Subsequently, when the young women did not appear in court, Bloomfield led Gardiner to believe that they were released on bail. Only after Gardiner sent his lawyer to ask

¹⁸¹ "Police Committee Inquiry" *British Colonist*, February 20, 1887, p. 4.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Bloomfield to forfeit the bail bonds, did Bloomfield explain that the bonds had never been signed and they were thus of little use. Gardiner requested that warrants be issued for the women's arrest, but at the time of the committee inquiry, they had yet to be found.¹⁸³

Gardiner pled his case to the Police Committee, complaining that "these girls were of great value; I had a bill of sale showing their value; it is my intention to break up this system of slavery and asked Mr. Bloomfield to help me: but what assistance do I get?"¹⁸⁴ His lawyer, Thornton Fell,¹⁸⁵ further went on to explain that after preparing the papers requesting guardianship "amongst which was an affidavit of Mr. Bloomfield in support of the order",¹⁸⁶ he had sent a draft of the affidavit to Mr. Bloomfield. His clerk returned, explaining that Bloomfield would be at the "office in five minutes to swear it."¹⁸⁷ Despite efforts to locate Bloomfield, it was not until the following day that the document was sworn, after he was tracked down at the police court by the clerk of Gardiner's lawyer. When called to testify to the inquiry, Bloomfield explained that the women had been released by mistake and that despite many attempts to find them, he had been unable to do so.

The inquiry continued a week later. Counsellor Higgins, who chaired the inquiry, concluded that:

the charge of corruption had fallen to the ground. There had been great carelessness – he would not say culpable carelessness. The superintendent

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Thornton Fell is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, as he was not only Gardiner's attorney but the Home's as well.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ "Police Committee Inquiry." *British Colonist*, February 27, 1887, , p. 4.

admitted that he had made an error in liberating the girls and, in absence of any evidence that he had been bribed to do so, the committee was bound to clear him of the charge of corruption.¹⁸⁸

Although Gardiner believed that Bloomfield was purposefully subverting his work with Chinese women, the inquiry found that the actions of the superintendent were attributable to carelessness, not maliciousness. Very little concern was raised in the hearing about Gardiner's claims that Bloomfield was undermining the work of the *Home*. The committee's decision in the case instead focused on whether Bloomfield was guilty of corruption in his dealings with the Chinese. The committee did not seem to find Bloomfield's reluctance to aid Gardiner's work the least bit disturbing—an indication that in its early stages, the *Home* was not viewed favourably by the police, nor by the committee that governed the police. This perception would change once the WMS took over, with police actively assisting in the return of run-away girls as well as placing many women within the *Home*'s walls.

Bloomfield's failures to support Gardiner's work through his unwillingness to sign affidavits and through his inaccessibility were dismissed. The only question that remained was whether or not Bloomfield's reluctance to support Gardiner in his attempts to save the two women could be attributed to bribery by Chinese community members. Once it was clear that there was no evidence of bribery, the case was dismissed. Despite clearing the superintendent of the charges, however, the committee did not close their meeting immediately. Instead, Commissioner David Higgins, Chair of the Committee, commended Mr. Gardiner for his

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

fearlessness in coming forward. Here, Higgins made three important points worth exploring.

First, Commissioner Higgins decried the practice of the “sale of female children for immoral purposes”¹⁸⁹ and called upon not only police officers to stop it, but also upon the public to do what they could to stop this trade. Thus, the commissioner brought to the fore the importance of civil policing as an additive to formal policing in the moral regulation of (racial) problems. In reporting the commissioner’s comments, the newspaper called citizens to action.¹⁹⁰ Here, the police, as an arm of the state, in a matter that was not directly related to the trafficking of Chinese women and children, not only underscored its own authority, but also deputized the public to take up the charge to end this human trade. Although unwilling to chastise Bloomfield for not supporting this work, Commissioner Higgins took this time to applaud those who helped stop ‘this trade’ as well as to publicly shame those who participated in trafficking women.

The second point Higgins made was that for “those who aided and abetted ... [the sale of female children for immoral purposes], hanging was too good.”¹⁹¹ Higgins not only denounced the sale of these women, but then went on to juxtapose these actions against the actions of those moral citizens who tried to stop it. Those who “contributed ever so little to stop it, deserved the public thanks,”¹⁹² Higgins explained, but for those who aided it in any way, even death was too lenient. Thus, Higgins utilized this inquiry into the accusations of police corruption to stand as a warning to those who abetted the so-called morally inferior Chinese and who perpetuated this

¹⁸⁹ “Police Committee Inquiry.” *British Colonist*, February 27, 1887, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ “Police Committee Inquiry.” *British Colonist*, February 27, 1887, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

trade. Although corruption was not proven in the case of Bloomfield, Higgins' warning implied that police corruption in Victoria remained a possibility, as he encouraged others to report their suspicions regarding officials.¹⁹³ Although I was unable to find other formal complaints of police corruption during this period, Higgins' warning implied that bribery and corruption were not farfetched.

Higgins' final point emphasized the duty of the public in preventing corruption. Not only were the Chinese to be policed aggressively by private citizens, but so too were the police themselves. Higgins, and subsequently the press, encouraged the example that Gardiner had set, emphasizing that if all other citizens of Victoria would follow this example to "come forward and publicly state their suspicions against officials, instead of slander and back-biting to damage character, the moral tone of the community would be much improved."¹⁹⁴ The implication was clear. In Higgins' perception at least, Victoria was a community where moral problems extended beyond the conventional accounts of Chinese depravity. Rather, the problem was much wider: slander and back-biting threatened the integrity of the white community. If this police inquiry was any indication, the best way to end the divisions in the white community was to publicly discredit the charges of police corruption. Outright denial of corruption was not necessary. Neither was the condemnation of the man, Mr. Gardiner, who instigated the investigation. Instead, Higgins applauded Gardiner and by doing so championed the success of the investigation.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ "Police Committee Inquiry." *British Colonist*, February 27, 1887, p. 4.

As this and the next cases show, although the Police Committee took Gardiner's complaint seriously, very little attention was paid to the Chinese girls' fates. This was something that would change dramatically once the Woman's Missionary Society took over the running of the *Home*. Court cases and public attention became much more focused on protecting the domestic realm and cementing the place of Japanese and Chinese women within its walls. However, men and their public responsibilities became central once more as Bloomfield and Gardiner faced off again at a second inquiry. Bloomfield was once more accused of a failure to act, but this time the accusations were concerned with his failure to arrest Walter R. Menzies.

Walter Menzies, by all accounts, appeared to be a well-respected member of the Victoria community. Usually addressed as 'Professor Menzies,' the man represented himself as a magnetic healer.¹⁹⁵ He was also active in the church community and was an avid supporter of the *Home*. In fact, his mother-in-law, Mrs. Hopkins, was one of the early matrons who worked in the *Home*, prior to the era of the WMS. Given that Menzies was an early supporter of the *Home*, the relationship between Gardiner and Menzies most likely began as a positive one. What caused the rift between the two men is difficult to determine, but what transpired in May and June of 1888 would make clear that any friendship that once existed was now over.

It was Gardiner, with the support of two clergymen, who evoked his role as 'concerned citizen' to publicly accuse Menzies of kidnapping and selling two Chinese girls who resided in

¹⁹⁵Although the term 'magnetic healer' might easily suggest Menzies was a charlatan, prior to this case, Menzies' trade seemed to be well respected. For instance, one article published in May 1886, stated that although the many marvellous cures cited by Menzies may have seemed impossible, "the facts remain unchallenged, and the persons whose statements have been made public have fully verified every case presented; many of the people are well-known residents, and their testimony cannot be denied." "Seeming Impossibilities." *British Colonist*, May 13, 1886, p. 3.

the *Home*. The charges against Menzies alleged that he sold one of the girls across the border in the United States, and the other to a Chinese man in Victoria as his wife. These accusations were directed at Menzies through a newspaper article entitled “Trafficking in Girls” which appeared on 30 May 1888.¹⁹⁶ Whereas this initial exposé did not name its sources, it would become evident in the inquiry that followed that this story had been brought forward by Mr. Gardiner, Reverend Starr, and Reverend Fraser. The newspaper report that first brought to light these accusations against Menzies did not, initially, produce any formal state actions. The police did not move to arrest Menzies, nor did they prevent him from leaving the city. In fact, the first state actions took the form of an investigation and inquiry into the dual failures of those concerned citizens who targeted Menzies in the press and the police who failed to act on their accusations.

The *Times* article that initially exposed Menzies was quickly followed by an article in the rival newspaper, the *Colonist* the following day. The article explained that the chief of police had written a communication questioning why the information in the *Times* had not been reported to the police before being leaked to the newspaper. The following day, on 1 June 1888, the *Colonist* reported that it seemed “strange that the police were not informed of the matter; or that the gentlemen having knowledge of the affair should not have sworn out an information against the offender.”¹⁹⁷

The *Times* responded to the accusations made by the *Colonist* that the matter should have been laid before the police:

¹⁹⁶ “Trafficking in Girls.” *Daily Times*, May 30, 1888, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷ “The Chinese Case: The ‘Times’ Charge Against Prof. Menzies of Selling Chinese Girls.” *The British Colonist*, June 1, 1888, p.1.

The *Colonist*, which awoke this morning to the realization of the importance of the subject, expresses surprise that the facts were not laid before the police. The *Times* laid the matter very fully before the police on Wednesday evening, and Menzies was still in the city at midnight—six hours after Chief Bloomfield asked the Council to hold an investigation. An ‘investigation’ of the steamer between 12:30 and the time she sailed would have resulted in the capture, if such were desired, of the culprit.¹⁹⁸

The implications here were that the police might have been more concerned with clearing their own names than with the apprehension of Menzies. This was a theme that was quickly picked up in the *Colonist*—it was not only their writers who followed this line of thinking, but also Mr. Gardiner. In a letter to the editor, Gardiner asked the question: “What did the police do when they *were* communicated with?” He then answered his own question stating, “they had ample time to detain him, and *failed to do so*. How is that for the efficiency of the police? Strange, is it, that the police were not informed of this matter? The wonder is that after such an act of gross negligence in the performance of his duties, public opinion has not compelled the Chief of Police to join Menzies in his meanderings.”¹⁹⁹

On the same page, the *Colonist* formed a reply. Pritchard and Berkowitz (1991) have argued that letters to the editor must be understood not only as reactions, but as themselves responsive to the past and as shaping future content of news reporting. Understanding the newspaper as an active text that is in dialogue with the social body and that is a form of action and re-action, of production and re-production, points to the rhizomatic qualities of moral regulation, and the role of the newspaper in creating and shaping reality. Although not

¹⁹⁸ “‘Professor’ Menzies.: Left the City Thursday Morning—A Few More Incidents.” *The Daily Times*, June 1, 1888, p. 4.

¹⁹⁹ “The ‘Menzies’ Affair” (a). *The British Colonist*, June 2, 1888, p. 4, emphasis in original.

mentioning Gardiner's accusations directly, the *Colonist* included a short, twelve-line column which bore the same heading as Gardiner's letter. Entitled "The 'Menzies Affair,'" the column began as follows:

It is trusted that action will be taken by the Police Committee and that a searching inquiry will be instituted into the charges proffered against Prof. Menzies of kidnapping and selling a Chinese girl for base purposes. It is true Menzies has departed, but as the Chief of Police is charged with being derelict in his duty in not detaining Menzies, the whole matter should be thoroughly sifted and the evidence of all concerned in the matter obtained.²⁰⁰

Here, the newspaper made clear its faith in the state to deal with its official's failure to act. That a man *should* be detained based entirely on the merits of a newspaper account was not questioned here, an indication that the press held a great deal of power and leverage in the community. Instead, a formal investigation took place to probe "the alleged failure of the police to do their duty."²⁰¹ While the *British Colonist* framed this as an inquiry into police misconduct, the initial request for an investigation came from Chief Bloomfield himself, who asked that the three men behind this exposé "be communicated with as to whether they reported the facts [regarding their initial accusations against Menzies] to the police or called their assistance ... [and] their reasons for not doing so."²⁰² Although Bloomfield had called for the initial investigation into the failure of *citizens* to act, very quickly the focus began to shift to Bloomfield's own failures.

In the investigation, the three gentlemen explained why they chose to expose Menzies in

²⁰⁰ "The 'Menzies' Affair" (b). *The British Colonist*, June 2, 1888, p. 4.

²⁰¹ "The 'Menzies' Affair." *British Colonist*, June 5, 1888, p. 4

²⁰² "'Professor' Menzies: An Investigation to be Held on Monday Next." *The Daily Times*, June 2, 1888, p. 4.

the press. Their motivations were explained by Gardiner in the following way: “The reason was because we have lost confidence in the Chief and for reasons that we can substantiate.”

Gardiner then went on to explain that “This very case proves it, as there was time to detain Menzies after the *Times* appeared with the exposure.”²⁰³ Both the newspaper and Gardiner claimed that the police knew of Menzies’ situation, did not act, and purposefully refused to intervene even as Menzies left the city. The police’s failure to act was an indication that while the police did not actively support the work of the *Home* in these early stages, neither were they willing to become involved with adjudicating the right of the *Home* or of Menzies to detain Chinese or Japanese women, something the courts would later become involved with in various habeas corpus cases.²⁰⁴ However, the Police Committee did take such public accusations seriously. Present at the meeting to investigate the alleged failures of the police were Mayor Grant, Aldermen S.T. Styles, Charles Penwill, and John Coughlan, Superintendent Bloomfield, and unnamed members of the police committee. Also in attendance were Reverends D. Fraser and J.E. Starr, and Mr. Gardiner.

The three men, including Gardiner, expressed concerns that the investigation was directed at finding wrongdoing in their actions. In fact, Gardiner initially refused to testify unless formal charges were brought against him, but once reassured that the investigation was to be focused on the police, he replied “if that is the lines you are going on, we are here at your service.”²⁰⁵ Gardiner then went on to openly accuse the police chief of knowing “perfectly well that Menzies

²⁰³ “‘Prof’ Menzies Case: An Investigation Before the Police Committee About Menzies” *The Daily Times*, June 5, 1888, p. 4.

²⁰⁴ Habeas corpus cases will be discussed in more detail in the chapter that follows.

²⁰⁵ “‘Prof,’ Menzies Case: An Investigation Before the Police Committee About Menzies.” *The Daily Times*, June 5, 1888, p. 4.

was in town.”²⁰⁶ He continued, explaining that they could “prove that the chief knew Menzies was in town the night of the exposure, and that the police knew an hour and a half before the Yosemite started that Menzies was on board of her.”²⁰⁷ Whether or not the superintendent was aware of the matter forged the basis of the discussion to follow. The matter was left unresolved, but two days later when the board met again, discussion resumed, this time in the absence of those who had testified. It was resolved and subsequently reported in the *British Colonist* that given Menzies had yet to be convicted and “not having been brought to trial the police were not much to blame as if Menzies had been tried and convicted.”²⁰⁸ The investigation was considered to be closed, as the police could not be seen to be guilty of letting a criminal escape their jurisdiction unless it was proven that Menzies was in fact a criminal.

The resolution of this case was interesting both because it did not seem to consider the past investigation, despite the fact that many similarities existed, and because of the logic by which the investigation was resolved. Gardiner was called to testify in this investigation and yet the previous investigation that he initiated was not referenced in his testimony. Gardiner did, however, comment that he had lost all confidence in Bloomfield, a loss that was most likely informed by the previous case. This investigation, like the previous one, also dealt with Chinese women who were at one time accused of being prostitutes and who had contact with Mr. Gardiner. This contact occurred while he was in an official capacity as an administrator of the *Home*. Like the previous case, the committee did not seem to be concerned with the protection of

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ “Board of Aldermen.” *British Colonist*, June 7, 1888, p. 4.

Chinese women. Nor did they address Bloomfield's alleged disregard for their protection. By focusing only on Menzies, the committee deemed that Bloomfield was not at fault. The dismissal of the investigation was premised not on whether or not Bloomfield knew enough to act, but on whether or not Menzies was guilty, a fact only knowable subsequent to a court case. The irony was that this case had to be dropped because Bloomfield had allegedly allowed Menzies to leave the jurisdiction. Thus, the reason that he had been investigated in the first place became his saving grace in the resolution of this case. This circular logic allowed Bloomfield to escape investigation once more. Although Menzies was eventually found guilty, the investigation into Bloomfield's actions was never reopened.

The press, while instrumental in exposing Menzies, could not bring him to trial. Despite the fact that Gardiner and his colleagues acted in concert with the newspaper in order to publicly expose Menzies in such a way that the police would have no choice but to act, the police still refused to intervene, forcing Gardiner and the *Times* to then expose the police for failing to act on this information. The state was then forced into acting, if not in support of the *Home*, then certainly in clearing the police of wrong doing. It is also likely that it was the subsequent, almost unrelenting attention that the press paid to this case that was instrumental in convincing Menzies that he had no recourse but to return to face the charges. There was little chance that he could return unnoticed to resume his life in Victoria. Thus, the 'moral geography' (Taylor 2010, 307) of Victoria was mapped in such a way that the city was closed off to Menzies unless he was able to prove himself innocent of these charges.

Transformation or Trafficking: The Search for (Male) Moral Authority

The *Daily Times* exposed Menzies and his alleged crimes with sensational headlines: "Trafficking in Girls" appeared as the bold headline, followed by two sub-headlines which were even more sensational. "A Trafficker in Human Flesh—A Magnetic Healer Turned Slave Dealer"

reads one, while the second reads “An Unprecedented Case of Villainy—Details of the Plot Laid Bare.”²⁰⁹ Throughout the story, the newspaper sensationalized the case, portraying Menzies as an opportunistic magnetic healer who, driven by greed, kidnapped and then sold Chinese girls, upon whom his “magnetism was being exerted with more than usual vigor”.²¹⁰ This description of him not only called into question the legitimacy of his profession but also hinted at the possibility that he might be involved in sexual relationships with these girls. While these points were never substantiated, they exacerbated existing anxieties surrounding sexuality and racial mixing.

In what follows, I will argue that although Menzies’ actions were not substantially different than those routinely practiced within the walls of the *Home*, Menzies lacked the moral authority necessary to ‘transform’ the young women and therefore was accused, instead, of trafficking them. The scandal that followed was premised on the distinction between transformation and trafficking. This distinction is important, as the line between the two would be instrumental in defining the limits and possibilities of the *Home*. The newspaper used various tactics to draw their readers into the scandal of this particular case. Throughout the article, the author emphasized key words such as ‘slavery’ and ‘shame’ in order to draw the reader in, again hinting at sexual aspects of the case which were never to be corroborated (See Figure 8.)

²⁰⁹ “‘Trafficking in Girls.’” *Daily Times*, May 30, 1888, p. 4.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

crime. The two girls in question were
 at one time inmates of the "Home" for
 Chinese girls and women, rescued from
 SLAVERY AND SHAME
 by Mr. J. E. Gardiner, a gentleman who
 had taken a deep interest in rescuing
 Chinese girls from lives of shame; but

Figure 8: "Trafficking in Girls." *Daily Times*, 30 May 1888, p. 4.

By calling attention to the "slavery and shame" from which the two Chinese women were rescued by Mr. Gardiner, the newspaper legitimated the existence of the *Chinese Rescue Home*. Although cross-racial contact was also evident between Gardiner and these women, here, the contact was authorized by his role in administrating the *Home* and through the domestic spaces that would house the women. Domesticity, Christian purity, and benevolence, therefore, were seen to inoculate Gardiner and were juxtaposed against characterizations of Menzies as a sexualized 'magnetic healer.' Further, Gardiner's contact with the women he rescued was short-term and always buffered by the matron of the *Home*.

In addition, this article juxtaposed the work that Gardiner did against the actions of Menzies through the following phrases: "MARRY THE CHINAMAN", "HAVE THE GIRL FOR \$150" and "SMUGGLING LOI HO."²¹¹ The newspaper accused Mr. Menzies of *selling* the Chinese girl, Ah Lin, to the 'Chinaman' for \$150. Further, the newspaper indicated that it was Reverend Starr, another founder of the *Home*, who uncovered this plot to sell the Chinese girl

²¹¹ "Trafficking in Girls." *Daily Times*, May 30, 1888, p. 4.

under the guise of marriage. According to this account, Reverend Starr “refused to perform the ceremony, unless Mr. Gardiner or some trustworthy interpreter could be present, giving as his reason that the majority of Chinese marriages in this country had been farcical in the extreme.”²¹² However, given that the young woman, Ah Lin, had claimed abuse at the hands of the matron of the *Home*, avoiding contact with Gardiner was likely an important consideration. The Chinese man, Ah Chee, and the two women, Loi Ho and Ah Lin, were framed as victims of Menzies, but the greater problem seemed to be the propensity of the Chinese (and Menzies) to disregard or worse yet, misuse, the sanctity of Christian marriage. Menzies’ crime, then, was that he facilitated an already inherent Chinese depravity. The sensational nature of this article rested on the newspaper’s ability to create the problem as a foreign, dangerous, and exotic one. One objective of such sensationalism was to inform and protect Victoria’s white readership.

The *Times* began its story of the Menzies case by explaining that it was their “painful duty to publish the detailed account of certain operations, the like of which is not in the memory of the oldest resident of this province, and for vileness of purpose, for the audacity of the operator, and the utterly revolting nature of the crime, has never been surpassed.”²¹³ Although there had been many crimes whose severity far exceeded the ones that Menzies was accused of, his crimes resulted in no loss of life or physical assault, the newspaper placed this particular crime as having never been surpassed in terms of ‘vileness of purpose.’ Moreover, Menzies was accused of crimes no greater than crimes that were frequently attributed to the Chinese

²¹² “‘Trafficking in Girls,’” *Daily Times*, May 30, 1888, p. 4.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

population in Victoria. His accusers claimed that he kidnapped and sold young Chinese women into the slave trade in one case, and into a false marriage in another. Certainly these were crimes that were routinely attributed to Chinese men, as the *Home* was in fact built on these assumptions. Thus, one must ask why Menzies' crimes were seen as unsurpassed in the province. The answer, I believe, lies not in the nature of the crimes, but in the fact that they were allegedly committed by someone who had previously been viewed as a respectable white citizen, and by virtue of the supposed effects of these crimes on the white population. Menzies challenged not only racial boundaries, but the suggestion was that he also violated sexual and gendered ones.

