WHITEWASHING HISTORY:
SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF WHITENESS
IN ARMSTRONG, B.C.,
1890-1930

by

ROBYN S. BOURGEOIS

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Robyn S. Bourgeois
Name of Author (please print)

Title of Thesis: Whitewashing History: Social Constructions of Whiteness in Armstrong, B.C, 1890-1930

Degree: Master of Arts
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Department of Anthropology and Sociology
The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC Canada
ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the social construction of white racial identities in the small, rural British Columbia community of Armstrong during the time period 1890-1930. Focusing on public documents – newspapers and the minutes and legislation of the local city councils – I utilize an intersectional framework, incorporating critical race, feminist, anti-colonial, Marxist, and queer theory and scholarship to critically interrogate the construction of whiteness and its dominant status in Armstrong. Employing critical discourse analysis, this thesis dissects how whiteness was raced, classed, gendered, and sexualized within the public discourse of the community.

My analysis of whiteness follows three major themes: land, morality, and weddings. In my discussion of land use, I demonstrate how racialized constructions of land use, which demonstrated the superior nature of white land use and the inferior nature of Chinese and First Nations land use, were employed by white Armstrong to affirm and reaffirm their dominant status in the community. Further white control over land was facilitated by the construction of the ideal white immigrant within newspaper-run immigration schemes.

In my discussion of morality, I make clear that not only did moral issues divide white from non-white, but they also contributed to fracturing and hierarchical ordering within whiteness itself. Thus, while Christianity and alcohol helped divide white from non-white, issues pertaining to the moral training of white youth and temperance and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union served to divide and order whiteness itself.

Finally, in my discussion of weddings, I demonstrate how the institutionalization of middle-/upper-class weddings within the newspapers contributed to the establishment of gendered, classed, and sexualized norms [particularly a heterosexual norm] for white Armstrong. Further analysis of the heterosexual norm demonstrates a fractured white masculinity in the community. Finally, this section concludes with a discussion of the ideal white feminine ideals of wife and mother and the role that consumption played in establishing a fractured white femininity.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .................................................................................................................. ii

Table of Contents .................................................................................................. iii

List of Figures ......................................................................................................... v

List of Abbreviations .............................................................................................. vii

Acknowledgments .................................................................................................. viii

CHAPTER ONE Questioning the Past: An Introduction ........................................... 1

1.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 1
1.2 A Brief History of Armstrong-Spallumcheen .................................................. 3
1.3 Whiteness as a Subject of Investigation – Race, Racism, and Racialisation .. 9
1.4 Overview ........................................................................................................... 17

CHAPTER TWO Examining Whiteness: Origins, Methods, and Frameworks ......... 19

2.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 19
2.2 Review of the Literature .................................................................................. 20
2.3 Tools of the Trade – Research Methodology ................................................... 34
2.4 A Note on Primary Sources ............................................................................. 42
2.5 Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 45

CHAPTER THREE “Landless Men and Manless Land” – Whiteness, Land, and
Immigration ............................................................................................................ 47

3.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 47
3.2 The Coming of Civilization – Settlement and the Myth of the Overlanders .. 49
3.3 Making Use of Manless Land – Whiteness and the Regulation of Land Use
in Armstrong .......................................................................................................... 61
3.4 The “Yellow Peril” – The Chinese and White Racism .................................... 68
3.5 Landless Men – Whiteness and the Regulation of Immigration ....................... 76
3.6 Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 86

CHAPTER FOUR “Good White Folk”: Whiteness and the Moral Realm ............ 88

4.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 88
4.2 “God