This violation took place, not through *contact* with Chinese women, for as others in this case were quick to point out, within the walls of the *Home* the WMS also facilitated marriages and held Chinese women, sometimes against their will. The contamination took place, instead, through the *unsanctioned* contact with Chinese women and the facilitation and perversion of *white* rites of marriage. Menzies' contact with the women was not part of the transformative project that the *Home* was engaged in, but instead was seen as a *relationship* between a white man and Chinese women. Further, it was a relationship which perverted a Christian institution, marriage, a point that the judge would emphasize in his ruling once the case went to trial.

Gender and gender boundaries were central to this case. Although the alleged victims in this case were Chinese, the newspaper repeatedly emphasized that they were women, thus pointing to their vulnerability as women. The 'Chinese girls' were first described as "two young girls of this city" and only belatedly as *Chinese* girls. In fact, the newspaper account references

the Chinese-ness of these girls in an almost apologetic way, explaining that they were “Chinese girls, to be sure, but girls nonetheless.”²¹⁴ The newspapers, by emphasizing the gendered nature of the crime, implied that the risk was not isolated to the Chinese community. Yet, the newspaper’s readers were not likely to fall victim to Menzies’ alleged trafficking scheme, both because his victims were Chinese and because Menzies himself had left town. White readers, the newspaper implied, were at risk in other ways. First, their trust in Menzies was misdirected; even his “legitimate art of healing” had to be questioned so that white readers would not be duped by this man. Second, the newspaper’s readers were at risk from the Chinese population as well. The crimes were framed as having their origin in the Chinese community. Thus, the white audience needed to be educated as to the threat posed by this purportedly deviant population. The newspaper, therefore, was quick to point out not only Chinese attitudes towards marriage, but the rebellious nature of the Chinese girls themselves that were at the root of this crime. The newspaper explained that after Mr. Gardiner had rescued the Chinese girls from their lives of shame, “these two[,] disliking the rules and discipline of all well regulated institutions of a like reformatory nature, preferred leaving the ‘Home’ and hiring themselves to two European families in this city.” It was partly their greed and rebellion, therefore, that caused them to be “taken advantage of by the ‘Professor’”²¹⁵

Although framed as ingratitude, the motivations behind the movement of these two young women outside of the *Home* can also be understood as strategic. Once freed from their

²¹⁴ “‘Trafficking in Girls.’” *Daily Times*, May 30, 1888, p. 4.

²¹⁵ “‘Trafficking in Girls.’” *Daily Times*, May 30, 1888, p. 4.

former lives as ‘prostitutes’ or ‘slave girls,’ these young women were likely not content to be subjected to new forms of domination. Their freedom won, these young women were determined to make the most of it, even if it meant leaving the security of the *Home*. However, as they would quickly learn, outside of the *Home* their chances for success were far from certain. Their contact with whites outside of the *Home* not only put the girls at risk, but Victoria’s white populace as well. Menzies’ crimes were considered so great that they were to be understood as “a terrible outrage upon society, an infamous wrong upon humanity, and a scandal and disgrace to the community in which, in the broad glare of day and under the very noses of the guardians and enforcers of the law, it has so brazenly been enacted.”²¹⁶ Here, the newspaper underscored the outrageousness not only of the crime, but of the scandal and disgrace that it caused the white population. White society was at risk not only from exposure to the vile crimes of Menzies, but from the contamination that was brought *into* the white community through the intermixing of Chinese and European populations.

Lending Legitimacy: The Women Weigh In

The newspapers that reported on the Walter Menzies case became sites where competing truth claims were negotiated in a public forum. These struggles over truth unfolded in the publication of editorials, letters, and even affidavits of those involved in the case. To this end, women actively participated in the discussions, using their moral authority to lend legitimacy to each side. Once Menzies had left the country, the state, through the courts, could not act. Therefore the case would be ‘tried’, at least initially, in the press. One of the first people to weigh

²¹⁶ Ibid.

in on this case was Jennie Menzies, the wife of Menzies. In her letter, Jennie Menzies not only championed her husband's innocence, but also levelled some accusations of her own against Gardiner and the *Home*. That it was Jennie Menzies who wrote the letter to the newspaper and not her husband suggests two things. First, white women's moral authority was utilized not only within the *Home's* walls, but outside of them as well, as Jennie Menzies condemned the behaviour of both John Gardiner and the matron in the *Home*. Second, Jennie Menzies' 'testimony' was meant to bring the cross-racial contact back into the more legitimate domestic realm.

On 4 July 1888, an explanatory article accompanied Menzies' letter in *The British Colonist*. The article explained that the *Times*' reporting was one-sided, that it was only right that the other side of the story be told, and thus it was publishing the letter from Mrs. Menzies. The article did not stop there. While it did not defend Menzies' actions directly, it did point out that his actions were, according to "some people who claim to be well-informed on the matter," not substantially different from the actions of Mr. Gardiner, his accuser. The article claimed that "Mr. Gardner has been in the habit of demanding and receiving from Chinese who married girls out of the house monies on account of board, etc."²¹⁷ Jennie Menzies' letter continued in this vein.

Dated 26 June 1888, the letter was sent from Oakland, California. Menzies' wife laid out her account of the events that culminated in the accusations levelled at Menzies. In her version of events, she carefully documented her role in aiding her husband's 'rescue' of one of the Chinese girls around whom this case revolved. Written almost a month after Menzies had been

²¹⁷ "The Menzies Affair." *The British Colonist*, July 4, 1888, p.4.

accused of skipping town in order to dodge investigation, Menzies' wife claimed to be "much surprised to see ... an account of the inveigling—so-called—of two girls from the 'Chinese Home' by Professor Menzies."²¹⁸ Jennie Menzies quickly followed this with her claim that there "are many people in Victoria who know how untruthful that statement is, none better than Mr. Gardiner himself."²¹⁹ Immediately placing herself in opposition to Mr. Gardiner, Mrs. Menzies called into question not only the facts as they had been laid out in previous accounts, but the integrity of Gardiner as well. Given Gardiner's involvement in the matters of the *Home*, Mrs. Menzies was also calling into question the integrity of the *Home*. As a woman, Mrs. Menzies drew on her moral authority to morally assess the work of the *Home*.

Jennie Menzies was not content to blacken the reputation of the *Home* by inference and innuendo alone. Her version of events began with the following account:

On the 14th of January last the two girls in question ran away from the Home to Mrs. L.M. Fowler's house. They complained of having been terribly beaten and nothing would induce them to return to the Home. That was Saturday. Mrs. Fowler waited all afternoon and up to midnight, expecting someone to come to see if they were there. She had been their matron. No one came or made any inquiry whatever about them.²²⁰

Here, Menzies not only implicated the Matron of the *Home* in charges of physical abuse, but also implied that the Matron and Gardiner were unconcerned about the absence of these two girls. According to Menzies, she and her husband had spoken to Gardiner after the incident and had

²¹⁸ "Traffic in Chinese." *The British Colonist*, July 4, 1888, p.2

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

informed him that they would take one of the girls and find someone else to take the other in. Here she implied not only association with the *Home* but also its consent.

By accusing the *Home* of misconduct and neglect, Jennie Menzies simultaneously reinforced her own moral authority and placed both herself and her husband into the role of rescuers. Penned by Jennie Menzies and not her husband, the letter was able to avoid allegations of sexual depravity by framing their *own* home as a substitute rescue home. The domestic space of the home helped to legitimize the Menzies' interventions. Given the legitimacy offered by women's moral authority, it was imperative that a woman intervene on behalf of these young girls. Yet, despite the motherly care that Mrs. Menzies could offer, no religious transformation was suggested in her account. Therefore, the relationships forged between the Menzies and their charges continued to be viewed by the newspapers as suspicious. Despite her confessed involvement in this case, Mrs. Menzies was never charged. From the safety of California, Mrs. Menzies was able to defend herself and her husband and also cast a shadow over Gardiner and the *Home*. This case, in fact, was "tried" for a full month in the newspapers before any formal charges were laid. Jennie Menzies and other women and men used the press to do what the courts were unable to do: address (or level) charges and offer testimony before the court of public opinion.

Despite the fact that the 'Professor' and his wife were not in Victoria to defend themselves, the letter made clear that neither had anything to hide. Jennie Menzies plainly stated that she and her husband "made no secret of it, and the only reason Prof. Menzies would have

had for making evasive replies would be to *shield Mr. Gardner and the 'Home.'*”²²¹ Mrs. Menzies went on to state that “except for the matron of the Home there was no one the girls were more afraid of than Mr. Gardner.”²²² Here, any secretiveness was framed not as linked to their guilt, but as a protective strategy. Why Mrs. Menzies would feel the desire to protect the *Home* was unclear and thus highlights an interesting contradiction. Although she claimed that her husband was only secretive in an attempt to spare Mr. Gardiner and the *Home*, she simultaneously implicated the *Home* and Gardiner in behaviour that should have been reported, not hidden. One must ask, what fuelled the desire to protect Mr. Gardiner and the *Home*? Further, why did Jennie Menzies overcome this protectionist desire and why did she do so in such a public fashion?

The initial desire to protect the *Home* may have been attributed to racial loyalties. To accuse Gardiner and the *Home* based on the stories of two Chinese girls would have upset racial logics that existed during this period, logics that would become obvious in the court case that followed. The testimony, formal or informal, of the Chinese girls could not be privileged over and above the reputation of the white men and women who ran the *Home*. However, as the case became less about the accusations of the two Chinese girls and instead shifted to accusations levelled from one white man to another, the Menzies’ need to protect the *Home* was overcome by the need to defend against such an attack. The accusations against Gardiner and the *Home* were not about the protection of the Chinese girls, but about the preservation of Professor and Jennie

²²¹ “Traffic in Chinese.” *The British Colonist*, July 4, 1888, p.2

²²² *Ibid.*

Menzies. In her letter, therefore, Jennie Menzies directed numerous charges against the *Home* in general and against Gardiner in particular. Among these was the aforementioned abuse, as well as claims that the young girls were turned away from both Gardiner's home and from the "Rescue Home" despite that they were barefoot in the snow. She also charged Mr. Gardiner with *pretending* to rescue a young woman from Chinatown, subsequently charging the woman's husband for her board and clothing, and then having them remarried under western traditions before allowing the woman to be released. In her eyes, this was evidence that Mr. Gardiner was marrying Chinese women to Chinese men who were willing to pay. If the moral condemnation by Menzies was ironic given that she was defending her husband's similar actions, it was also evidence of the power of women to morally intervene in such matters.

Jennie Menzies' letter and the accompanying column were the first attempts to defend Professor Menzies. It must be noted that the letter appeared in the *Colonist*, the rival newspaper of the *Daily Times*, even though the letter was in response to an article in the *Times*. If Menzies also sent a letter to the *Times*, no such letter was ever published. The drama continued to play out as the two newspapers each took sides in this public 'trial'. After Mrs. Menzies' letter was published, the *Times* responded with a front page article which, according to the *Colonist*, was "inspired by Mr. Vrooman, [and] casts certain doubts as to the authenticity of Mrs. Menzies' letter ... and also contains several absurd insinuations in regard to *The Colonist's* position in the matter."²²³

The *Times*' immediate response to Mrs. Menzies' accusations was evidence of the weight

²²³ "The Chinese Matter." *The British Colonist*, July 6, 1888, p. 4.

of women's moral authority. The *Times* was quick to discredit Mrs. Menzies' letter on a few fronts. In the first sentence of their article, the paper described the letter as "*alleged* to have been written by Mrs. Menzies,"²²⁴ immediately pointing out their suspicions that perhaps the letter was not even authentic in its authorship. If it was written by Mr. Menzies and passed off as a letter from his wife, the moral authority and the domestic legitimacy could easily be brushed aside. Additionally, the *Times* also discredited the *Colonist's* publication of the letter in two ways. First, by entitling the article "The Colonist's Gardnerphobia" [sic], the *Times* called into question the motivations of the *Colonist* for publishing both Menzies' letter and an additional article on the subject. Chalking their reporting up to an irrational fear of Gardiner leads one to ask what exactly the *Times* was suggesting that the *Colonist* was afraid of. Given that the *Colonist* did not seem to take issue with Menzies' contact with the two Chinese girls, it was likely not fear of cross-racial contact that was the issue. Instead it may have been the *relationships* that were being forged within the *Home* and the alleged transformation that was the objective of the *Home*. This is evidence that, while white superiority was central to transformative discourses, not everyone who was white supported the work of the *Home*.

Despite that cross-racial contact was usually contained within the *Home*, anxieties around the work done there may have been due, at least in part, to the types of relationships that were forged within those walls. Menzies, while he certainly was accused of adopting immoral tactics, had returned the 'Chinese problem' to the Chinese community, reinscribing racial boundaries in the process. Second, the *Times* explicitly accused the *Colonist* of 'plotting' and implicitly

²²⁴ "The Colonist's Gardnerphobia," *The Daily Times*, July 4, 1888, p. 1.

accused the newspaper of poor journalism, as they quickly showed that their own investigation had proven some of Jennie Menzies' claims to be false. While Menzies had claimed that Gardiner sold a Chinese girl in marriage for a sum of money, the *Times* found evidence that the parties in question were, in fact, already married before they had come into contact with Gardiner. This article exposed Menzies' accusations as "basely false and therefore malicious"²²⁵ and at the same time discredited the *Colonist* who supported and printed her accusations.

On 6 July 1888, the *Colonist* responded to *The Times* by turning to another woman. This time they offered a copy of an affidavit of Miss Jessie Fowler which corroborated Mrs. Menzies' letter. The publication of this affidavit had both legal authority and female moral authority. The *Colonist* did not go as far as to deny Menzies' guilt, but instead began to cast equal or greater suspicion onto the conduct of Gardiner. At first content to counter the *Times*' article with the letter from Mrs. Menzies, when the *Times* attempted to discredit this letter, the *Colonist* turned to court records to build its case. That the courts were seen as a space where truth was both the goal and a necessity was clear in the newspaper's use of court records as evidence. An affidavit was made to stand for truth in ways that a letter to the editor could not. Although contradictory affidavits often appeared in court cases, this particular affidavit was given the weight of truth because, first, it corroborated the facts as they appeared in Jennie Menzies' letter, second, the affidavit was written by a party who was not directly implicated in this case, and third, as the paper made clear, there were other available "affidavits on file there and in possession of

²²⁵ "The Colonist's Gardnerphobia." *The Daily Times*, July 4, 1888, p. 1.

officials in the city touching on this same Chinese trafficking.”²²⁶ Thus, the affidavit was used as a strong rebuttal against Gardiner’s accusations.

The affidavit in question was one which was used in a related *habeas corpus* case filed by Ah Chee. Subsequent to Menzies ‘selling’ Ah Lin to him as his wife, Ah Chee learned that they were not, in fact, legally married. Gardiner agreed to have them legally married on the condition that Ah Lin return to the *Home*. After her return to the *Home*, Ah Chee claimed that he was not allowed to visit and was told that Ah Lin no longer wished to marry him. Ah Chee then applied, through a writ of habeas corpus, to have Ah Lin returned to him and out of “the influence of Vrooman” (aka Gardiner).²²⁷ The affidavit given by Jessie Fowler was the first of three affidavits that were to be published in this case. In her affidavit, Fowler supported Jennie Menzies’ claims regarding the *Home* and Gardiner’s treatment of Ah Lin, as well as her claims that she had tried to find homes for the two girls. Although the newspaper asserted that there were other supporting documents on file, the fact that they chose Miss Fowler’s affidavit to support Mrs. Menzies’ claims speaks to the moral authority held by women.

The *Times* fired back quickly, attempting to discredit their rival, the *Colonist*. In a front page article aptly titled “The Menzies Apologist”, the *Times* accused the *Colonist* of what they called “a mendacious attempt to prejudice the public mind against Mr. Gardner,” ending the article with a demand that the “Menzies apologist should call off his bloodhounds.”²²⁸ The *Times*

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ “Traffic in Chinese.” *The British Colonist*, July 7, 1888, p. 4.

²²⁸ “The Menzies Apologist.” *The Daily Times*, July 6, 1888, p. 1.

accused the *Colonist* of publishing Miss Fowler's affidavit "without a statement of all the facts and the final result of the application."²²⁹ The final result was that the case against the *Home* was dismissed, and therefore, the *Times* suggested, the affidavit should not be given as much credibility as the *Colonist* seemed to lend it. The *Times* did not include any reference to what the affidavit said, but instead only attacked the *Colonist* for its 'one-sided version of the case.' and promised to lay before the public the 'facts of the case' in good time.²³⁰ It fulfilled this promise five days later, but not before the *Colonist* published twice more on the matter. The first article was in response to the *Times*' accusations and the second was a letter to the editor, which actually challenged some of Mrs. Menzies' claims.

The *Colonist* began its 7 July 1888 article by linking it to the previously published affidavit of Fowler, providing some context for the letter to the editor, a response no doubt to the *Times*' accusations. This time the *Colonist* did not hold back the full context of the case. Instead, the newspaper included excerpts from many of the affidavits offered to the courts. All of the affidavits were indictments of Gardiner and the *Home*. The first headline simply read, "The Chinese Matter,"²³¹ while the second was entitled "Traffic in Chinese: Affidavit of Ah Chee and Statement of Ah Lin—Serious Charges."²³² Neither headline referenced Menzies or the kidnapping charges of which he had been accused. Although the second headline did hint at the trafficking of Chinese women, Menzies was not the accused in this case. While the *Colonist* did not make reference to the Menzies case directly, it was clear that the affidavits and testimony of

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ "The Chinese Matter." *The British Colonist*, July 6, 1888, p. 4.

²³² "Traffic in Chinese." *The British Colonist*, July 7, 1888, p. 4.

Ah Chee and Ah Lin were only of interest to the *Colonist* because of their connection to Menzies and Gardiner. The case from which the affidavits were drawn had received no attention prior to the publication of Gardiner's accusations against Menzies, notwithstanding that it had been the focus of the court a full three weeks prior to the publication of the affidavits in the *Colonist*.

While the newspaper used these affidavits to discredit Gardiner as Menzies' accuser and shift suspicion away from Menzies and onto Gardiner, soon other Victoria citizens contributed to the debate through their submission of letters to the editor. The letter from Mrs. Menzies paved the way for other letters to follow, with letters from Mrs. Spofford, Reverend Starr, and Miss Leake, then matron of the *Home*, subsequently appearing in the *Colonist*, the first on 8 July 1888 and the latter two on 13 July 1888. Mrs. Spofford's letter pointed out some inconsistencies in Mrs. Menzies' letter. Mrs. Menzies had claimed that no one would take responsibility for Ah Lin; however, Mrs. Spofford claimed that she had offered the girl a home. Her letter did not seem to take either side, neither defending Gardiner nor containing any new accusations with regards to Mr. Menzies. The only goal of this letter, it seemed, was to set the record straight. As a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and a supporter of provincial suffrage campaigns, Mrs. Spofford was an avid moral reformer who lent her moral authority to what was quickly becoming a very public debate (Converse 1998, 33–34). Mrs. Spofford ended her letter as follows: "I have no desire whatever in this matter but to see 'right' prevail, and when I read Mrs. Menzies' letter felt it was my *duty* to contradict statements which I knew to be incorrect."²³³ While refusing to take sides, Mrs. Spofford saw the press as an ideal venue for fulfilling her civic

²³³ "The Chinese Affair." *The British Colonist*, July 8, 1888, p. 2, emphasis mine.

duty to ensure that the ‘truth’ was fully told.

This focus on truth-telling was not only evident in the letters that were written to the newspaper, but in the newspaper commentary as well. Of the four letters to the editor in this case, three were accompanied by ‘Editorial Comments’. The only letter which did not have such commentary was the letter from Mrs. Spofford. In the column that accompanied the letters of Starr and Leake, the *Colonist* began by evaluating and then weighing in on the veracity of Reverend Starr and Miss Leake’s ‘testimony,’ much as it did with Mrs. Menzies’ letter. In both cases, the *Colonist* spoke to what they believed to be the truthfulness of the letters, despite the fact that the testimonies offered differed substantially. In the case of Mrs. Menzies’ letter, the *Colonist* stated that her statement “has the ring of truth”²³⁴, while in reference to Miss Leake, the *Colonist* also claimed that her story “bears the impress of truthfulness”²³⁵, and of Reverend Starr and Miss Leake the *Colonist* also stressed its belief that they “are honest in what they say and sincere in their endeavour to do good work among the Chinese.”²³⁶ Although the *Colonist* did not go as far as to say that they had been deceived by previous correspondence or the affidavits, they concluded that the affidavits were “worthy of further investigation.”

The *Colonist*, however, did not shoulder the blame for believing these affidavits to be true, nor did they place the blame on those who may have misled them. Instead, the newspaper claimed that the affidavits, “if false, they are replete with perjury of a vicious type, and the

²³⁴ “The Menzies Affair.” *The British Colonist*, July 4, 1888, p. 4.

²³⁵ “Editorial Comments.” *The British Colonist*, July 13, 1888, p. 1.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

individual against whom they are directed, should at least have taken the trouble to reply to them or proceeded in some manner that would have established his innocence.”²³⁷ Here, it was Gardiner’s failure to publicly defend himself through his own truth-telling acts that was to blame for any misconceptions. The *Colonist* defended its own actions and its intentions, claiming that their position “was not assumed through malice, or a desire to wantonly besmirch Mr. Gardiner’s character, or to injure anyone acting with him.”²³⁸ Furthermore, the paper continued, the “evidence submitted pointed to certain facts, and these facts, except by assertion, have not been disputed.”²³⁹ Again, it was Gardiner’s unwillingness to defend himself or supply evidence to support his innocence that was to blame for the newspaper’s misconceptions. If it was the newspapers’ duty to expose wrongdoing and to seek out the truth, it was also the duty of those accused and those who could verify or contradict ‘evidence’ to do so.

Miss Leake, matron of the *Home*, for her part, did offer a defence. She opened her letter with the words “in justice not only to Mr. Gardner, but also to ‘The Chinese Home,’ permit me the use of your columns to make public the following facts.”²⁴⁰ Miss Leake answered charges that had been laid against her in Mrs. Menzies’ letter and in the affidavits that had been published in the newspaper. Although her testimony took the form of a “Letter to the Editor” and not an actual affidavit, the structure of the letter is noteworthy. The ‘facts’ laid out in the letter are numbered from one to seven and are significant in that the order and logic of these ‘facts’ mimic

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ “The Chinese ‘Home.’” *The British Colonist*, July 13, 1888, p. 1.

those affidavits which had been previously published by the newspaper. Here, it is clear that the *Home's* matron was familiar with and hence deeply influenced by the state's records, her own testimony shaped to mimic them.

The affidavits of both Jessie Fowler and of Ah Chee, whose formal name was 'Lum Tsze', both contained exactly seven points which were numbered in the same manner. Likewise, all three of these 'testimonies' have as their first point information meant to identify them in relation to the case, Miss Fowler by explaining her relationship to the *Home*, Ah Chee by stating both his formal name and the name he is often called, and Miss Leake by identifying her relationship to both the Woman's Missionary Society and the *Home*. As Leake continued on with points two to seven, she continued to mimic the format and tone of the two affidavits, carefully and logically citing dates, places and people, leaving out any emotion, and including only the facts as they might be verified by other sources. One clear difference between Leake's letter and the affidavits offered by Fowler and Ah Chee was that the latter were concluded with sworn declarations that were witnessed by either a Justice of the Peace or a "Commissioner for taking affidavits in the Supreme Court of British Columbia."²⁴¹ This seal of legitimacy was not included in Leake's letter. However, Leake's own work as a moral reformer gave her moral authority, as did the accompanying letter from Reverend Starr.

Reverend Starr's letter had two purposes. First, Starr acted as a notary of sorts, giving legitimacy to Leake's 'testimony.' As the pastor of the Pandora St. Methodist Church, Starr's

²⁴¹ "The Chinese Matter." *The British Colonist*, July 6, 1888, p. 4; and "Traffic in Chinese." *The British Colonist*, July 7, 1888, p. 4

reputation was viewed as beyond reproach. In fact, in the ‘Editorial Comment’ the editor described Reverend Starr as an “honorable and upright man and honest in what he says and sincere in his endeavors.”²⁴² Starr, thus established as trustworthy—perhaps even more so than a Justice of the Peace—opened his letter with his first task, that of presenting to the editor the letter written by Leake. He began, “The matron of ‘The Chinese Home’ has forwarded to me the enclosed letter with the request that, if I approve, I will hand it to you for publication.”²⁴³ Thus, by submitting the letter, Starr had given his stamp of approval to Leake’s testimony, verifying not only its truthfulness but its authenticity. His first goal achieved, Starr quickly moved on to his second.

In beginning with “I should also myself like to say a word on behalf of Mr. Gardner”²⁴⁴, Starr called into question the integrity of the evidence by acting as a character witness. Although Starr did not introduce new evidence in his letter, he attacked the newspaper for journalistic misconduct as he rebuked them, saying that “when giving publicity to your belief, the part of a true journalist, I submit would have been to publish all the facts which *you knew were at your disposal*.”²⁴⁵ Here, Starr questioned the motives of the newspaper, insisting that the newspaper did not have the public’s interest at heart, nor was it concerned with justice, as it did not disclose the full evidence that was at their disposal. Thus, Starr faulted the newspaper, not for what it did print, but for what it did not. That his friend, Gardiner, was being used to divert attention away

²⁴² “Editorial Commentary.” *The British Colonist*, July 13, 1888, p. 1.

²⁴³ “Letter from Rev. J.E. Starr.” *The British Colonist*, July 13, 1888, p. 1.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, emphasis in original.

from the accused was not the subject of his critique. Instead, his focus was on the newspaper's failure to present the public with all of the information necessary to make an informed judgment.

Starr's desire for balanced reporting was evident in his own testimony on Gardiner's character. Unlike the newspaper, which he critiqued, Starr did not provide either a condemnation of Gardiner, or a totally glowing endorsement. Instead, Starr began by framing Gardiner as "not infallible. Like other men he has his faults."²⁴⁶ However, Starr was quick to counter these faults by speaking to Gardiner's generosity, his reputation and his self-sacrifice. In the face of all of the accusations, and knowing Gardiner's faults, Starr concluded that "knowing as I do the *real truth*, I deem it an honor to say I could trust him with my life."²⁴⁷ Here, Starr offered what he contended that the newspaper had not: the 'real truth', knowable only through acknowledgment of both the good and the bad; in other words, the 'real truth' as the whole truth, nothing but the truth. Following the publication of these letters, the *Colonist* vowed that they would not report on the case again unless further developments took place. This avowal seemed to mark the beginning of a ceasefire in this very public case as the *Times* followed suit.

The press' publication of competing claims to truth highlighted the existence of competing claims to morality. The alleged sale of Chinese women as well as the abuses that they were alleged to have suffered at the hands of the *Home's* matron stood as cautions against cross-racial intimacies. Further, publication of inquiries into the police's failure to act in this case drew attention to the fissures in the moral landscape. These fissures marked points of disagreement

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, emphasis mine.

about how to best deal with Chinese populations. Concerns were raised not only about whether or not Menzies was selling Chinese women, but whether Gardiner in his work was doing the same, an indication that not all believed in the redemptive power of the *Home*. It must be noted, however, that subsequent to this case, Gardiner's name was rarely mentioned and no similar accusations were levelled at the women from the WMS who ran the *Home*, despite the common practice of finding husbands for the women in the *Home* and also that of receiving money for the women's care. It was likely the institutional nature of the *Home* that made the receipt of these funds acceptable. Yet, the work of saving and domesticating women was legitimated precisely because it took place within the *domestic* realm, the domain of women. The men who interfered in these 'private' matters, especially as they concerned marriage, were quickly brought to task, both by the public and by the state.

The State of Marriage

Upon Menzies' return to Victoria on 26 July 1888, he was quickly arrested and charged with "feloniously causing Loi Ho, under the age of sixteen²⁴⁸, to be secretly confined and taken out of Canada against her will", although this was quickly amended to "kidnapping with intent."²⁴⁹ On 3 August 1888 a second charge of "obtaining \$150 from Ah Chee under false pretences" was added to the original charges, with the kidnapping charges being dropped the

²⁴⁸ It should be noted here that although the age of the young women was mentioned here, within the courts their age was not a topic of concern. It is possible that the increased attention by the press was because of the youth of the young women. However, this was not a point of law, as marriage laws at the time only required young women to be twelve years of age to marry. This would not change in British Columbia until 1911, when the age was increased to sixteen (Snell and Abeele, 1988, 480).

²⁴⁹ "Is it a Conspiracy?" *The Victoria Times*, July 27, 1888, p. 4.

following day.²⁵⁰ On 21 August of the same year, Menzies was arraigned in the Supreme Court on the charge of “procuring a girl under 21 years of age to have carnal dealings with a Chinaman named Ah Chee.”²⁵¹ This was an important distinction, as it rested entirely on how the state was to define what constituted marriage. If Ah Chee and Ah Lin were to be considered married, the charges would fall. Thus, marriage would become a central point of discussion in this case. In order to provide some context for my discussion of marriage in this case, a brief discussion of the *Home*’s role in marriages is in order.

Marriage was, in fact, an important facet of the *Home*. While many of the residents stayed only a short while, for those young girls or women who remained in the *Home* for longer periods, leaving the *Home* respectably usually meant going out into service work or being married out of the *Home*, preferably to a Christian Chinese or Christian Japanese man. Although the records did not always provide reasons for why women left, it was clear that many were married before leaving the *Home*. The *Home* was often used as a wedding site for residents as well as for Chinese and Japanese community members who desired a Western marriage. For many years the *Home* was also a transitional space for Japanese women who entered the country as wives of Japanese men. Although legally married under Japanese law, many of these marriages were not initially recognized by Canadian law. Thus, so-called ‘picture brides’ and others were often directed to the *Home* by immigration officials until their husbands could be found and new marriages performed. Here, the state’s investment in not only policing

²⁵⁰ “The Menzies’ Case.” *The British Colonist*, August 3, 1888, p. 4, “The Menzies Case” in *The British Colonist*, August 4, 1888, p. 1.

²⁵¹ “The Menzies Case,” *The British Colonist*, August 21, 1888, p. 4.

immigration, but also private relationships of new immigrants was clear. The *Home* also provided each of these brides with a Bible as a memento of their ‘special day.’ When new laws were passed recognizing the marriages of ‘picture brides,’ the Advisory Board was keenly disappointed at this lost opportunity. However, other marriage opportunities still existed, as the house provided the ideal space to train residents for their future roles as wives and mothers.

Cooking, cleaning, sewing, and mending were necessary not only to the running and maintenance of the *Home*, but also as training for the role of wife. As discussed in the previous chapter, as a house, the *Home* provided the ideal space for training women to be wives and mothers. Whether learning to cook, clean, sew, tend to young children, or build a fire, a house had all the amenities necessary for such training. Marriage, thus, became a dominant concern among those who were involved in the running of the *Home*. Finding suitable partners for their ‘girls’ was one of the many concerns of the matron and the *Home’s* advisory board. Elizabeth,²⁵² for instance, entered the *Home*, at 17, staying for four years. The date she left was also the date that she was married in the *Home* to a baker from a town over eighty kilometres north of Victoria. Given the isolation that these young women likely experienced and the distance between this town and Victoria, it is probable that this marriage was arranged by the women who ran the *Home*. On at least two other occasions, the Advisory Board minutes showed instances where Chinese men had come to them in search of a wife. Screening these men was imperative, as not all those who applied for wives were to be trusted. Testifying at the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration (1902), Miss F. Kate Morgan, a teacher and evangelist with

²⁵² Elizabeth is a pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

the *Home*, discussed the suspicion with which these applications were viewed. She testified that “A Chinaman will profess to become a Christian to get a wife.”²⁵³ Here, it is clear that a profession of faith was not enough. Instead Christianity was to be evident in the behaviours and lifestyle of the would-be husband.

In January 1901, the board met to discuss the future of one particularly disruptive girl named ‘Bev.’²⁵⁴ Although a “Chinaman had applied to the home for a wife,” he was not deemed suitable for her.²⁵⁵ Three months later it was reported that “a suitable husband had been found for Bev and she had been married from the home to a professedly Christian Chinese merchant of Nanaimo.” This was a relief to all involved as, “the conduct of the girls ... very much improved since Bev left.”²⁵⁶ Marriage became not only a respectable way of leaving the *Home*, but also an important means of removing disruptive or uncooperative women such as Bev in a way that would not lead them back to their ‘immoral’ lives. Despite that Chinese men far outnumbered women in Victoria, not all of the young women found husbands while residents in the *Home*. This suggests that the *Home* was very particular about picking men for ‘their girls’ to marry. The preoccupation with marriage was certainly tied to white women’s roles as moral reformers. However, as the Menzies case makes clear, this did not stop men from attempting, with varying degrees of success, to take on these same roles outside of the walls of the *Home*.

²⁵³ “Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration”, Sessional Paper No. 54, Session 1902, Ottawa: Printed by Order of Parliament by S.E. Dawson, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty. p. 38.

²⁵⁴ Bev is a pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

²⁵⁵ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, January and March, 1901, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

²⁵⁶ “Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee”, January and March, 1901, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

On Wednesday, 21 August 1888, the trial began in the case of *Regina vs. Menzies*. The states' interest in the case became clear, as it shifted away from crimes against the Chinese and toward a charge which was more concerned with policing the bounds of intimacy and morality. The *Times* presented an account of the trial that evening, with the *Colonist* publishing their account the following morning. The former published a story only thirty-three lines in length, while the latter devoted almost two hundred and fifty lines to the case. The *Colonist*, for its part, included much of the court transcripts, including portions of the testimonies of Ah Chee, of a doctor who was brought in to testify with respect to Ah Lin's age, as well as Ah Lin and Mrs. Hopkins. The *Colonist* also included the comments of the presiding judge.

The *Times* took a distinctly different approach, listing the charges and then reporting on counsel for each side. This was followed by a very brief discussion of the testimony of the first witness. The *Times* went to press when the court proceedings were still in progress, hence the incompleteness of its story. Although the first witness, Ah Chee, was reported to have been examined and then cross-examined, the newspaper did not include any of this testimony in their report. Instead, the *Times* chose to focus exclusively on the judge's comments. This focus on the judge as authority might partially explain why the newspaper chose not to include the full testimony of Ah Chee. According to the *Times*, "His Lordship during the time the evidence was in progress said the testimony given by the Chinese was a mockery of justice. The papers before the court were the most important evidence."²⁵⁷ The *Times* seemed to take this charge quite seriously, as they chose to include any only very small amounts of the testimony of either

²⁵⁷ "The Menzies Case." *The Victoria Times*, August 21, 1888, p. 4.

Ah Chee or Ah Lin, around whom this case was built (for more on Chinese testimony, see Reginald Good 2011). Instead, the *Times* focused its reporting almost entirely on the testimony of Jessie Fowler, who recalled the story of Ah Chee and Ah Lin, once more underscoring white women's authority. White witnesses were regarded to be the only voices of reason. That these voices were to stand in for the unintelligible Chinese was further evidence of the privileging of whiteness and the reinscription of the 'Chinese problem.' The paper also included the remarks of counsel on both sides, as well as those of the judge. Only at the end of the article did the *Times* mention that Ah Chee was recalled and re-examined, but devoted only eight lines to his testimony, three of which had no apparent bearing or relevance to the case. This decision seems to underscore the judge's belief that the testimony of Chinese witness could not be trusted.

The *Colonist*, however, provided a much fuller account of the trial. Over the course of the two-day trial, the newspaper seemed to be reporting on a much different case. The list of witnesses that the *Colonist* detailed on the first day totalled five. The newspaper also included the judge's commentary throughout. On the second day, the *Colonist* reported on an additional three witnesses pointing to the diversity of voices and the contestation over facts.

Justice John Gray made no secret of his attitudes towards the Chinese and especially their presence in the courtroom. That his disdain for Chinese populations was not questioned by either paper suggests that his attitude was commonplace and acceptable for a person of his authority. In their report, the *Colonist* opened with the testimony of Ah Chee. Ah Chee's testimony was interrupted several times by Justice Gray. The first time, early in Ah Chee's testimony, the Judge

interjected: “The court for the trial of Chinese cases is, it seems to me, the greatest burlesque in the country.”²⁵⁸ Justice Gray’s comments are significant for a few reasons. First, his reference to this case as a ‘Chinese case’ is suggestive, as the defendant being tried was a white man. Based on his comments, the judge viewed race to be a central component of this case. Second, his reference to burlesque here likened the courtroom and the trial to the theatre and to performance. In fact, Gray’s own ‘performance’ within the courtroom was a clear indication that his role was not only to preside over and pass judgement, but was also to narrate this elaborate performance. Consider, for instance, the following exchange between the prosecutor, the defence attorney, and Justice Gray regarding the testimony of Ah Chee:

Mr. Irving—He answered that question.

Mr. Drake—I want to get that answer from the witness myself.

His Lordship—You will accomplish a great feat if you do so.²⁵⁹

Here, Justice Gray’s comment was not as an impartial judge, but instead as one of the players in what Gray saw to be a theatrical performance. He openly derided the testimony of Ah Chee. Later in the case, he would go even further in discrediting this witness and Chinese witnesses more generally.

Justice Gray’s reference to burlesque is also suggestive for a third reason. In his indictment of Chinese testimony, he contended not only that this was tantamount to burlesque but that this was the *greatest* burlesque in the country. Here, Gray’s focus was not only on

²⁵⁸ “The Menzies Case.” *The British Colonist*, August 22, 1888, p. 4.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

deriding Chinese performances, but was also an indication that the ‘performances’ given by Chinese witnesses were to be enjoyed as a type of amusement. This objectification of Chinese ‘performers’ for white audiences is a clear indication that not only were Chinese not to be taken seriously, but that their only conceivable role was to serve the needs of the white population. Lastly, given that burlesque was associated with parody and exaggeration, Gray’s comments say something here about race. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines burlesque as “a literary or dramatic work that seeks to ridicule by means of grotesque exaggeration or comic imitation” and as “mockery usually by caricature” (2010). Chinese witnesses were seen as not only mimickers of whiteness, but as comic in their imitation, their performances mockeries of a white tradition.²⁶⁰ This was certainly evident in Gray’s response to not only Chinese testimony, but also to other Chinese ‘performances’ of whiteness, such as marriage.

Upon hearing one witness testify as to how Menzies and Gardiner each tried to arrange the marriage of Ah Chee and Ah Lin, Justice Gray interrupted, exclaiming “it is a perfect mockery of justice. How can we believe these people? A marriage certificate should never be issued to such persons. The act never contemplated any such thing.”²⁶¹ To this, defence counsel Drake replied “I wish to know the marriage ceremonies of the Chinese law.” His Lordship was quick to reply: “They sell them.”²⁶² Here, the judge emphasized not only the untrustworthiness of Chinese witnesses, but their inherent immorality as well. In fact, although the courtroom was framed as a place where the facts were to be evaluated and questioned, morality was a central

²⁶⁰ For a compelling discussion of racial burlesque, see Mawani (2009), especially Chapter One.

²⁶¹ “The Menzies Case.” *The British Colonist*, August 22, 1888, p. 4.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

concern for Judge Gray in this case, especially as it was to be applied to marriage.

When Reverend Fraser was called to testify that he had refused to marry the two victims without an interpreter, Judge Gray interjected his own moral judgement again. Although not directly relevant, as Ah Chee and Ah Lin were not married in either a civic or religious ceremony, Gray commented that: “It has struck me as abnormally wrong that these people who have not the slightest conception of the solemn rights of matrimony and Christianity should be married by a Christian Clergyman.”²⁶³ Here, Gray did not simply see Christian marriages for Chinese as wrong, but *abnormally* wrong. While the sanctity of Christian marriage might be violated by whites, for Chinese, this violation was also linked to their ‘abnormality’. When the witness replied that “It has not struck me that way. I look upon the heathen as God’s children”, Gray weighed in on the matter again, stating that “I think it would be better if they should go before the civic authorities rather than to a clergyman.”²⁶⁴ His comments had no bearing on the case, but only served to once more discredit Chinese people as unable to understand or perform Christian morality. Thus, the state was clear in its condemnation of those who might tarnish such a Christian institution as marriage.

Regardless of how the court might have felt about Chinese marriage, the defence claimed that the marriage between Ah Chee and Ah Lin was, in fact, legal, and therefore no ‘illicit intercourse’ took place. The prosecution, however, claimed that the marriage could not be recognized because of Ah Lin’s age. In order to support their claim that Ah Lin was too young to

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

be legally married, the prosecution did not rely on Ah Lin to testify, but instead called in an expert witness to determine her age. Dr. Jackson concluded that Ah Lin, based on her “general appearance and physical development”²⁶⁵ was about 14 years of age. Here, the doctor’s testimony was framed as ‘expert evidence’ in order to provide what Ah Lin herself could not be trusted to provide, the truth.

Despite the lack of credibility given to the testimony of Ah Lin and Ah Chee, on 24 August 1888, Justice Gray pronounced the defendant guilty. Again the judge was quick to point out that he “attached very little importance to the evidence of the two Chinese witnesses. The turning point of the matter was that Menzies gave a receipt and worded it as he did, which to his mind was conclusive evidence of having deceived the Chinese. The Chinese evidence was valueless, except so far as it corroborated the evidence of other witnesses.”²⁶⁶ Here, Gray was clear that Chinese evidence was only to be considered true when it corroborated the testimony or evidence brought by white witnesses. At the same time, however, the only way to evaluate the truth was to measure it against the truth of white witnesses. This logic guaranteed that in cases where Chinese testimony was at odds with that of white witnesses, it would be deemed false and thus discredited.

The judge’s disdain for Victoria’s Chinese population would become even more evident in his concluding remarks, as was his investment in policing the boundaries of the domestic, of intimacy, and morality. Throughout the case, Ah Lin was portrayed by the prosecution as a

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

hapless victim, a child of fourteen who had been victimized first by the Chinese men who turned her into a prostitute and then by Menzies who allegedly sold her to Ah Chee. The defence, however, painted her as a troubled and troublesome prostitute who Menzies attempted to rehabilitate, but who could not and should not be trusted. The judge clearly saw her in a light that was even worse than that portrayed by the defence. His remarks were scathing. He condemned Menzies for prostituting the girl, who he described as “a notoriously bad character, a Chinese prostitute.” But what offended him even more was that it was with this knowledge of her bad character that Menzies had traded “her off to a man as a *wife*.”²⁶⁷ The judge felt that it was an insult to marriage to have proposed it between such unfit parties. He continued, “I am bound to say nothing can justify you, with a full knowledge of the utter unfitness of the parties, going around to Christian ministers of the different churches in this city to ask them to perform the solemn service of their church.”²⁶⁸ The issue for Judge Gray was not the deception of the two Chinese victims: there was something far greater at stake, and that was the sanctity of Christian marriage.

In the case of *Regina vs. Menzies*, the state attempted to prove that Menzies had, in effect, prostituted Ah Lin by selling her to Ah Chee under false pretences, thus “promoting illicit intercourse between Ah Lin and Ah Chee”²⁶⁹ The outcome of this case was dependent on two factors. First, did Menzies *promote* the illicit intercourse and second, did the illicit intercourse take place? The defense argued that Menzies had not, in fact, sold Ah Lin but had only asked to

²⁶⁷ Ibid., emphasis mine.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

be reimbursed by Ah Chee for expenses incurred while Ah Lin was in his care. The money that he received, therefore, could not be understood as promoting relations between Ah Lin and Ah Chee. However, the receipt that Menzies had given to Ah Chee was seen as damning evidence that Ah Chee paid for his *marriage* to Ah Lin. Selling Ah Lin to Ah Chee in marriage, however, did not constitute the promotion of illicit intercourse. The case was, thus, contingent on whether the couple had consummated a *marriage*, for if they did ‘illicit intercourse’ could not be understood to have taken place. Thus, the case hinged not on whether Menzies had sold Ah Lin to Ah Chee, but whether a legitimate marriage had taken place.

The court decided that no such marriage had taken place and therefore, when Menzies told the couple that they were married, his deceit *caused* them to engage in illicit intercourse. Thus, the prisoner was found guilty as charged. For Gray, although he saw the crime itself as a “particularly offensive one, leading a young girl by false representation to prostitution,”²⁷⁰ the greater crime to which the judge devoted most of his comments was the disregard and disrespect paid to the sanctity of Christian marriage. Thus, during this trial, the contamination of white domesticity was at stake here, not the virtue of a Chinese woman. Although the case was contingent on the fact that Ah Chee and Ah Lin were *not* married, Judge Gray did not view Christian marriage as the answer. Instead, he was clear that Menzies’ crime was not having failed to have the couple married; it was that he had the audacity to attempt to have them married in a Christian church.

Gray chastised Menzies for degrading the Christian office by simply asking Christian

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

ministers to marry these two who “had neither knowledge of what the ceremony meant, or the language in which it was to be performed, of the mutuality of affection or contemplation of the future, in accordance with the views of any Christian church.”²⁷¹ Here, Gray was clear that Menzies should have had the couple married by their own customs, or “if necessary that there should be a civil marriage, let them go in a civil magistrate or the registrar.”²⁷² He continued, “I cannot understand the sacred service of a Christian church being so *prostituted* and dishonoured.”²⁷³ Gray used the same charges levelled against Menzies with regard to his treatment of Ah Lin to speak to what he saw as being the real victim. It was not only Ah Lin who was prostituted, but the Christian church as well. And clearly, Gray viewed the church as the greater victim. Likely, one of the reasons that the *Home* had support from the community, and later the courts, where Menzies did not, was two-fold. First, before marriages were arranged through the *Home*, a process of domestication was to take place under the apt tutelage of white women. Second, as a religious institution, the *Chinese Rescue Home* ensured that the couples who were married were first converted to Christianity. Menzies ensured neither of these criteria were fulfilled.

In his sentencing, Gray condemned Menzies for this ‘dirty business.’ Further, he did so in a way that underscored the racial hierarchy which favoured whiteness. Whites, he argued were to be held to an even higher standard under the law. “It is no answer to say the Chinese buy and sell

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

these women and do not regard marriage in the light we do”²⁷⁴ argued Gray. Addressing Menzies, he opined that “You belong to what we believe a higher scale of civilization. You are either English or American, and ought to feel that bartering children for prostitution, whether under the form of marriage or otherwise, is a disgrace as well as a crime.”²⁷⁵ Here, a higher moral calling was attached to whiteness, and thus a higher standard of conduct was demanded. It was the racial hierarchy equating whiteness with truth and morality that, in the end, was responsible for the disregard of Chinese testimonies. Further, it was this same hierarchy, in particular Menzies’ inability or unwillingness to live up to it, that caused him to be so harshly punished. The punishment of Menzies, in this case, eight months in jail, was meant to protect the racial hierarchy that he had violated both through his attempts to allegedly prostitute Ah Lin and through his even more abhorrent crime, the prostitution of the church.

Conclusion

In previous chapters I have argued that the *Home* functioned in a space on the edge of the domestic, both in terms of the domestic/foreign divide and in the sense of domesticity and its separation from the public realm. Here, I have shown how this space was, in some ways, shaped by public discourses and state interventions that took place beyond its walls. This chapter has moved outside of *Home* spaces in order to track perceptions of the evaluative and regulatory work that took place within the *Home* as well as its relationship to other institutions. By drawing on a case that had close ties to those who ran the *Home* as well as those within it, I have shown

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

how moral entrepreneurs (Taylor 2010) functioned in complex ways as each tried to carve out and map the contours of the moral landscape, even as it applied to the domestic realm.

Specifically, I have highlighted the ambivalent response of the state to the *Home* through an examination of the Menzies case, but also of the police's failure to act in the interests of the *Home*. Maneuverings and negotiations that took place outside of the *Home* defined not only the *Home's* reputation, but also delineated its work from similar work being done outside of the *Home*. In the Menzies case, as in the *Home*, women played an important role as moral authorities and reformers. State interventions also contributed to the moral landscape by defining not only the boundaries of cross-racial contact, but also of the domestic realm, particularly around marriage. The harsh penalties meted out to Menzies sent a clear message that men should not intervene in what was seen as the legitimate work of women. The exceptionality of the *Home*, its delineations from the outside, becomes clearer through this discussion of the functions and functioning of the outside. Victoria's citizens were divided on the subject of Menzies' and Gardiners' guilt or innocence, making clear that the *Home* was not without controversy. It was regarded with both reverence and suspicion not only by the white community but by the Chinese community as well. In the following chapter, the focus will be on habeas corpus cases, where the *Home's* custody was challenged by Chinese community members. Here, the state had a clear investment in shaping and defining the boundaries of domesticity within the *Home* and in deciding who might reside within those walls.

Chapter Six: Roofs, Rafters and Refuge: The State, Race, and Child Custody

Habeas corpus cases were one way that the state took an active role in defining the possibilities and limits of domesticity, especially as it was concerned with race. This is shown through an analysis of four habeas corpus cases, three of which were reported in the *British Columbia Law Reports*. One case, although not reported on in the *British Columbia Law Reports*, received extensive newspaper coverage. Given that it was the only case where the *Home* lost, it provides an important counter-example to the other cases I explore. Habeas corpus is defined as a “command that was issued by a judge to a person having custody of another person to bring the prisoner before the court (‘Let me have the body’) so that the court could inquire into the validity of that person’s detention” (Irwin Law Inc; 2009–2010). Here, the focus is primarily on detention of a *prisoner* and its validity. Given the importance of law in defining and regulating society, an analysis of these cases will show how common knowledge of race “is grounded not only in the world of ideas, but in the material geography of social life” (Haney López 1996, 17). This chapter utilizes the home metaphor of roofs and rafters as a way to explore three important and overlapping themes.

First, the *Home* was envisioned as surrogate parent to Chinese women and children—literally giving them a roof over their heads. The *Home* was seen as an appropriate site of racial governance, due to its ties to ‘proper’ domesticity and western ‘family values.’ Second, the state provided the legal framework, or rafters, for these practices through its interpretation of habeas corpus cases as custody. Here, I examine these cases through an examination of the family. In particular, I explore the *Home* through an analysis of legal concepts of parents and guardians, especially as this related to the *Home*’s role as surrogate parent. Although these were habeas corpus cases and not familial custody cases, the applicants in each of the three cases had to construct themselves as appropriate and legitimate guardians of the young girls over whom they

wished to regain their control, for if they had no legal rights as guardians, then they had no right to file writs of habeas corpus on their behalf. Thus their fitness and legitimacy as parents or guardians would be determined by the court. Third, the *Home* became a space of refuge from outside threats, especially the threat of the ‘stranger.’ Here, the construction of family is juxtaposed against the ‘stranger’ as the antithesis of Western ideals of family as well as a threat to these ideals and to the family. The discourse of the stranger, as I argue below, was tied to discourses of race. However, race intersected with law in contradictory and ambivalent ways.

The following cases each provide insights into how the law was enacted, sometimes in racially charged ways, to provide resolution between Chinese community members and the *Home*. The first habeas corpus case in which the *Home* was involved was reported in the *British Columbia Law Reports* in 1893 and revolved around Ah Gway, who was described as being approximately fifteen years of age.²⁷⁶ The applicant, Chin Su, filed a habeas corpus case against the *Home*, claiming parental rights and that the *Home* was holding Ah Gway against her will. The applicant’s parental rights were not acknowledged by the courts and the case was dismissed. The second case was that of Choy Wan.²⁷⁷ This case involved a twelve year old Chinese girl who came to the *Home* on 4 September 1895. The applicant, Mong Kow Lee, argued that the girl was under his guardianship and that she had run away and thus the *Home* had no right to keep her. In this case, the court agreed. The third case began in 1898 and

²⁷⁶ “In re AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII

²⁷⁷ *Annual Report of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1895–1896*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, p. 22.

concerned a sixteen-year-old child, Quai Shing. The applicant, Sing Kow Seid, claimed to be her adopted father. Quai Shing had allegedly been removed from the applicant's home by police and placed in the *Home*. The applicant filed a writ of habeas corpus in an attempt to regain custody of the child. He lost the case, appealed, and lost again. The last case was that of Soy King. This case was initiated by Sam Kee in July of 1900. In this case, the applicant's guardianship of the child was affirmed by the courts, but his habeas corpus application was denied. Each of these cases offers insights into parental surrogacy, discourses of custody, and refuge.

A Roof over Their Heads: Parental Surrogacy and the *Home*

While the Woman's Missionary Society interacted with Japanese and Chinese residents of the *Home* in the realm of domesticity, this realm was neither entirely private, nor separate from state interventions or concerns. As surrogate parents or guardians, the actions of those who ran the *Home* were the subject of both legal and social interventions. These interventions and concerns took the form of ordering the familial relationships from the outset by determining guardianship of the very first girls to be admitted into the *Home* and by defining what constituted a familial relationship. Each of the cases offers interesting insights into the relationship between the state, the *Home*, and members of the Chinese community. They each also underscore the ways in which the *Home* itself was constructed as a legitimate institution both within the courts and outside of them. Although the *Home* was not a state institution, the fact that the legal battles revolved around habeas corpus and not kidnapping charges suggests that the *Home* was seen, at least by some, as a legitimate site of detention. The state's sanctioning of the *Home* began with some of its first rescues.

Mr. John Gardiner, an active evangelist in the Chinese Mission School in Victoria, had "found that there were some Chinese girls held in houses of prostitution against their will, who

would be glad of any means of escape.”²⁷⁸ The court agreed with Gardiner’s assessment that the four girls who were recovered “were held against their will as slaves for immoral purposes” and once Gardiner was appointed as guardian by the Court, he “undertook the cost himself” and rented a house for these young women.²⁷⁹ Despite the fact that the *Home* was founded by a private citizen and was later run by a religious organization, state involvement, although not consistently applied, was routine and constant. Not only did the state intervene in guardianship cases, but throughout the *Home*’s history, the police and immigration officials also played active roles in bringing the *Home*’s wards under their roof.

Police and immigration officials placed women in the *Home* and the police also facilitated their return when they ‘escaped’ from it. That the *Home* was a part of a carceral network is further underscored by the type of cases that were brought against it. Although WMS records often referenced habeas corpus cases as custody cases, an indication that they viewed themselves as surrogate parents, the courts ruled in all of these cases not on custody, but on whether or not the Chinese applicant had legal *right* to challenge the detention of the ‘prisoner’ in question. Thus, the court did not decide upon the *Home*’s legal right to detain the child in question. Despite the *Home*’s status as a private institution, it served a public (state) function.

Although I was only able to access records for the four cases that follow, there were references to other cases which were not published. While it is impossible to know exactly how many cases were heard before the courts, it appears that there were many. The case of Quai

²⁷⁸ “The Chinese Work in Victoria.” *The Missionary Outlook*, March, 1887, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 2.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Shing, although deemed important enough in the legal world to be published in the *BC Reports*, did not seem to be a major point of discussion at the *Home's* advisory board. In fact, although the first hearing concluded in October of 1897, the board did not mention their victory or allude to this case at all when they met in November and December of 1897. This case would not be discussed until January 1898. "Miss Bowes then read her quarterly report giving the history of Elsie's [Quai Shing] case, how she was brought to the Home from Vancouver and the lawsuit which following when her former owner claimed her and tried to regain possession of her, the judges however deciding that the child should be left in the care of the Home since no one else seemed to have any better right to her."²⁸⁰ In fact, although custody was mentioned in meeting minutes and in formal reports, the discussions were very superficial, implying that for the women of the *Home*, issues of custody were either of relative unimportance or were fairly commonplace.

The confidence that the *Home* had that the courts would ultimately grant them custody was evident in a number of references in the minutes of the advisory board. For instance, when Emily²⁸¹ ran away from the *Home* to a convent, the board recommended that they write immediately "to the Convent demanding the return of Emily to the Home and emphasizing our authority in the matter."²⁸² Their confidence in their right to custody of Emily may seem strange given that no official custody was granted to the *Home* in her case, or indeed in the cases of most

²⁸⁰ "Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee", January, 1898, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

²⁸¹ Emily is pseudonym. Names not associated with public records have been changed to ensure anonymity.

²⁸² "Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee", November, 1897, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

of the girls and women in the *Home*. However, given their success in the courts, (I only was able to identify one case that the *Home* lost), the women of the *Home* likely had every reason to feel confident that the state would support them, even in a case against the Catholic convent. The following month after receiving a reply from the convent, the board called a special meeting and “Mesdames Spencer and Bettes were appointed to wait on lawyer Fell to ask his advice as to what steps, if any should be taken to bring Emily back into the Home.”²⁸³ Although their counsel advised them that they did not have legal standing to remove Emily from the convent, eventually Emily returned ‘home’ of her own accord. In other cases, when Chinese men threatened the *Home* with lawsuits if girls were not returned to them, the women did not waver. In fact, in some cases, it appeared that the WMS’ willingness to take legal action was enough to discourage Chinese men from pursuing their cases formally. The women of the WMS did not question their right to act as surrogate parents. Rarely did the courts question this right either.

While the courts certainly played a role in maintaining the power of the WMS over Chinese men and women, the ways in which the *Home* was framed by the court varied in each case. For instance, in the *Quai Shing* case, the *Home* was described as “a missionary institution in the City of Victoria, instituted for the purpose of adopting, educating and bringing up Chinese children.”²⁸⁴ This description is interesting, as ten years earlier, the *Home* was founded not as an orphanage but as a place of *rescue*, primarily for Chinese prostitutes and ‘slave girls.’ In fact, it

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 86-87.

was a full thirteen years after this case that the name of the institution was changed from *Chinese Rescue Mission* to the *Oriental Home and School*, a name more befitting the description offered in court. Additionally, in court documents, the *Home* was most often referred to as the *Chinese Refuge Home*, not the *Chinese Rescue Home* as it was called in the institution's own documents. The use of 'refuge' in place of 'rescue,' however, opened up the possibility for expanded definitions of the *Home*. In the minutes of the Advisory Board for this period, there was no discussion of children in the *Home*, but instead discussion revolved around Emily and her third escape from the *Home* (October/November), an "interesting wedding which had taken place" (January) and in February, a discussion of Japanese and Chinese women in Union who "might be visited" and a discussion of bringing another woman into the *Home*, who it was believed "might carry on her immoral practices" if left to her own devices.²⁸⁵ While it is unclear why the *Home* took on this second identity as an orphanage or a refuge home, it is probable that this was a legal strategy for making the *Home* seem like the most suitable place for the courts to place 'children' such as Choy Wan, Quai Shing, Soy King, and Ah Gway. Framing the *Home* as a surrogate parent legitimized the *Home* as a place of shelter, as providing the much needed roof over these children's heads.

In a later case, not discussed here, the *Home* was described somewhat differently. Here, the *Home* was described as "a local philanthropic institution which has been established for the

²⁸⁵ "Minutes of the Oriental Home and School Advisory Committee", 1898, *Oriental Home and School fonds: 1896–1914*, Record Number MS-2439, British Columbia Archives.

purpose of reclaiming and reforming fallen girls and women of the Chinese race.”²⁸⁶ The differences in the description can most likely be linked to the differences in the types of cases being presented. In the case of Quai Shing, the applicant claimed to be her adopted father, and therefore placement in an orphanage-type setting would seem less problematic. The latter case, however, dealt with a woman seized by immigration officials who claimed she was a prostitute. What is clear here, even when the definition of the *Home* was not, is that the court not only supported the *Home* in many of its decisions, but it also required that the *Home* be moulded and manipulated in order that it fit the demands of the court that then helped to fill it.

The Child's Rights

While it was certainly the case that the *Home* was engaged in institutional imperatives, when deciding custody cases, the best interests of the child invariably focused on her free will. In all of the cases, the child in question was constructed as a consenting resident. This was not surprising, as these cases were all concerned with what was claimed to be unlawful custody by the *Home*. Given that the *Home* often argued that they were rescuing the girls and women precisely because their free will was violated as slaves and prostitutes, it is ironic that unlawful custody and confinement were central to these custody cases—only the accusations were directed at the benevolent society itself. The *Home*'s later use of barbed wire on their fences and locks on windows and doors suggests that confinement was one imperative of the *Home*, despite

²⁸⁶ “In re FONG YUK and the CHINESE IMMIGRATION ACT.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1901, Vol. VIII, p. 120.

their claims to the contrary. However, this aspect was never acknowledged in court records, the focus instead was on the best interests of the child. Defining the domestic sphere was first and foremost about defining a home and constraint was not compatible with constructions of home. In fact, given that the white women who ran the *Home* were concerned with training these young women in proper domesticity, their authority in these cases was never challenged. What the courts did challenge was whether the racial mixing that was required in order to achieve these ends was in the best interests of the child in particular and the family more generally.

In the Ah Gway case, as well as in the cases that followed, the best interests of the child were established through the testimony of the child and the matron, although in some cases others weighed in. Deposed in the first case were Gardiner, the chaplain, and Mrs. Morrow, the matron of the *Home*, who testified about Ah Gway's freedom. They contended that "no manner of force or restraint was now placed on the movements of the infant: that she could leave the *Home* at any time and although Chin Su or other strangers were not allowed unlimited liberty or access, still she might see and converse with the infant at all reasonable hours, in the presence of two other China women [sic], residents there."²⁸⁷ Likewise, in the Quai Shing case, while the applicant's affidavit painted his relationship with Quai Shing as paternal in nature, and the *Home's* confinement of the child as unlawful, Quai Shing herself told a much different story. Her story, in fact, mirrored the story of Ah Gway in a number of ways. Both girls claimed to be about sixteen years of age, both claimed to be orphaned, kidnapped, and sold as slaves and both girls were alleged to be living in households (at the time of their apprehension by the *Home*) where

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

there was a chance that the child would be “exposed to risks”²⁸⁸ or was in an “improper and immoral place of abode.”²⁸⁹ Both girls also testified that their choice was to remain in the *Home*, and in the case of Ah Gway, that physical restraint would be necessary to keep her in her previous home should she be placed there. Both cases were also resolved in the *Home*’s favour.

Despite similar tactics by the *Home*’s counsel, the case of Choy Wan was not as favourably resolved for the *Home*. Choy Wan’s affidavit and one from Miss Sarah Bowes, matron of the *Home* were used to claim that no force was applied to keep Choy Wan in the *Home*. Choy Wan, for her part, denied that she was a servant and accused Kow’s mother of ill treatment. The child, while out on an errand, had appealed to the *Home* to be given shelter, stating that she was a slave in China and had been bought by Lee’s family. The affidavit of Miss Bowes explained the circumstances by which the girl had come into the *Home*, and stated that “she was there of her own free will and was free to leave whenever she wished.”²⁹⁰ Here again, the *Home* offered the child’s consent as evidence that the *Home* was not confining the child or violating her rights in any way. Further, Miss Bowes explained that the *Home* was not a home “simply for fallen women, but for all Chinese girls and women requiring aid.”²⁹¹ This home space, she implied, was not a space of confinement, but was a space of refuge. But, in this case, the court sided with Lee. Here, the Judge determined that the rights of the applicant and the

²⁸⁸ “In re AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII, p. 346.

²⁸⁹ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 87.

²⁹⁰ “Choy Wan’s Guardian.” *The British Colonist*, September 7, 1895, p. 7.

²⁹¹ “Choy Wan’s Guardian,” *The British Colonist*, September 7, 1895, p. 7

sanctity of family were of primary importance.

From Roofs to Rafters: State Support of the *Home*.

If the *Home* provided a protective roof over their inmates' heads, the state provided the legal supports, or rafters, which lent legitimacy. This was not a straightforward endeavour, however. From the beginning, the lines between habeas corpus and custody were blurred. Although all four of the cases were brought before the court as habeas corpus cases, most became primarily concerned with custody as well as with the rights and responsibilities of parenthood. The state's role in deciding custody in the following cases was dependent on its understanding and interpretation of pre-existing legal definitions of parenthood and how these related to the 'best interests of the child.' These considerations were tied to the determination of the legitimacy of guardianship claims which, in some cases, were dependent upon the fitness or suitability of the guardian or 'parent.' In determining the rights of parents, the Ah Gway case was important, as it was cited for the precedent it set in two of the three other cases that are referenced in this chapter. Acting as counsel for the *Home* was Thornton Fell.

Active in the community, especially within the Presbyterian Church where he was an elder and member of the board and also offered legal representation, Thornton Fell would be the *Home's* counsel for many years. Fell was a well-known businessman from an important family in Victoria, and was thus an important ally of the *Home*. The son of James Fell, a prominent businessman who served as a councillor in 1864 and 1865 and became mayor of Victoria from

1885-1887,²⁹² Thornton Fell was also politically active in the city. Like his father, he was a counsellor for Victoria, holding a seat from 1904 to 1907. Fell was a “prominent barrister in Victoria who served as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.”²⁹³ According to the minutes of the Advisory Board to the *Home*, Fell was consulted on a number of legal matters, including the Ah Gway case.

In this important case, Chin Su contended that Ah Gway was her niece, entrusted to her and her husband while she was visiting her sister in China. Given that her sister was recently widowed, the applicant claimed that she had agreed to take on the responsibility for Ah Gway’s “nurture and education, until marriage, the infant being alleged to be betrothed to a young man in China.”²⁹⁴ Here, Chin Su argued that as the aunt to Ah Gway, she was the legitimate guardian of the child. Further, by reference to her agreement to take on the child’s nurture and education, Chin Su constructed herself as a true parent to Ah Gway. Thornton Fell opposed the motion that demanded that Ah Gway be returned to Chin Su. He did so, not on the basis of the *Home*’s right to hold the child, but on what he argued was Chin Su’s illegitimacy as guardian and on the argument that the child was in the *Home* of her own free will. Here, Fell made two important points. First, by arguing that Chin Su had no legal rights of guardianship, Fell called into question her right to apply for habeas corpus in the first place. Second, given that the child was

²⁹²“Mayors Listed by Name.” *City of Victoria*, http://www.victoria.ca/archives/archives_refmayor_maynamelist.shtml, accessed June 20, 2010.

²⁹³ “Oak Bay Community Heritage Register”, *Heritage Oak Bay*, http://heritageoakbay.ca/pages/preserve_oak_bay_heritage/ob_heritage_register/directory/pages/heritage_register0043.html, Accessed June 20, 2010.

²⁹⁴ “In re AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII

claimed to be at the *Home* of her own free will, no confinement could be said to have taken place. These two points were effectively made through the discrediting of (biological) familial ties and the privileging of emotional ones.

Fell's strongest witness in this case was the child herself. Ah Gway deposed that:

she had never known her mother or any parent; her earliest recollection was of being under the care of a woman in Shanghai, who did not profess to be her mother. Some years ago this woman handed her over, she believed in consideration of a sum of money, to another woman, who carried her to Canton and who, in Canton, handed her over (again supposed for a money consideration) to Chin Su.²⁹⁵

Here, Fell used Ah Gway's testimony to dispute not only Chin Su's legitimacy as guardian, but her suitability as a parent as well, for any woman who would 'buy' a child certainly could not be considered a fit parent. Women's roles were to fit definitions of 'proper' domesticity and white maternalistic standards. Constructing Ah Gway as an orphan allowed the case to be reframed around custody. Thus, the *Home's* role as surrogate parent was established in order that the court would see the *Home* not as a place of detention, but instead as a *familial* roof with which to shelter this orphaned child.

Parenthood and guardianship were often dependent on highly gendered understandings of who had rights to children. Although the *Home* positioned itself as surrogate home and mother, the court was much more concerned with the father and his rights. In the Chin Su/Ah Gway case, for instance, Justice Matthew Baillie Begbie, himself a prominent judge and the province's first

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

chief justice,²⁹⁶ dismissed the writ of habeas corpus on the grounds that there seemed to be “no restraint, lawful or unlawful, of any personal liberty,” and then determined that what was at issue was the matter of custody. Here, Begbie chose to take neither side with regards to which party had greater claim to custody, arguing instead that it did not “appear that any person has a valid claim to that custody.”²⁹⁷ This was a point that would be taken up in subsequent cases where custody was an issue. Begbie explained that “Nobody can have a valid claim *except the father* or a duly appointed guardian; or some person as a schoolmaster, to whom the infant has by proper authority been confided or apprenticed.”²⁹⁸ While the *Home* was not deemed to be father or ‘duly appointed guardian,’ it was rarely called upon to defend its rights as surrogate parent. The courts only questioned the *Home*’s guardianship as it pertained to questions of racial mixing, as I discuss later in this chapter.

The law privileged a patriarchal understanding of the family. According to White (1980), in the “normal course of events, the father had a *prima facie* right to assume the role of guardian of his children’s persons and property” (221). Although the *Talfourd’s Act* of 1839 sought to allow a mother’s visitation and access rights, no rights to guardianship were to be given to the mother. In her book *From Father’s Property to Children’s Rights: The History of Child Custody in the United States*, Mary Ann Mason (1994) explains these laws by reference to both

²⁹⁶ Begbie, in fact, was a clear example of how the language of race was drawn from a transnational context. As Mawani (2009) has argued, Begbie “drew on Britain’s overseas experiences to make sense of the new and unfamiliar racial exigencies facing the young colony, including the ‘problem’ of Chinese migration” (24),

²⁹⁷ “In re AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII, p. 345, emphasis mine.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

patriarchal and capitalist influences on law. Laws, she argues, were initially crafted based on the understanding that although children were “not considered property under common law, as it has become fashionable to expound, ... a child’s labor was a valuable resource to parents and other custodial adults” (xii). Thus, fathers, “without dispute, had almost unlimited authority of custody and control over their natural legitimate children, leaving almost no room for maternal authority, at least during the father’s lifetime” (6). This was largely due to the “general legal impotence of married women. Under English common law a married women (*femme couvert*) could not own property, either real or personal” (14). It wasn’t until women began to gain more legal rights, for instance property rights, that a shift began to take place in custody laws. In British Columbia, the gaining of legal rights for women also coincided with greater custody rights, but this would not occur until 1917. According to Cramer (1992), the “Equal Guardianship Bill ‘giving mothers equal right with fathers to the guardianship of their children’ [was passed] two weeks before the suffrage bill” (66). Because these cases took place well before such legislation was passed, and despite that Chin Su claimed to have been granted custody to Ah Gway by her mother, it was ruled that Chin Su did not have “any legal rights at all over the infant’s person.”²⁹⁹

Begbie was quick to acknowledge that the authority of a mother had been “greatly extended”³⁰⁰ in England. However, he did not extend that authority in this case for two reasons. First, he explained that he was “not aware that this legislation has been adopted in Canada”³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

and second, he was also unaware of “what the state of the law in China”³⁰² was. He also asserted that it would be difficult to ascertain “that a Chinese widow possessed similar authority, or had legally deputed it.”³⁰³ The Chinese law on custody was not only unknowable, but also unnecessary to the case, he ruled. In two of the three cases that followed where the applicant was a man, the court decided that he was the legitimate guardian, although only one of the two men retained custody.

In the second case and in the two cases that would follow it, where the applicants were Chinese men, their legitimacy as guardians was also to form the basis for their claims against the *Home*. However, each of the stories was slightly different, as were their outcomes. A newspaper account, dated 5 September 1895, entitled “Little Choy Wan” explained that Mong Kow Lee, a “well known Chinese interpreter for the customs, applied in chambers to be made guardian of little Choy Wan, a Chinese girl twelve years old.”³⁰⁴ Although this story was reported in the newspaper five times between 5 September and 19 September, the case was very quickly resolved. In fact, by 6 September, the court had issued an order and heard and ruled on an appeal. Unlike the Ah Gway case, which began with her admittance on 3 February 1893 and was resolved almost two months later on 2 April 1893, this case was over in three days. Here, Lee argued that he had hired Choy Wan as a nurse for his ailing widowed mother, that she was a servant in his family, and that he was “paying the mother a certain sum for her services.”³⁰⁵ Lee’s

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ “Little Choy Wan.” *The British Colonist*, September 5, 1895, p. 5.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

argument, unlike Chin Su's, was that the child was not a member of the family: instead, he portrayed the relationship as a business contract and himself as simply the child's employer.

In the case of Choy Wan, the court determined that Mong Kow Lee did, in fact, have guardianship over the child. The Ah Gway case was not cited in this decision, although it was referenced in the later habeas corpus cases I discuss. Given that Lee had argued that he was paying the *mother* of the child for the services of Choy Wan, the father again did not factor into the arrangement. However, it may have been precisely the business nature of the relationship that garnered the judge's support for Lee's application. The judge in this case did not provide reasons for his assumption that Lee was the proper guardian of the child, but simply affirmed that it was so. It is possible that Justice Davie did not rely on whether the applicant had the authority of the father in order to determine guardianship of the child as cited by Begbie. Instead he likely focused on the latter portion of this decision, the notion of a guardian such as "a schoolmaster, to whom the infant has by proper authority been confided or *apprenticed*"³⁰⁶ It is possible, then, that the judge determined the child to be, as a servant, a type of apprentice and therefore Lee could be seen as the appropriate guardian.

In the third case, Sing Kow Seid appealed a decision by Justice M. W. Tyrwhitt Drake in October of 1897. Although the case file provided very little background information on Seid, *The British Colonist*, in an article not related to this case, described the applicant as a "Chinese

³⁰⁶ "In re AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU." *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII, p. 345, emphasis mine.

interpreter for the C.P.R.”³⁰⁷ In another article in *The British Colonist*, Seid was described as a “well-to-do Chinaman.”³⁰⁸ The only other information that could be gleaned from the case, as reported in the newspapers and the *BC Reports*, was that he lived with his wife and two young daughters. One son had apparently died the previous year by way of an accidental poisoning and another son was being educated in China. Thus, Seid was known to be a well-established family man in the community. The case concerned Quai Shing who was at the time alleged by the applicant to be under the age of sixteen, although the child herself claimed to be “about sixteen years old.”³⁰⁹ The applicant in the case argued that Quai Shing was his adopted daughter, whom he had adopted from Lim Fei, “who was believed to be her uncle, and that since that time the applicant had kept the child as a member of his own family.”³¹⁰ Here, Sing Kow Seid attempted to establish the legitimacy of his right to guardianship of the child through claims that he had formally adopted the child in China. Further, he underscored this through references that he kept her as a member of his family. Maintaining that Quai Shing was family was important as both of the previous cases hinged on proving legal right to the child. Seid strengthened his case by arguing that Quai Shing had been forcibly removed from his home without his knowledge. The child, according to the applicant, was removed from his home by a police constable while he was away and was subsequently placed in the *Home*. This reference to the police marked out the

³⁰⁷ “Chinese Child Poisoned,” *The Daily Colonist*, Oct. 21, 1896, p. 1.

³⁰⁸ “The City,” *The British Colonist*, Sept. 26, 1897, p. 1.

³⁰⁹ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 96.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.87.

Home as a site of confinement, as it was a state official who had seized the child and had placed her there.

In this case, the court initially determined that the applicant, Sing Kow Seid, had no legal right to the child. However, the applicant appealed this judgment, arguing that “having placed himself *in loco parentis*,” he was “entitled to the same rights in regard to custody of the child as a father.”³¹¹ Council for the applicant further argued that the “policy of law is to extend the right of guardianship beyond mere consanguinity.”³¹² However, council for the respondents argued that the law of England did not recognize the rights of adoption and unless “the applicant be the parent, he has no more right than an absolute stranger.”³¹³ While the final decision dismissed the appeal, the judges were not unanimous in their decision. Judges George Walkem and Paulus Irving agreed with the original decision, citing the case of *Ah Gway* and others as precedent for denying the rights of an adoptive parent or guardian where the father’s express wishes had not been evident, but Judge Davie did not agree. In fact, in his lengthy and strongly worded judgment, Davie not only disagreed that the applicant had no legal claim to custody, but further implicated the *Home* in a criminal matter.

In his judgment, Davie argued that the cases cited in *Ah Gway*, as well as the *Ah Gway* case itself, did not deny the legitimacy of the adoptive relationship, but instead emphasized that

³¹¹ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p.89.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

the adoptive parent had no rights “as *against* the father.”³¹⁴ This was the distinction that threatened the undoing of not only this case, but the Ah Gway case as well. If the adoptive relationship was deemed legal and had the rights associated with parental rights, except as against the rights of the father, the court could not intervene in the best interests of the child, except in a “case of gross moral turpitude.”³¹⁵ Here, the court made a distinction; it was not simply that the father had ultimate right over the guardianship of his child, but that it was only in cases that argued *against* the rights of the father that the court *could* intervene. If the father was not party to the case, his rights could not be understood as being violated, and therefore his protection was not to be a concern of the court. However, the other judges did not agree and the court upheld the earlier decision. Although a weakening of the state’s structural support was evident, the court sided, this time, with the *Home*.

The privileging of the father’s rights threatened to undermine the authority of those who ran the *Home*. Davie’s efforts to elevate the rights of Chinese guardians over institutions such as the *Home* meant that not all were in agreement when it came to defining the boundaries of domesticity. What would become clear in the Soy King case, however, was that guardianship rights would not be enough to guarantee that the plaintiff could regain custody of the child. On 30 June 1900, Soy King, or ‘Dorothy’ as she would soon be called, entered the *Chinese Rescue Home*. On 11 July of the same year, the *British Colonist* reported that a habeas corpus

³¹⁴ Ibid. 92, emphasis mine.

³¹⁵ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 94.

application would be heard on the matter in the Supreme Court Chambers. Sam Kee applied for a writ of habeas corpus on the grounds that he had gained custody of Soy King four years before and that when she was found at the *Home*, “the authorities refused to give her up.”³¹⁶ This case was distinct from the previous three cases because the legitimacy or legal right to guardianship of Soy King was seen to be much stronger. This meant that the suitability or fitness of Sam Kee would have to be determined in order for a decision to be made. Given the strength of Sam Kee’s claim to guardianship, the *Home* was forced to move beyond their previous stance which had been largely to undermine the applicant’s legitimacy as guardian and avow their own support of and respect for the children’s free will. In this case, therefore, the *Home* offered the court two separate grounds for ruling in their favour. First, the *Home* argued that Soy King, like the earlier cases, was a slave and that Sam Kee was never entrusted her care by the father. Second, the *Home* argued that even if the court were to rule that he did stand *in loco parentis*, he had lost his right “on account of (a) cruelty; (b) failure to properly maintain and educate; and (c) grossly immoral conduct.”³¹⁷ While the *Home* would ultimately retain custody of this child, as the analysis of the judgment will show, this was the only case where the court based its final decision solely on the applicant’s suitability and fitness as a parent rather than on whether he had the legitimate right to file the habeas corpus.

Justice Martin viewed the Soy King habeas corpus application as “quite distinct from that

³¹⁶ “Wants the Child” *The British Colonist*, July, 11, 1900, p. 5.

³¹⁷ “In RE SOY KING, AN INFANT” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1900, Vol. VII, p. 292.

which arose in the cases of *In re Ah Gway* (1893), 2 B.C. 343, and *In re Quai Shing* (1898), 6 B.C. 86.”³¹⁸ Unlike the two cases cited by the learned judge, this case was unique as the applicant claimed to “stand in *loco parentis*” to Soy King. In the case of *Ah Gway*, the applicant claimed to have been entrusted with the care of the child by her sister, who was the mother of the child. Similarly, the applicant in *In Re Quai Shing*, claimed guardianship, citing authority given to him by the child’s uncle. In this case, however, Sam Kee claimed that he “was confided to his charge by her *father*, a resident of China, to be cared for, supported, and educated as his (Sam Kee’s) own daughter.”³¹⁹ Here, Sam Kee claimed to have the authority of the father, who in the earlier cases was deemed to be the only true parental authority (although Davie challenged this interpretation of the law, the two other Justices did not agree).

In the case of *Ah Gway*, for instance, when Begbie stated that “Nobody can have a valid claim except the father,”³²⁰ he was challenging the mother’s authority, which he saw as only valid if there was no legitimate father to dispute this authority and even then this authority was limited. However, this authority was not automatically afforded to a Chinese widow, thus it was left to the Court to decide the fate of the *Ah Gway* case. Likewise, in the case of *Quai Shing*, the

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

³¹⁹ “IN RE SOY KING, AN INFANT” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1900, Vol. VII, p. 291, emphasis mine.

³²⁰ “IN RE AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII, p. 345.

court agreed that the applicant had no legal right to “custody and possession of the child.”³²¹ The case of *Soy King*, therefore, differed substantially, as the applicant claimed to have the father’s authority for possession of the child. In the case of *Soy King* the state reaffirmed the rights of the father through the acknowledgment of the rights of the adoptive father. This acknowledgment was short-lived, as the issue of fitness still remained. It was on this point that the court decided in the *Home*’s favour. In making this assessment, the family was juxtaposed against the opposite, the stranger.

Refuge from the Outside: The Stranger and the Best Interests of the Child

One of the most common discourses used by the courts to assess the validity of the habeas corpus cases was that of the ‘stranger.’ Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s (2000) discussion of the stranger I argue here that the courts used discourses of strangeness and the stranger to mark the Chinese “body out of place” (39), as outside of proper family or domestic relations. In these cases, the stranger was a figure that not only marked out the Other but also acted rhetorically to reinforce and police racial and familial boundaries. Ahmed’s (2000) discussion of the fetishization of the stranger, or the stranger as object, is useful for understanding how it is that the stranger can be framed as *unknown* precisely because of the invisibility of how it is that we come to *know* or recognize the stranger. For Ahmed, then, the construction of the stranger is about the construction of difference, but it is also about the construction of danger. She explains that “‘the stranger’ is produced as a figure precisely by being associated with a danger to the

³²¹ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 88.

purified space of the community, the purified life of the good citizen, and the purified body of ‘the child’” (Ahmed 2000, 37). However, as I show here, discourses of the stranger were not always this straightforward.

Sometimes the racial Other was framed as a stranger because of the threat posed to the child, while in other cases, it was the white stranger who posed the most danger to the ‘purified space of the community.’ Thus, it was not only the racial Other who was marked off as a stranger to whiteness, but in some instances, whiteness was also framed as a stranger to Other-ness. Here, the boundaries of race were policed from both sides, for if the racialized Other was defined in relation to whiteness, so too was whiteness to be defined in relation to the Other. Ahmed (2000) argues that the stranger is “the one who is out of place,” that “the policing of valued spaces allows the legitimation of social exclusion by being tied to a heroic ‘we’ who takes shape against the figure of the unspecified stranger” (30). In the court cases I discuss, the role of the stranger was not as clear cut. In cases where whites were framed as ‘strangers,’ this was not necessarily meant to socially exclude whites, but to legitimate the social exclusion of Chinese. Whites were only deemed to be out of place when they challenged or threatened existing racial hierarchies. Here, the racial project of delineating and ordering race was based on essentialist representations of race, but just as importantly about locating these within existing “social structures of domination” (Omi and Winant 1994, 72).

The right of the court to determine the best interests of the child was tied to who had legal rights to the guardianship of that child. Thus, in cases where the applicant was determined to have no legal standing, the court was called upon to act as guardian of the child. The rights of guardianship could not, in these cases, be equated with the right to custody. Therefore, the state weighed not only legal right, but also the moral fitness of guardians. In this endeavour, the state utilized not only assessments of the applicant’s fitness as a parent, it also relied on discourses of

friend and stranger to frame its decisions. While it is tempting to define the stranger through an understanding of who is known or not known, this approach is not sufficient here. As Ahmed (2000) explains,

the stranger is produced as a category within knowledge rather than coming into being in an absence of knowledge. The implications of such a rethinking of the relationship between knowledge and strangers are far reaching: it suggests that knowledge is bound up with the formation of a community, that is, with the formation of a ‘we’ that knows through (rather than against) ‘the stranger’(55).

Likewise, in the courts, the stranger was not necessarily unknown to the child, but instead was constructed as potential threat against not only the child but against the formation of community, in this case both the white community and the mixed-race ‘family’ that resided within the *Home*. The stranger in these cases, like Ahmed’s stranger, was produced and known through the formation of community and family. Given that the stranger was defined through his/her opposition to definitions of family or community, the stranger was *known* and produced through existing definitions of both.

It was in the case of Ah Gway that the discourse of the stranger first arose in regards to the *Home*. In his ruling that the applicant had no legal right to the child, Begbie positioned the applicant as a virtual stranger. The matron of the *Home* had testified that the young woman was to be supervised or chaperoned should “Chin Su or *other strangers*”³²² come to visit. The language used here served to frame Chin Su as a *stranger* to Ah Gway as the reference to “other strangers” implied that she, too, was included in this description. The court supported the *Home* in this regard by deeming Chin Su to have no legal right to the child. What the court was arguing

³²² Ibid, emphasis mine.

here, was not that Chin Su was unknown to the child, but that she was, in fact, a ‘body out of place,’ the stranger who was, through her “very proximity, *already recognized as not belonging*” (Ahmed 2000, 21, emphasis in original). The courts, thus, recognized her as out of place, allowing for “both the demarcation and enforcement of ‘this place’, as where ‘we’ dwell” (Ahmed 2000, 21-22). In this case, the ‘place’ was home and the ‘we,’ family. Chin Su was, then, determined to be a threat to the family. Thus, framing Chin Su as stranger was not about her lack of relationship with Ah Gway, but about the danger she was perceived to pose to the child, the home, and the family. The discourse of the stranger here was a racialized one which marked Chin Su out as a racial outsider. However, racialization was not straightforward here, as Ah Gway, despite her race, was to be included within the family. Here the only racial threat was the one who opposed the values of white domesticity which were to be instilled within the child.

If the stranger was framed as simply one who was not knowable, it would be difficult to reconcile Begbie’s decision to keep the child in the *Home*. By denying the legitimacy of the applicant’s claim to custody, Begbie also effectively denied the legitimacy of the *Home*’s claim. If a woman claiming to be the girl’s aunt had no authority, then by what authority could the *Home* claim the same right? However, the discourse of the stranger, as it was equated with threat to the child, meant that the *Home*, despite its far shorter history with the child, was not to be constructed as stranger to her. Although the *Home* was unfamiliar, it was considered to be safe. Thus, Begbie ensured that Ah Gway would stay beneath the *Home*’s roof, stating that this was

“where she desires to remain, and where, I think, her best interests are lodged.”³²³ The child, like the other Chinese girls in the *Home*, belonged there and thus could not be viewed as a stranger. The court, therefore, refused to grant the writ of habeas corpus, meaning that in the absence of a legal guardian the *Home*’s informal custody would not be interfered with.

It was precisely because neither party had a legal right to claim custody of Ah Gway, that she remained in the *Home*. The application of habeas corpus required Begbie to “remove her from one unauthorized custody ... to another custody equally unauthorized.”³²⁴ Although Begbie recognized that the custody of the *Home* was equally unauthorized, given that Begbie found no grounds for the charge that Ah Gway was held against her will and that neither party had a greater right to custody, Begbie declined to remove her and therefore the *Home* was allowed to keep Ah Gway, not because they had a greater right but because they posed no threat to either her or the community. Further, Ah Gway herself did not pose a threat to the family or community, as she had been ‘domesticated’ or was in the process of domestication by those who ran the *Home*. Thus, while Chin Su could be constructed as a stranger to the child, the *Home* by virtue of its function as a *rescue* mission could not be without delegitimizing it altogether.

Discourses of the stranger were also to be at the forefront of the discussion of guardianship in the case of Quai Shing. Here, the discourse of the stranger worked in other ways.

³²³ “In re AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII, p. 346.

³²⁴ “In re AH GWAY, ex parte CHIN SU.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1893, Vol. VIII, p. 346.

When the *Home's* council for the respondents argued that unless “the applicant be the parent, he has no more right than an absolute stranger,” the *Home* itself was also constructed as a stranger to the child. Here, the term stranger was meant to put the *Home* and the applicant on equal footing, in this case each having no *legal* rights, thus giving the Court full discretion in determining Quai Shing’s best interests. In his October 1897 judgment, Judge Drake began by outlining the case, explaining that Sing Kow Seid had applied to have “the body of a Chinese girl under the age of sixteen” brought before the court, “alleging she was in unlawful custody.”³²⁵ This charge, however, was quickly countered by Drake. Despite the fact that the applicant claimed to have adopted the child from her uncle and that he had “kept the child as a member of his own family,” Judge Drake went on to explain that the “applicant is no relation of the girl, and is not a guardian or in any way interested in her welfare otherwise than having been her employer.”³²⁶ Further, he quickly contrasted this relationship with the relationship that the young woman had with the *Home*, where she was described as “apparently satisfied with her position, and is well cared for and trained for future usefulness, both morally and intellectually.”³²⁷ These references to moral and intellectual training were important, as legal guardians had obligations to provide for the education of those in their care. Additionally, religious and moral training could also be undertaken, but according to law, “the guardian must instruct the ward in the faith of the

³²⁵ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 87.

³²⁶ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p.88.

³²⁷ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p.88.

father or in accordance with the father's wishes" (White 1980, 237). Although this certainly was not the case with respect to the *Home*, Drake ignored this point of law, choosing instead to counter claims that the child was held against her will, by not only alluding to her satisfaction with her 'position' in the *Home*, but also referencing the moral and intellectual nurturance that she was receiving there. In this way, although the *Home* could not be considered as having more *rights* than an absolute stranger, morally, the *Home* was shown to take on the role of family. Thus, despite the fact that Quai Shing and the *Home* may have begun as strangers, Quai Shing, like Ah Gway, was since made to belong through processes of domestication, care, and transformation. If Quai Shing was no longer a stranger in the *Home*, the *Home* could not be a stranger to her.

Quai Shing's satisfaction, as well as her moral and intellectual training, erased the threat and danger that she may have otherwise been seen to pose to the white community. Further, Judge Drake clearly saw the *Home* not as a carceral institution, but as a surrogate home for those who resided there. Rather than strangers, those in the *Home* were seen as surrogate parents, specifically mothers. He underscored this through his reference to the children as "waifs and strays," thus positing the *Home* as a charitable institution where the homeless could be 'homed,' and strays could be domesticated. The child was, hence, not 'out of place' but at 'home,' and therefore part of a family.

Defining the family would also be a primary concern of the court in the case of Sam Kee and his application for custody of Soy King. Here, the court acknowledged Sam Kee's rights as standing in *loco parentis*, but Judge Archer Martin was quick to point out that this right was not absolute. In cases where a parent forfeited their rights, "by certain sorts of misconduct" the Crown would act as *parens patriae*. (For more on the uses of *parens patriae* see Grant's (1984), Houston's (1972) and Reitsma-Street's (1989–1990) respective discussions of juvenile

delinquency, and Custer (1978) on the origins of the doctrine). Literally ‘parent of the nation’ or ‘parent of the country,’ *parens patriae* is defined as the power of the state to act “as the legal guardian of persons not *sui juris* and without natural guardians, as the heir to persons without natural heirs, and as the protector of all citizens unable to protect themselves” (Irwin Law Inc. 2009–2010). This doctrine of *parens patriae* was used within the court system as well as to justify the removal of children by social reformers who otherwise would have been deemed strangers to the children. These social reformers, according to Mason, had “little tolerance of cultural, ethnic, or class differences, particularly when it came to alcohol or what was considered immoral sexual behaviour” (Mason 1994, 101). That these young Chinese girls were viewed as unable to protect themselves from such threats was clear. Although for Ah Gway and Quai Shing, the state also intervened, this intervention was based on the contention that no one else had rights to guardianship and therefore the state was forced to intervene. However, in this case, the court had determined that Sam Kee had guardianship rights. He, therefore, could not be framed as a stranger to the child unless it could be proven that the applicant had forfeited his rights through misconduct.

In her work on the social reform of family courts in Ontario during this period, Dorothy Chunn (1992) has shown that the state adopted an “interventionist attitude toward marginal families” (45). The Children’s Protection Act of 1893 gave the Children’s Aid Society the power to “apprehend any children deemed to be at risk and detain them in special shelters prior to a legal hearing” (46). This was commonplace in other jurisdictions, including San Francisco. As early as the 1880s, Pascoe (1990) notes, Chinese Mission workers “took advantage of the quasi-legal powers of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to assign Chinese children who had been taken from their parents to Mission Home care” (186). Although similar legislation was not in place until 1902 in British Columbia, the police and the courts routinely

placed Chinese girls and women in the *Home* as a way to protect them from their ‘owners.’

Unlike the aid societies that Chunn (1992) discusses, the police and courts did not temper this intervention with the possibility of reinstatement of parental rights through rehabilitation. Clearly it was believed by some, including the courts, that Chinese populations were not redeemable. Interventions into child custody were seen as reformatory only insofar as the child could be subjected to moral reform through Christian interventions.

The gross immoral conduct with which Sam Kee was charged had to do with his “bigamous relations with two women,”³²⁸ a charge even more damning as it was not one which the applicant denied. In reaching his decision, Justice Martin considered the primary matter for the court to consider to be “the welfare of the child, and that its moral and religious welfare must be considered as well as its physical well-being.”³²⁹ Yet, this claim was qualified by the following: “the immorality to extinguish the right of the parent or guardian to the custody of the child, must be of a gross nature, so that the child would be in serious danger of contamination by living with him.”³³⁰ The discourse of contamination can be tied closely to the discourse of the stranger. As referenced earlier, Ahmed (2000) contends that the stranger is *produced* precisely because of his/her threat to the purity of “the good citizen, and the body of ‘the child’” (37). The threat was, thus, not in the behaviour of the stranger, but in his/her potential to contaminate the child. Therefore, in this case, it was not enough for a man to be in an adulterous relationship; he

³²⁸ “In RE SOY KING, AN INFANT.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1900, Vol. VII, p. 292.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 295.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

must also have exposed the child to this relationship in such a way that the child would be contaminated by it.

In the case of Soy King, Justice Martin was satisfied “that the atmosphere of his home is, as viewed from the standard of social life in this country, so grossly immoral that there is serious danger to apprehend that Soy King will be morally contaminated by further residence under his roof.”³³¹ The reference to ‘standard of social life in this country’ will be taken up in the following discussion of the role of race in shaping the decisions of the courts. However, here, it is enough to point out that the social standard of this country was equated with ‘home’, and clearly Sam Kee became marked off as the stranger. The *Home* would therefore retain custody of Soy King. She was baptized in the *Home* three years later and remained in the *Home* for over five years. She left the *Home* in October of 1905 when she married. Her connection with the *Home*, however, did not end there. Six years later, when her children were two and a half and five years of age, they were both placed in the *Home* by their father, “as the mother was not living a good life and neglected her children.”³³² They would remain in the *Home*, except for a two-month period, until 1931.

Unlike the previously discussed three cases, in the case of Choy Wan, the court did support the applicant’s request for habeas corpus. This time, the court, despite claims of mistreatment by the child, did not construct the applicant as a stranger to the child. Here, his

³³¹ Cited in “In RE SOY KING, AN INFANT.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1900, Vol. VII, p. 296.

³³² “Record 201” *Oriental Home Register and Biog. 1888–1908, Oriental Home and School fonds*, The United Church B.C. Conference Archives (Bob Stewart Archives), p. 72.

relationship was framed as that of an employer and therefore not as posing a threat to the child. However, this is not to say that the *Home's* administrators did not strive to show that they were, in fact, the more suitable guardian for the child. A letter to the editor from Miss Bowes, matron of the *Home*, appeared on 8 September in the *British Colonist*. This letter was in reply to a report published on the 6 September, following an incident at the *Home*. This article reported that the order made on Wednesday (4 September) appointing Lee guardian of the little Chinese girl was signed by the Chief Justice, but that when Lee came to collect the girl the following day, Miss Bowes asked for a delay until she could notify the *Home's* lawyer and that it was arranged that Choy Wan be allowed to stay until the appeal. The appeal was set for two days later (6 September) after which time, the child was handed over to Lee.³³³ In a letter to the editor, Bowes, matron of the *Home*, contested this report.

In her letter, Bowes did not dispute that the young girl remained in the *Home*, but rather than framing this in legal terms, she framed it in the following way:

On Thursday p.m. Mr. Aikman and Mong Kow came into the home for Choy Wan. I produced the child in presence of the above named, also of Mr. Coleman, the interpreter, and Miss Wickett, the teacher of the home. The question was asked me by Mr. Aikman, 'Do you give up the child?' and I replied 'Yes, if she is willing to go.' She was not willing to go, but shook her head and began to cry.³³⁴

Bowes' construction of this event is interesting for two reasons. First, although she was willing to abide by the court's decision, the story that Bowes told was one which showed the child to be

³³³ Although a newspaper account claimed that the child was turned over to Mong Kow Lee on 6 September, record books from the *Home* do not show her being discharged until the 10 September.

³³⁴ "Choy Wan's Case." *The British Colonist*, September 8, 1895.

fearful of Lee. It was a story which positioned Lee as the stranger who entered the *Home* with the purpose of removing the child from her home. Here, the child was framed as unwilling to leave her 'home.' As Ahmed (2000) contends, "home is not simply about fantasies of belonging (where do I originate from?) but that it is *sentimentalised* as a space of belonging" (89). This story, thus, through its emotionality, portrayed the *Home* as a place where the child belonged and where she desired to stay. This is related to my second point.

By constructing the space of the *Home* as the child's own home, Miss Bowes underscored the threat that Mong Kow Lee posed, not only to the child's sense of home, but to her free will. Miss Bowes' refusal to turn over the child highlighted the *Home*'s support of Choy Wan's own wishes. She emphasized her own willingness to give up the child "if she is willing to go."³³⁵ However, when the child shook her head and began to cry and three times "expressed herself as unwilling to go with Mong Kow," Bowes, along with the teacher and interpreter "protested against her being compelled to leave contrary to her will."³³⁶ While the general facts regarding Choy Wan's continued stay in the *Home* were not disputed, Miss Bowes wrote to "place the facts truly before the public," emphasizing that it was not *her* will, but the child's that was being privileged by the *Home* in this dispute. Here, Bowes placed before the public the *Home*'s support of the best interests of the child, implying that the court's ruling was not in those interests and further, that the ultimate threat to her free will was Lee. However, the court would ultimately be vindicated in the press.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

The next and final time that Choy Wan appeared in the newspaper was on 19 September 1895. A single short paragraph in “The City” column of the *British Colonist* provided readers with an update on “little Choy Wan’s troubles.”³³⁷ The paragraph explained that according “to the terms of the order by which she was restored to the possession of Lee,” Choy Wan was required to appear before Chief Justice Theodore Davie in his chambers. Here, the court was shown to have the best interests of the child as its main concern. After interviewing Choy Wan, the order was made absolute, as the young girl “expressed herself as entirely satisfied with his [Lee’s] treatment of her and anxious to remain in his care.”³³⁸ Although originally, according to the *Home*, the child contended that she had been bought by the applicant and was his slave, in chambers Choy Wan was stated to have not only expressed her satisfaction with being returned to Lee, but was also *anxious* to remain in his care, perhaps supporting the judge’s contention that this was a child who had simply run away because of being punished and who saw the *Home* as a way to protest this punishment. By framing the child as now willing, and indeed, desiring to remain the home of Lee, this article showed that ultimately the court had decided in the best interests of the child, that Lee posed no threat and was therefore no stranger to her.

Discourses of ‘the stranger’ allowed the courts to mark off certain populations as posing a threat to the community and to the child, if not always legally, then certainly in a practical sense, without explicit reference to race. In all of these cases, the stranger was not defined as someone who was unknown to the child, but instead as someone who posed a potential threat to the purity

³³⁷ “The City.” *The British Colonist*, Sept. 19, 1895.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

or well-being of the child or the sanctity of the family. While the stranger was usually defined as a racial ‘outsider’ to the family, this discourse was also shot through with racial ambivalence, as Chinese girls and women were deemed to be ‘at home’ in the *Home*. This, I argue, was due to their perceived willingness and voluntary compliance to being in the *Home*, to their domestication in both senses of the word. These relationships, therefore, were not determined through racial affiliation, but through discourses of belonging, although certainly these discourses were racially imbued.

The ‘Race’ for Custody

McLaren (1999) argues that the “law was viewed by whites in the province as an important instrument in constructing a distinctive Chinese identity and in regulating their conduct” (427). He goes on to argue that “there is little, if any, direct evidence that racial background played a role in the disposition of individual cases” (423). McLaren’s (1999) claims did not prove consistent in terms of the habeas corpus cases that I examine here or in the Menzies case discussed in the previous chapter. Because of the domestic nature of these cases (and the relations that they permitted), I argue that race was an important factor in the outcome of each. While it was often claimed by the judges in these cases that the court was blind to race, the impossibility of this impartiality was evident. Judges claimed that the laws must be applied equally to all regardless of race, yet the application of law relied on racial categories which were always already legally constructed. As Haney López (1996) points out, although the tendency is to “assume that races exist wholly independent of and outside law”(10), critical

race theory has shown the extent to which both historically and today, race has been and is “at least in part fashioned by law” (13). Additionally, the cases themselves cannot be understood as separate or uninfluenced by other laws, for instance immigration laws, which could not claim to be colour-blind, invested as they were in maintaining white dominance within the nation.³³⁹

Writing of juridical categories such as ‘Indian’ and ‘half-breed,’ Mawani (2009) argues that these “legal designations were not tied to legal coercion and governance alone but were also intricately connected to questions of mobility and territory, dictating where one could go and where one was to reside” (177). Additionally, she argues, categories such as ‘Chinese’ and ‘Chinamen’ “implicitly and explicitly evoked a set of moral, physical, and mental qualities that distinguished these foreigners from whites and Indians” and that these discourses were solidified in laws that excluded them from “taking certain jobs and from entering the country” (142). Chinese women’s place, both symbolically and geographically, must be understood as legally determined, even prior to the cases in questions. The very categories that judges used were reflective of an already existing lack of equality under the law. Given that Chinese women could only enter Canada as wives or daughters of existing immigrants, their status in Canada was always already governed by their race and gender. Further, the courts’ decisions were focused on regulating private, familial spaces and relationships and therefore eradicating race from the discussion was impossible in a context where cross-racial contact was both feared and carefully policed.

The state, therefore, acted not only to decide the legal merit of the applicants’ cases, but

³³⁹ On this point see Ward (1990) and Roy (1989; 2003), for instance.

in doing so also decided what sorts of relationships were permissible. While in at least one case the courts deemed that the boundaries between Chinese and whites should be maintained and thus granted custody to the Chinese applicant, in other cases, the applicant was conceptualized as a virtual stranger, a tactic used to distinguish the Other from the white self. While this might suggest that the law was not evenly applied, here I argue that in both outcomes, it was the courts' need to uphold the supremacy of whiteness that was central to these decisions. The custody cases were also spatially defined, as the goal of the state was to determine which spaces were acceptable for young Chinese girls and women. To this end, judges often mobilized ideas of racial difference in their decisions.

By placing Chinese girls and women into the space of the *Home*, or by refusing to allow for their removal, the court legitimized certain types of white/Chinese relations. It was only when the court determined that these relations might threaten the white *family*, where the boundary between whiteness and Chinese-ness was deemed most critical, that the court ruled in favour of the applicant. Shah (2001) makes a similar argument that Chinese were threats to white families in general, and to the 'American Standard of Living,' in particular. Also relevant here is Mawani's (2009) discussion of Chinese as threats to white families (105–11). In these cases the state enacted the 'rule of law' and its impartiality in order to protect and police whiteness and in the habeas corpus cases discussed here, this was especially true with regard to preserving the sanctity and purity of the family in the most private of spaces, the home. Following from Hunt (1999), who has shown that the Societies for Reformation of Manners, as 'agents of moral regulation' were "located within civil society, but had significant links with both Church and state" (32–33), this chapter demonstrates the complex and ambivalent relationship between state and non-state actors, especially in a context where courts, as direct agents of the state, had to act as impartially as possible.

In the Quai Shing case, Justice Davie made the claim that “the law knows no distinction of race or religion, but all stand equal before the law.”³⁴⁰ This was not to say, however, that race didn’t matter or that those who heard these cases were immune to its influences. As a survey of these four cases shows, discussion of and allusions to race were prevalent in all of the cases. First, assumptions around race framed how the applicants were regarded by the courts. Second, racial difference entered the discussion as a way to protect white society from the racial ‘equality’ of the law. Third, culture was used to stand in for race, as way to justify racial segregation or separation.

Although in the Ah Gway case, race was never openly addressed, the issue of language and translation point to the ways in which the trial was racialized. The discussion around language and translation also highlights existing biases around the so-called Chinese ‘race.’ Although she was the applicant in this case and therefore not on trial herself, Chin Su was treated as potentially criminal from the start. Not unlike the Menzies case I discussed in the previous chapter, the issue of language and translation was brought to the forefront, not as a way to protect the applicant, but as a way to protect the court from the allegedly untrustworthy Chinese. While the Menzies case showed clear instances of racist language around what the judge saw as the ‘mockery’ of Chinese testimony, in the Ah Gway case, this attitude was much more covert. When counsel for Chin Su “proposed to read the affidavit [of Chin Su], drawn up in English,”³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 95.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 344.

explaining that the applicant, who did not understand English, had been read the affidavit and had it explained to her in her own language, Begbie advised him that this was not admissible. He explained that “The affidavit should be written in Chinese and read to her or by her, and sworn so: then a sworn translation of that will be used on the application to me.”³⁴² Here, Begbie explained that not only did the earlier method make it possible that the “deponent may be made to swear to matters she never intended” but that “it would be very difficult to maintain an indictment for perjury in the case of false statements.”³⁴³ Thus, before the trial had even begun, the court was already considering the possibility of indicting her for perjury.

Although the courts were sometimes quick to dismiss the testimony of Chinese, in Lee’s application of habeas corpus with relation to the child Choy Wan, Lee’s testimony appeared to have been taken at face value. After determining that Lee had legal guardianship of the child, Davie, who was one of three judges who would also preside over the appeal of the Quai Shing case, referenced race, or its irrelevance, in his decision. On the one hand, Davie explained that the “Chinese were entitled to the same protection in their domestic relations as white people.”³⁴⁴ On the other hand, this was not to say that race did not matter. In fact, Davie highlighted the importance of racial distinctions when he offered the following comparison:

Supposing a white child in China had run away from its proper guardian and gone to a refuge conducted by Chinese. What would white people say if some Chinese tribunal gave it over to the Chinese Institution instead of delivering it to its white custodians? The proceeding would be denounced as an outrage. So in the present

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ “Choy Wan’s Guardian.” *The British Colonist*, September 7, 1895, p. 7.

case, it would be a most monstrous thing that, because the child had got a whipping and had consequently run away to a refuge kept by white people, a British court should deny the Chinese custodian the possession of her. The refuge home was a most worthy institution, but it was better for the child to remain among people of her own nationality than to force her to be brought up by aliens to her people.³⁴⁵

Here, Davie highlighted the equal treatment of all ‘races’ under the law, but at the same time, clearly showed that race must be a consideration in these cases. Davie, in fact, highlighted the global concerns of law in his decision. By reversing the context, whereby a white child was given over to a Chinese family, Davie decried the decision as an outrage. Here, Davie was not content to highlight the ‘monstrous’ nature of a decision that would keep the Chinese girl from her Chinese guardian. Instead, he used a global context to highlight the case in a way that privileged the white family. This strategy, I argue, was based on three logics.

First, by locating the white family as a central example, Davie made clear that his decision was based on assumptions that white families required special protections from the precedence that could be set by allowing the Chinese child to be taken from her legal guardian. The law, being blind to race, must protect the Chinese family in order that protection of white families might also be in place. Second, Davie’s decision to relocate the argument to the global sphere allowed him to centre the discussion on the white family and thus privilege the white family as the norm by which all families should be judged. It would not have been enough to say that removing the Chinese child from her guardians was monstrous, as racial stereotypes posited the Chinese family (especially in Canada) was exploitative at best and abusive at worst, invested

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

as they were in viewing women and children as illegitimate citizens. As has been argued by others, Chinese women and children were often viewed as prostitutes and slaves, or at the least as potential prostitutes and slaves (see for instance Mawani 2009). Third, Davie's decision favoured logics of racial separation. Race clearly mattered in defining the boundaries of the domestic, as the issue here was whether a child could or should be given over to a guardian of a different race. In fact, Davie was not content with distinguishing between differing races, but instead highlighted the incompatibility of races. By stating that "it was better for the child to remain among people of her own nationality than to force her to be brought up by aliens to her people,"³⁴⁶ Davie highlighted the white race as *alien* to the Chinese race. Here, Davie made clear that the races were, and should remain, strangers to one another.

In both this case and in the Quai Shing case discussed below, Davie made racial comparisons to highlight his refusal to support the continued residence of either child in the *Home*. While it is probable that Davie refused because of the ramifications for white foster or adoptive parents, as outlined in his judgment, another possibility lies in the prominence of the applicants in these two cases. While the Ah Gway case revolved around a female applicant who was said to be the aunt of Ah Gway, the cases of Choy Wan and Quai Shing were both filed by Chinese men with some stature in the community. In fact, the next time that Mong Kow Lee appeared in the newspaper was six months later, this time as the host of a Chinese military attaché who "called upon several of the leading men of the city" during his stay.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ "The City." *The British Colonist*, Jul. 26, 1896, p. 5.

In the original Quai Shing case, the references to race were not overt. Although race was not openly discussed in this case, a racial history was evident through the citing of precedents. Drake cited the Agar-Ellis case, a case where the mother was considered to have ‘unlawful control’ over her children as she attempted to expose them to a type of religious training that was contrary to the father’s wishes. Both parents were British and most of the discussion was over whether the children should be raised as Protestant or Roman Catholic and whether the mother’s refusal to abide by the father’s wishes constituted unlawful control. Given that his reason for citing the case was to discuss unlawful confinement or control and who should be called to testify in such cases, this case seemed only weakly related. However, Judge Drake specifically drew attention to how the Agar-Ellis case followed the Hottentot-Venus case. His reference to this now-famous case is compelling for a number of reasons. A bit of context for the Hottentot-Venus case, however, is necessary here.

According to Qureshi (2004), “Converted peoples were often displayed in England as evidence of missionary beneficence in spreading civilization” (235). Sara Baartman was to constitute one of these displays of beneficence.

Sara Baartman arrived on England’s shores within this traffic of animals, plants and people destined for display as objects representing colonial expansion and as a means of economic gain; she served as both an imperial success and a prized specimen of the ‘Hottentot’. Brought over in 1810 by Alexander Dunlop, the surgeon of an African ship and exporter of museum specimens from the Cape, she sailed from the Cape to Liverpool upon the strength of a promise to help her earn her fortune (235).

Displayed as a human curiosity, Baartman was poked, pinched, and baited by the public and according to one source, “it took all the authority of the keeper to subdue her resentment” (Qureshi 2004, 236). Abolitionists protested against her display because of humanitarian concerns and these concerns prompted a court case, the basis of the court case resting on issues

of free will. “Ultimately, the court found in favour of the defendant, Cezar, upon the presentation of a contract between Baartman and Dunlop” (Qureshi 2004, 238). Given that there were very few similarities between the Quai Shing case and the Hottentot-Venus case, one must ask why the judge chose to cite this particular case.

Sara Baartman was twenty-one years old when brought to London and was thus an adult, while Quai Shing was alleged to be a child of sixteen at the time of her case. Although the reasons for citing this case were to determine whether the child’s testimony was to be considered, in Baartman’s case, no such determination was necessary. In the earlier case, Baartman, at the time of the case, was living a highly sexualized and public life. Her show catered mainly to white Londoners (both men and women attended these shows). In the case of Quai Shing, however, the child was confined to the private sphere where her sexuality was likely strictly policed. The similarity, here, was that in both of these cases, it was precisely the sexuality of the woman/child that needed to be controlled or protected. In the case of Quai Shing, the threat from her Chinese guardian was always a threat to her sexual morality, as Chinese women were often framed as naturally promiscuous and this could only be stemmed through the intervention and transformative promise of the *Home*.

The other more obvious similarity was the focus on racial difference. In both cases, the ‘detainees’ were non-white, while those accused of controlling/detaining them were white. In both cases there were accusations of slavery and/or prostitution, although in Baartman’s case, it was her white manager who was accused of holding Baartman against her will, while in the Quai Shing case, it was the applicant who faced accusations of slavery, despite the fact that it was the *Home* that was being accused of unlawfully detaining the child. Citing the Baartman case, given that it had very different concerns than the Quai Shing one, implies that race was an important issue. It is important to note here that although Baartman was an adult at the time of her case, it

was not she who was the applicant, but the abolitionists. Thus, in neither case was the writ of habeas corpus instigated directly by the girl or woman who was allegedly being held against her will. In fact, in both cases, it was determined that both ‘victims’ did not wish to be released.

In both cases the applicants were unsuccessful in gaining the release of the girl/woman, but the reasons for the refusal of the courts to intervene were very different. In the case of Sara Baartman, the court determined that because there was a contract between Baartman and her manager, there was no infringement of her freewill. However, in the case of Quai Shing, although freewill was certainly an issue that arose during the case, the case was decided largely on what the court saw to be the best interests of the child. Like the case of Ah Gway, the court determined that neither the *Home* nor the applicant had legal rights to custody and thus it was the state’s obligation to consider what was best for Quai Shing. Thus, while Baartman was ultimately given autonomy in the case (although some have argued that the contract was, in fact, likely forged), Quai Shing was at the mercy of the courts. Soon after the courts decided in favour of the *Home*, Sing Kow Seid appealed the case.

As mentioned earlier, the three Justices did not agree on the appeal of this case. While two of the Justices upheld the appeal, Justice Davie disagreed. In this case, as in his involvement in the Quai Shing case, Davie was quick to affirm the legitimacy of the guardian’s claim. Having established the legitimacy of Sing Kow Seid’s claim, Davie quickly went on to assert that,

We are now dealing with the case of an unmarried female, under the age of sixteen years, regarding whom the Criminal Code distinctly enacts, by section 283, that every one is guilty of an indictable offense and liable to five years

imprisonment, who unlawfully takes, or causes to be taken, any unmarried girl being under the age of sixteen years, out of the possession and against the will of her father or mother, or of any other person having the lawful care or charge of her.³⁴⁸

Here, Davie not only affirmed the legitimacy of Seid's guardianship claims, but suggested that the *Home* might be guilty of an indictable offense in keeping her from her guardian.

By framing the applicant as guardian, rather than as stranger, as did Justice Drake, Davie positioned only the *Home* as stranger in this case. He argued that previous cited cases dismissed the rights of the guardian or foster parent only insofar as they were against the biological parent. He further contended that the cases would have resulted in much different rulings should the cases have been put forward by a stranger who tried to take custody of a child from the foster parent. Not only was the *Home* positioned as 'the stranger' who swept in and took custody of the child, but further, as a *criminal* stranger, as "benevolence and good intention are no defense in law to an indictment under the statute."³⁴⁹

In order to strengthen his argument even further, Davie quickly moved beyond the case at hand to discuss the ramifications of disallowing the rights of the adoptive parent by asking:

how many thousands of homes might be plunged into mourning, more bitter than that of death, if the law stood idly by and permitted the orphan and adopted child, received into the family circle, reared as the rest of the children, knowing and being reminded not that it is of different blood from them, and perhaps not so, to

³⁴⁸ "In re QUAI SHING, An Infant." *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 94.

³⁴⁹ "In re QUAI SHING, An Infant." *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 94.

be ruthlessly torn from the fireside, by a mere stranger who (benevolent although his intentions might be) conceives the idea that he can look after the child better than its own foster-parents.³⁵⁰

Two points need to be made here. First, although Davie does not explicitly mention race, his reference to differences of ‘blood’ is compelling. While Davie marks off the child here as not related by blood to his or her new ‘family’, the child in this instance does not need to know or be reminded of the different blood, precisely because he or she can pass as family. However, the ‘stranger’ here is marked off as the benevolent white stranger, who despite good intentions, must always be a stranger to the child as there can be no (racial) passing in this family.

Second, Davie conjured up both hearth and home to show how, despite the applicant’s Chineseness, the ramifications might be felt much more widely in the white community. Without any direct reference to race, Justice Davie shifted away from this singular case and its Chinese applicant, first, through reference to ‘many thousands of homes,” and secondly, by painting a picture of the classic Victorian home, with the family gathered around the fireplace. Here, although race was an absent discourse, it was prevalent nonetheless. The judge here erased race as a strategy, not to argue for equal treatment of Chinese populations, but to show the consequences for white populations of the precedent that might be set in such cases.

Davie also referenced race in a more direct way early in his judgment when he explained that the rights of the foster parent could be lost if the court deemed it was in the best interests of the child, citing a case where a child was removed from the care of a foster parent and given over

³⁵⁰ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 94.

to a stranger because “it was right that the child should be reared in one faith, and the foster-parents were going to bring it up in another.”³⁵¹ The judge here, however, was not arguing that the court had a right to remove the child from the foster parent, in this case because of religious differences, but instead that the *Home* was denying the child the right to be “brought up according to instincts, customs and religion of her own people.”³⁵² Rather, he argued that Quai Shing was “made the subject of an attempt to proselytize her to the customs, habits and creed of an alien race.” By appealing to race here in general and by referring to the ‘white race’ in this case as an ‘alien race,’ Davie again hinted at wider ramifications of such a practice. Although Davie referenced race here, he was adamant that “the law knows no distinction of race or religion, but all stand equal before the law.”³⁵³ However, he was not only arguing that as a Chinese man Sing Kow Seid should be treated equally, but that the force of the law that was applied to Seid could be equally applied to white citizens, and thus this case held the threat of setting a dangerous precedent. On this note, he was unequivocal, stating “If we were in China, and the tribunals were to uphold the right of benevolent Chinese societies to take our children from us and raise them as Chinamen, we should denounce it as an outrage, but is it not precisely the same kind of outrage upon the Chinese which is asked recognition in this case?”³⁵⁴

Thus, Davie recommended that the case be remitted to Judge Drake, “with the opinion that the applicant has a legal claim to the custody of the child, as against the Refuge Home, but

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid., 95

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

that he may be deprived of that custody, if upon investigation the learned Judge finds gross moral turpitude in the applicant's household, or other misconduct sufficient in the Judge's opinion to deprive him of the custody of the child."³⁵⁵ However, Davie went on record to state that not only should the child be placed in a Chinese home, but further implicated the *Home* in what he suspected was the perjured testimony of Quai Shing. Although Davie declined to rule for the applicant in this case, and the two other judges ruled against him, the record showed that the court here was divided on not only the legitimacy of foster parents generally, but on the role of benevolent societies such as the *Home*.

Two days following this case, the *British Colonist* reported that Miss Bowes, then the matron of the *Home*, had been appointed as guardian of Quai Shing for a period of two years. In this article, Sing Kow Seid was stated to be planning an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Searching the judgments of the Supreme Court, however, did not uncover any appeal of this case.³⁵⁶ While it is impossible to determine the 'truth' of the applicant's case against the claims of the *Home* by examining newspaper accounts of this case, certain suppositions can be made. First, Seid's position as an interpreter for the C.P.R., combined with his class position, makes it unlikely that he could have maintained his position had he been involved in illegal activities such as prostitution, an accusation not made explicit in the original case, but one that was implied when Quai Shing indicated that the "applicant's household was an improper and immoral place

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ "Little Quai Shing," *The Daily Colonist*, February 10, 1898, p. 5.

of abode.”³⁵⁷ Second, an early newspaper account mentioned a “report that the girl [Quai Shing] had disappeared from the home on Friday night, but it turns out that she is still there, safe and sound.”³⁵⁸ While it is possible that the applicant in this case reported her missing in order to strengthen his case against the *Home*, runaways were not uncommon in the *Home*. If she did run from the *Home*, Seid’s claims that she was being held against her will may have indeed been true. Third, at the end of his judgement, Davie brought up a number of points that suggest that Quai Shing may have been coached when making her statements.

First, the issue of language was raised, the affidavit of Quai Shing having been taken through an interpreter as she evidently spoke no English. Given that the court was dependent on one interpreter, Davie argued that the Court should “hear from the child herself, and to be assured that *the words of the affidavit have not been put into her mouth.*”³⁵⁹ Second, and related to this first point, Davie argued that the issue of age was suspect, as the affidavit claimed her to be sixteen, whereas a ‘personal interview’ with her “might tend to confirm either this statement, or that of her father that she is not yet fourteen.”³⁶⁰ Here, it was clear that Davie at least suspected that the child was coached, as the law allowed the Court to consider the wishes of a child over the age of sixteen in such cases. At the time, legal guardians had the right to actual physical custody of their wards, “although not against the wishes of a male child over the age of

³⁵⁷ “In re QUAI SHING, An Infant.” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1898, Vol. VI, p. 87.

³⁵⁸ “The City” *The British Colonist*, September 26, 1897, p. 5.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 96, emphasis mine.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

fourteen years or a female child over the age of sixteen years” (White 1980, 223). Given that the testimony of all of the young women in these cases had very similar themes and language, coaching may indeed have taken place. Lastly, and perhaps most damning, was the following observation made by Justice Davie. “The affidavit goes on to say that she was sold for \$350.00, and saw the money. It might be interesting to enquire how this child became acquainted with the decimal currency of the country, and as to her knowledge and understanding of it. It would also certainly be to the point to ascertain that the extraordinary story of the affidavit is altogether the child’s own.”³⁶¹ Quai Shing would remain in the *Home* against the wishes of Justice Davie.

In the final case, race came up only peripherally. As mentioned previously, when measuring Sam Kee’s fitness as a father, his living arrangements were measured by what Justice Martin identified as ‘national standards of social life.’ These standards were measured through white cultural and social practices, especially as they had to do with marriage. Had Sam Kee kept a mistress outside of his home, the court could not have found gross immorality, as in *Ball v. Ball* it was held that the court “has nothing to do with the fact of the father’s adultery, unless the father brings the child into contact with the woman.”³⁶² Thus the practice of keeping multiple wives, while often overlooked by immigration and police officials, in this case was found to violate the ‘standard of social life’ in Canada. Not only did it violate this standard, but it had the potential to morally contaminate Soy King through her exposure to it. It was, thus, on

³⁶¹ Ibid., 96, emphasis mine.

³⁶² Cited in “In RE SOY KING, AN INFANT” *The British Columbia Reports, being Reports of Cases determined in the Supreme and County Courts and in Admiralty, and on appeal in the Full Court, The Law Society of British Columbia*. Victoria: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, Limited. 1900, Vol. VII, p. 296.

understandings of white social standards that this case was decided. Although race was not cited directly, its presence was felt as the racial hierarchy which privileged whiteness as moral and Chinese-ness as immoral was evident in these discourses of ‘national standards of social life.’

Conclusion

The four court cases that form the basis for this chapter’s analysis provide insight into how the state received and conceived of Chinese populations. They tell us less about how the courts viewed the *Home*. However, the court’s unwillingness to evaluate the *Home*’s fitness in these cases implies that the court sanctioned the *Home* and therefore no evaluation was necessary. This underscores that racial hierarchies were mobilized by the courts in each of these cases, despite the divergent ways in which judges approached them. Race here was made to function as the basis of delineations, but it also created spatial designations. The *Home* was to act as surrogate parent to at risk children, offering a roof over their heads. The state, for their part, provided the support, or rafters, for this roof. That the *Home* was allowed, in most cases, to retain these young women in their care even when the court was unwilling to grant them official custody underscores that the *Home* was a space of exceptionality. Clearly, the court’s tendency to view Chinese as deviant and untrustworthy would indicate a legal desire for racial separation. However, it was precisely this supposed deviance that necessitated white interventions, such as those initiated by the *Home*. Failure to live up to white moral standards had to be met with legal sanctions, in these cases with the removal of the ‘child’ from the Chinese ‘guardian.’ However, privileging whiteness did not always mean that the *Home* would prevail. In some cases, the precedent that would be set was more dangerous than the threat that Chinese were thought to pose.

Although in habeas corpus cases the applicant’s claim was based upon accusations that a person or institution is unlawfully holding or confining another person, the court in these cases

seemed more concerned with establishing the legitimacy of the applicant than with determining if indeed the *Home* was unlawfully confining the young girls and women in question. In cases where the legitimacy of the claim to guardianship was dismissed, the *Home* retained guardianship over the child by default. In fact, the testimony of those representing the *Home* most often revolved around the free will of the child, not whether the *Home* had a legitimate right to the child or, indeed, whether the *Home* was a fit or suitable guardian.

Guardianship for Chinese, on the other hand, was shown to be dependent on both the legitimacy of the claim and if this was proven, then upon the fitness of the parent or guardian. Further, the state was invested in maintaining racial separations while at the same time negotiating not only the impact of their decisions in individual cases, but the broader implications of the cases as well. Questions of religious freedom or guardianship and custody became questions of race, not because the courts were invested in race, but precisely because they were determined not to be. The discourse of the law as colour blind meant that race *had* to be acknowledged precisely because, although the law was understood to be colour blind, those within the system were not. So, while some would adjudicate claims based on common place racial understandings and assumptions, others were careful to consider what the ramifications would be for the larger (read: white) population. Therefore, although judges were quick to point out that the law must be applied evenly, regardless of race, they often referenced their reasons as the protection of white society, not out of any sense of fairness directed at racialized populations. If the law was to define the boundaries of family or of the domestic realm more generally, it had to do so based on definitions which were in keeping with the values of white society. Sometimes it was enough to reference the racialized Other as dangerous or incompatible with the ideals of home and family, such as through reference to the 'stranger.' Other times, however, such as when the judges sided against the *Home*, Chinese men and women were ultimately seen as threats to

white families not because they were strangers to them, but because of the dangerous precedents that might be set.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion: At the Nation's Door: Race, Gender and National Imaginings

The door to the Canadian nation was heavy and cumbersome. Admittance was not easy for Chinese and Japanese women who came during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, many travelled far from home only to be turned away without ever having been allowed to step inside. Some made it through those heavy doors only to find themselves confronted with hardship, racism, and sometimes, exploitation. Combining a structural and post-structural approach to the *Home* (and the 'home'), this study examined how the door to the nation was policed and who held the keys. It has tied together the material spaces that housed Japanese and Chinese women with the discourses that informed their regulation. Imagining the *Home* as a domestic space reflects my desire to view the *Home* as both material and as a social construction, as embedded in what Anderson (1983) calls the 'imagined community.' I have chosen *spatial* metaphors of hearth and home in order to solidify discourses in the material spaces, which I argue have shaped the physical and social landscape in particular ways. I have also utilized sources that lent themselves to a material analysis to this end. By examining photographs of the *Home*, as well as architectural drawings, I was able to examine how spaces were constructed literally, as well as the ideological discourses that underpinned these material practices. Thus, this dissertation is itself an attempt to inhabit and emerge from the margins between two theoretical spaces, the spaces between poststructuralist understandings and materialist ones. It also inhabits a space between the historical past and the historical present (Weeks 1985). In this concluding chapter, I highlight three themes that I have emphasized and threaded throughout this dissertation through a discussion of the theoretical and methodological implications of each. I then conclude with a discussion of the limitations and contemporary significance of this historical research.

A Door into the Past: Reimagining Religion, Nation, Whiteness, and Gender

“At the Hearth of the Nation” attempts to recuperate a history of the *Chinese Rescue Home* by examining the complex and often contradictory logics that underpinned its founding, ideologies, and practices. Sometimes framed as ‘radical’ or exceptional work, the *Chinese Rescue Home* has been regarded as somewhat iconic in British Columbia history. Despite its iconic status, however, no sustained, systematic and/ or critical exploration has taken place to date. This institution has been understudied, perhaps because of the marginal space it has inhabited. Histories that have discussed the *Home* have often viewed it as an aberration of sorts or as part of a broader set of exclusionary practices (See for instance, Chang 2004; Mawani 2009; Gagan 1992; McLaren 1999; Valverde 1991). Some histories of race relations in Canada have focused almost exclusively on this privileging of whiteness in the formation of the nation (See for instance Peter Ward’s *White Canada Forever*). Likewise, studies of white women’s roles as missionaries have also focused on this privileging of whiteness in both global and national contexts. The history of the *Home* that I have offered emphasizes the co-existence, and indeed co-dependence, of inclusionary and exclusionary practices in global, national, and local contexts.

While much work has been done to augment white women’s histories and to discuss their roles in moral regulation, focus has largely been on white women’s moral reform work in national contexts as it was directed at aboriginal women or at other white women, primarily those of working class backgrounds (Chunn 1992; Gagan 1992; Perry 1997; Perry 2001; Rutherford 2003; Valverde 1991). Alternatively, scholars such as Burton (1994), Melman (1992), Semple (2003), and Singh (2000) have discussed the imperial nature of women’s reform movements as they have moved outside of the nation. The importance of these studies in understanding the global hierarchies of racial knowledge and power should not be discounted. Building on this scholarship, this dissertation broadens our understandings of the moral reform

projects of white women and enriches our understandings of the relationship between religion, nationhood, whiteness, and gender.

By linking the *Home* to the national context in which it functioned, I have uncovered some of the competing discourses around the seemingly immutable character of race and the globality of this problem. Although Japanese and Chinese immigrants were certainly of national concern, it was clear that these ‘racial problems’ were also seen to be part of a larger global concern. What was not as clear was how it was that the *Home* could both embrace and mediate these global discourses through a project that was, in many ways, contradictory to common-sense understandings of racial problems. As the discussion of the Royal Commissions has shown, the relationship between religion, whiteness, and nationhood was a complex one. On the one hand, discussion focused on the domestic incompatibility of the Chinese and Japanese with the nation. On the other hand, the superiority of whiteness and Christianity determined that the borders must remain open to Chinese and Japanese in order that they might be evangelized within the nation, but more importantly, so that white men and women might enter into China and Japan and evangelize there. Thus, religious discourses were not always straightforward when it came to discussions of race. While many saw religious conversion as a solution to racial problems, the degree to which these ‘problem’ groups might then be included within the nation was hotly debated. For many, admittance into Canada was only to be granted reluctantly, a price that must be paid in order to further the global dominance of Christianity. It was this ambivalence that became the basis for the founding of the *Chinese Rescue Home*.

Ideas of national and racial superiority legitimated the interventions of white men, and later white women, into the lives of Chinese and Japanese women. These ideas were solidified through disciplinary techniques, such as the seizure of Japanese and Chinese women under the auspices of religious benevolence. But they also materialized in the buildings that were chosen

or constructed for the *Home*. The types of buildings that were chosen or built reflected national ties to Victorian England, but also ties to the religious roots of Methodism. The *Home* itself existed in the spaces between the domestic and the foreign. Although located within the nation, the *Home* was marked off by the foreign bodies that it housed. It was, thus, a space of transition and transformation. It was a space where racial mixing was not only allowed, but encouraged. Here, Japanese and Chinese women were to be recreated in the image of white women in order that they might carve out and domesticate national spaces as their own. In the *Home*, would-be immigrants were made ready to enter the nation's door, although upon evaluation, some were not allowed entry. Immigration officials who placed Japanese women within the *Home*, for instance, relied on the matron to ensure that these women were either 'properly' married before leaving the *Home* or were returned to Japan if husbands could not be found, or if they were determined to be 'bad women.' While women left these spaces in various ways, some 'escaped' out of windows, others were escorted by husbands, police or immigration officials, only those who were evaluated and deemed success stories were free to leave of their own accord. Only once they were domesticated could they be trusted to take their place *within* the nation.

What this dissertation has shown is how domesticity functioned, as well as how it contributed to the construction of the *Home* as an active site of (re)production of the existing discourses of nationalism and whiteness. Beyond that, it has been my contention that it was the coalescence of these discourses with religious and gendered discourses that opened up possibilities for additional technologies of racial governance within the nation. Theoretical approaches that understand racial projects as merely exclusionary can result in the relegation of more inclusionary projects, such as the *Home*, to the margins of history. This dissertation has brought to the foreground the insufficiency of not only a focus on exclusion, but of the reliance on such binaries themselves. This includes binaries of inclusion/exclusion, as well as

global/local, and private/public. What is necessary, instead, is an approach that is more fluid and that takes into account the multiple aims, scales, and trajectories of such projects. From a methodological standpoint, using multiple methods can aid in uncovering the multiplicity of goals and trajectories of institutions like the *Home*.

Hearth and Home: Domesticity as a Key to Inclusion

By exploring the spaces and practices of the *Home*, I have shown that Christian home missions, while certainly building on understandings of a racial hierarchy, also interrupted these same racial discourses by constructing Asians as redeemable and, to some extent, assimilable. A history of the *Home* shows *how* racial projects functioned, not only as practices of subordination, but as limited spaces of transformation. The ideological processes that made Japanese and Chinese women targets of moral regulation and reform were part of the same processes that allowed for their inclusion into the ‘family of God.’

It was no accident that the *Chinese Rescue Home* was housed in domestic spaces. Housing women’s bodies meant ‘homing’ them at the same time. The houses which were home to the matrons and the Japanese and Chinese women they oversaw contributed to the types of training that were possible. Further, these houses helped shape the limits not only of womanhood, but of citizenship. Moulding Chinese and Japanese women into proper citizens was one of the goals of the *Home*; this was accomplished through the ‘domestication’ of their bodies. This domestication was not only a gendered process but a classed one as well. Once taught domestic skills, Japanese and Chinese women were meant to enter Canadian society not only as Christian wives but as domestic servants as well. (See Nakano Glenn 1992 for a detailed discussion of the reproduction of race, class, and gender in the domestic realm.) Thus, Japanese and Chinese women were welcomed and disciplined into God’s *family*. The metaphor of family was sustained through the domestic placement of these women. While Chinese men might be

welcomed into the family of God in churches (the 'House of God'), they were expected to leave the church and enter into the public realm, albeit in limited ways. Women, however, were expected to stay confined within the domestic realm, first as residents of the *Home*, second, as Christian wives and mothers, and lastly as domestic servants. Although inclusion was a goal of the *Home*, this goal was informed by pre-existing gendered discourses that confined not only Japanese and Chinese women to the domestic realm, but white women as well.

Domesticity, therefore, was a crucial element of inclusion. Thus, those who were outside of the *Home* were not rewarded for similar racial interventions. This is evident in the examination of the Menzies case in particular. Although the arranging of marriages was a routine practice of those who ran the *Home*, when Walter Menzies attempted to arrange the marriage of one *Home* 'runaway', he was soon at the centre of a city scandal, was criminally charged, convicted, and sentenced to eight months in jail for his efforts. The state, therefore, took an active interest in dictating the parameters of these cross-racial endeavours. The relationship between the state and the domestic realm, in fact, was constant and powerful. It was the state who often supplied women to the *Home*, but it was also the state who carved out who was to be considered a stranger in the nation and who would be considered a friend. Although it was certainly the case that the state legitimized the *Home* outside of the courts through police and immigration officials placing women in the *Home*, it was also within the courts that racial delineations were made, precedents were set, and spatial designations formalized. Thus, the habeas corpus cases that I discuss offered insight into the state's treatment of and control over not only Chinese populations, but domesticity itself. What this shows is how the construction and production of space was decentralized through the coalescing of state and non-state agencies.

Despite the fact that the state seemed to sanction white women's forays into domestic

evangelistic work, women's work with the Chinese was certainly not accepted in all situations. For instance, on 8 July 1909, the *British Colonist* reported that police commissioners in Vancouver were undertaking to try to "prohibit religious work by women, particularly young women, among the Orientals."³⁶³ Following the alleged murder of Elsie Sigel in the United States by a Chinese man, the commissioners as well as the mayor met to discuss what could be done to persuade young women of the 'evils' of such work. Although the conclusions were that no law gave the commissioners the authority to forbid this type of work, Mayor Prescott went on record calling the association of young women with Chinese *men* "a piece of great stupidity" and further argued that "we should not allow it."³⁶⁴ Here, it is clear that while white women could engage in missions to other women, their work with Chinese men was deemed to be dangerous, and therefore, women were 'encouraged' to engage only in work that kept them safe at 'home'.

The implications of this focus on domesticity are threefold. First, this focus interrupts existing binaries of private and public. Although the domestic is often imagined only in relation to the private realm, a discussion of how domestic discourses were also utilized in the public realm, (such as in the Royal Commissions) or of their utilization as a means to further the public aspirations of white women, helps to uncover the *spaces* where the public and private overlapped and coalesced. Second, a focus on the domestic helps to highlight the ways in which discourses of home operated on local, national, and global scales. Third, methodologically, the focus on the domestic allows for a reading of architectural forms and photographic material in ways that take

³⁶³ "Caution Young Women" *British Colonist*, July 8, 1909, p. 2.

³⁶⁴ "Caution Young Women" *British Colonist*, July 8, 1909, p. 2.

into account this focus on both space and scale.

Throwing Open the Door: The Production of Women's Aspirations and Authority

While women may have been encouraged to remain in the domestic realm, this dissertation points to the complex ways that domestic spaces allowed for a particular interplay of race and religion that contributed to the production of white women's moral authority. White women drew on discourses of cultural and religious inferiority to justify their work with Japanese and Chinese women. Discourses of religious benevolence aligned with those of racial inferiority to open up spaces for women to reassert their moral authority. However, it was only within the domestic realm that these cross-racial relationships were allowed to develop.

White women's histories have focused primarily on their contributions to the private realm and secondarily, to their work as moral entrepreneurs (Taylor 2010). However, these studies have rarely looked at the ways in which the private realm impinges on the public lives of both men and women. This dissertation examines women's contributions as moral entrepreneurs and how these roles intersected in meaningful ways with their roles as wives, mothers, or daughters. But, this study also moves beyond the private realm to examine how white women furthered their *public* aspirations by utilizing domestic skills, discourses, and spaces. It was the *Home's* spatial parameters, its construction as a home space, and its location between the private and the public, that allowed white women to use their marginality to buttress their movement away from those very margins.

While the interplay of racial and religious discourses afforded white women with moral authority, it was the location of the *Home* between the private (domestic) and the public realms that allowed for the interruption of binaries of private/public. Despite that it was constructed both materially and metonymically as a 'home,' the institutional nature of the *Home* allowed both white women and their Asian charges the opportunities to pursue aspirations that might not

otherwise have been afforded them in the domestic realm. Thus, the *Home* was a space which simultaneously re-inscribed racial and gender norms and challenged them. White women were able to extend their power beyond their own homes as they interacted with state officials, contractors, and ‘foreign’ populations. Yet, domestic spaces not only opened up new avenues for white women, but also opened up new possibilities for Japanese and Chinese women.

Japanese and Chinese women were able to utilize the *Home* as a way to escape oppressive home lives, whether that meant escaping prostitution, slavery, or jealous or abusive husbands. Although founded on racist logics, the *Home* offered a space from which to challenge discourses which equated whiteness with citizenship, replacing these with discourses of *Christian* citizenship. Religious evangelism, although premised on racial hierarchies, opened the door to more inclusionary practices. Although opportunities for Japanese and Chinese women were often limited to domestic roles, residence in the *Home* afforded many with increased educational and work opportunities as well.

Understanding white women’s moral authority as arising out of both racial discourses of inferiority and material spaces of domesticity, allows a clearer picture to emerge of how discursive and spatial practices informed one another in the production of power. Theoretically, this has implications for how we might understand the production of power. While certainly power was made to produce discourses of inferiority and spaces of racial regulation, we must also understand that this same power was in many ways dependent upon and reproduced through already existing discourses and through the types of spaces that were produced and chosen. Further, as shown through the previous discussion, these discourses and spaces must be understood as outside of binaries of public/private or inclusion/exclusion. Such binaries are insufficient to explain (or contain) the functioning of power, space, and discourse.

Locks without Keys: Empirical and Methodological Limitations

This dissertation is not a view from nowhere. One of the limitations of this research has been its sustained focus on whiteness and domesticity. While this focus has allowed for an uncovering of how power operated on multiple scales, it has also meant that other aspects of how power operated have not been addressed. Importantly, Methodist Christianity, including its roots, factions, and relations to other Christian denominations, has not been addressed here. Although the records of the Methodist Missionary Society have much to say with regards to how evangelical missions were conceived, internally as well as in relation to other denominations, my narrow focus takes into account only a few of these concerns. These concerns comprised a huge field that was impossible to address within the scope of this dissertation. Others such as Semple (1996) have provided comprehensive overviews of the history of Canadian Methodism which are useful in filling this gap.

The focus on whiteness and domesticity has also meant that other themes were only superficially examined. Domesticity was not the only reason that Japanese and Chinese women came to the *Home*. The importance of language training was another important theme that emerged. While learning English was certainly part of a larger project meant to train Japanese and Chinese in domestic service, language also functioned in other ways. It was used as a tool of recruitment, evangelism, and assimilation. These aspects of language are not fully addressed in this dissertation but would be an important avenue for future research.

Also missing in this dissertation are the voices of the Japanese and Chinese women who lived in the *Home*. The archive speaks very little to the experiences of Japanese and Chinese women who walked through the doors of the *Chinese Rescue Home/Oriental Home and School*. Although I navigated a plethora of sources, including transcripts and reports of Royal Commissions, court cases, newspaper reports, missionary reports, photographs, and *Home*

records, I was unable to uncover the voices and experiences of the Japanese and Chinese women who lived in the *Home*. While I have attempted throughout to speculate on some of their motives, dreams and aspirations, I often found myself caught between a desire to give voice to the silent and an unshakable conviction that to attempt to build their stories from conjecture, guesses, and speculation was unrealistic at best and unethical at worst. While I have tried to include insights from biography, literature, and other studies, I am left with the knowledge that even these strategies have fallen far short of my initial desires to provide Japanese and Chinese women with a voice. Thus, their stories largely remain untold.

My hope is that in a subsequent study, through interviews with later wards of the *Home*, their stories could yet be told. While my initial desire was to tell the story from start to finish in as full of a way as possible, the lack of sufficient time, the mountains of ‘data,’ and the space constraints meant that a smaller, more focused study emerged. Although this study ends in 1923, the *Home* continued to run for almost twenty years thereafter. A preliminary search of records shows a distinct shift in both the residents and the goals of the *Home* over this time. In future work, I hope to explore some of these new trajectories of the *Home*, including its growing focus on education and its shift to a younger ‘clientele.’ The focus on education and a shift away from familial relationships to more institutionalized ones is reflective of not only national factors such as changing immigration laws, but more local ones, such as the changing roles of women in society. Although the *Home* closed its doors in 1942, its closure was not due to a lack of residents. Rather, the *War Measures Act* dictated that the *Home*’s young charges, all Japanese children, be sent out of the ‘protected area.’ These children were sent to a residential school in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan. What happened to these children after their transfer is not known. This remains an important question for future research.

Utilizing a case study approach to the study of the *Chinese Rescue Home* has allowed for

an in-depth view of the inner workings not only of the institution, but also of relationships with those outside of it. However, as with most case studies, the focus is necessarily narrow.

Generalizing the findings of this research is limited by the narrow scope, both in a geographical sense and in a temporal one. Historical research with such a contracted focus can provide insights into how racial, gendered, and nationalist relationships functioned within these rather narrow parameters. However, generalizing beyond these parameters is difficult to do with any accuracy. The following discussion of contemporary implications, therefore, is tentative at best. Yet, through the case study, the researcher is able to “capture various nuances, patterns, and more latent elements that other research approaches might overlook” (Berg 2000, 318). Examining the present for evidence of these same patterns and nuances shows that this project is not only historical.

Doors, Locks, and Keys Revisited: The Radical Reinterpreted

The importance of this study lies beyond the historical recuperation of the *Chinese Rescue Home*. A critical examination of the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and nation, brought to the foreground the privileging of whiteness and Christianity. While it is easy to consign these incidents to a racist past, as “relics,” which have long since been remedied or forgotten, our history continues to inform what Jeffrey Weeks (1985) calls the ‘historical present.’ The historical present, according to Weeks, “involves understanding the fundamental connections of history and politics, to grasp the ways in which the past has a hold on, organizes and defines the contemporary memory” (10). Thus, the history that has been laid out in these chapters can provide insight into the ‘contemporary memory.’

While the door to the nation may be open to a much more diverse population than in the past, we need to reconsider this door through a lens that includes the functioning of domesticity. It is easy to point to the more inclusionary mandates of Canadian immigration policy. But as this

dissertation has shown, the binary of exclusion and inclusion leaves gaps in our understanding. We need to rethink contemporary debates and spaces in light of the history outlined here. Domesticity still retains an important logic in immigration matters, as seen in recent discussions around marriage and debates around the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), and in more local concerns such as important place that settlement houses continue to hold in Canadian society. These contemporary concerns centre on the home and the domestic. While it is not my contention that these contemporary concerns can be traced directly back to the *Home*, lessons that we have learned about how power operated within the *Home* demand that we reconsider how power might be operating in similar ways today. An examination of these contemporary spaces shows a continued connection between racialization, domesticity, and custodial power.

Closing Doors

I have argued that the role of the state in shaping the domestic was crucial to also shaping understandings of (racialized) citizenship. We need to reconsider how domesticity continues to function as a doorway to the nation, as marriage continues to operate as a site of moral and racial regulation and as a site of border control. Fears around white slavery and Chinese prostitution implicated Chinese marriage customs, as Vancouver and Victoria newspapers frequently reported on Chinese marriage customs as forms of sexual slavery (Mawani, 2009, 114). Japanese brides were also subjected to increased scrutiny as they entered Canada, their marriages often not recognized until formalized by the Canadian state. These are not only historical problems. On 27 September 2010, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced similar concerns to the ones highlighted above, and invited Canadians “to participate in an online consultation on the issue of marriage fraud, also known as ‘marriages of convenience’” (Citizen and Immigration Canada 2010).

Marriages of convenience had actually been identified as a concern by Citizen and

Immigration Canada (CIC) in 2007. A news article by David McKie stated that “[i]n February 2007, officials with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) requested an investigation into ‘the high number of potential fraud cases related to possible marriages of convenience’ in the Punjab region in India” (McKie 2010). Further, McKie continues, the “investigation produced shocking revelations about the number and nature of the marriages, including ties to the sex trade, narcotics trafficking, embezzlement and human smuggling” (McKie 2010). When polled about this national concern, 77% of the 2,342 respondents reported that fraudulent marriage was “a *very serious* or *serious* threat” to Canada’s immigration system (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011).

Recent news stories about jilted or “abandoned” brides have highlighted claims that foreign customs such as “arranged marriages” and stigmatization around divorce in countries such as Pakistan have contributed to the victimization of women. In two CBC articles, Pakistan, India, and the “South Asian community” in Toronto were all identified as vulnerable or problem areas (CBC News 2010, CBC News 2011). One suggestion for dealing with marriage fraud has been to adopt a system like the ones found in “Australia and England, where the sponsored person isn’t given full permanent resident status until he or she has lived with a spouse for three years” (CBC News 2010). Withholding citizenship from those who cannot sustain a ‘proper’ marriage for three years is not only an indication of the state’s investment in ‘proper’ marriage, but also its uneven application of citizenship rights as tied to these investments in marriage. That this unevenness is, at least in part, constructed as a ‘racial problem’ is evidence that these racial projects are still alive and well. That marriage provides a doorway into the nation for some immigrants necessitates that marriage continues to be a site of state intervention and evaluation.

Locked In: The Regulation of Inclusion

The Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) is further evidence that relationships with new or

would-be immigrants continue to be formed and regulated within the domestic realm. An obvious example is the domestication of Filipina nannies. As Geraldine Pratt (1999) has argued, Filipina nannies have sometimes been “constructed as a family member, who is loved and cherished as such” (Pratt 1999, 226) as they have taken their places within the domestic realm. However, this domestication also coincides with the deskilling and ‘ghettoization’ (216) of Filipina women as well as their marginalization and vulnerability as they are confined to the private realm. Thus, Filipina women become an invisible part of the moral landscape as they perform domestic labour so that white women are freed up to pursue their own aspirations. As in my discussion of the *Chinese Rescue Home*, what is at stake here is not only how racialized groups become subject to white domestication, but also how this is, at the same time, framed as inclusionary.

Abigail B. Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis (1994) have examined the Canadian Foreign Domestic Worker Policy to uncover how it both recruits and regulates foreign workers, especially Filipina women domestic workers in the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). They have argued that both “exclusion and inclusion [are] at work within both the state and civil society, in constructing the social boundaries of citizenship” (10). On the one hand, the LCP offers women a chance to immigrate to Canada, while on the other hand, the conditions that are imposed on them include a two year mandatory live-in requirement. These workers are confined to the domestic realm where they are often overworked and sometimes exploited by their employers. The blurring of lines between the domestic realm and the workplace is problematic not only because of the potential for exploitation, but because the confinement of women to the private sphere has also been linked through policy to their training as potential citizens (15). Much like the women in the *Home*, women who participated in the earlier stages of the LCP were required to show evidence of their suitability to stay in Canada, including their ability to ‘socially adapt’

(15).

Offering the Key to Settlement: White Women, Settlement, and Domestic Training

Investigating the types of relationships that were forged within the *Home* provided insights into how the mundane (domestic realm) became a site of radical transformation, a site where racial mixing was not only allowed, but encouraged. What is equally intriguing is how these once exceptional projects have now become mundane. The institutionalization of the domestic has now become normalized. The relations between white women and Others through the (re)production of domesticity is everywhere. White women's goals of offering empowerment to other women continue to be common in both professional social work and in non-state funded enterprises such as neighbourhood houses or community centres. For instance, Rosalind Petchesky has argued "the 'gatekeepers' to reproductive services are more often *women*, who as counsellors, nurses, physicians, and agency bureaucrats mediate state reproductive policies" (in Chunn and Gavigan 2006, 23–24). Within these fields, many of the relationships forged, whether formally or informally, are forged across boundaries of class, race, and sometimes citizenship.

Settlement houses have a long history which highlights the interconnections of state and non-state agencies in the settlement of recent immigrants (Yan and Lauer 2008, 230). Today's settlement houses have, according to Yan and Lauer (2008) inherited the values of early settlement houses such as the Hull Houses. Like the *Chinese Rescue Home*, the Hull house was a mixture of both benevolence and empowerment. According to Knight (1997), although Jane Addams, one of the founders of Hull House, "has often been judged as a practitioner of benevolence, she regularly sought to promote the empowerment of those outside the circles of power" (113). Meant to ensure the social integration of new immigrants, today's settlement houses continue to build on these same values of inclusivity and benevolence. That these sites are utilized primarily by women, many of whom have children and are

unemployed (Yan and Lauer 2008, 236) points to the continued role that the management of domesticity plays in the settlement of new immigrants. Re-examining such projects in light of what we know about the important role of domesticity in racial projects such as the *Home*, can offer insights into how these newer projects might also challenge binaries of public/private, and inclusion/exclusion.

The analysis of the *Home* workers and their relationships to the state aids in our understanding of how state, non-state agencies, and civil society overlap and coalesce in their attempts to mediate and transgress class and racial boundaries. In the past, white women's part in this process was largely invisible, but now they are not only visible, but what was once viewed as radical work has become normalized and expected. Women's roles as moral authorities have a long history, the conclusion of which has yet to be written. It is my hope that this dissertation, through its multiple methods and sustained analysis, builds on not only the recuperation of this historical past, but adds to the 'historical present' as well (Weeks 1985, 10).

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Appendix: Timeline for Menzies/Bloomfield Cases

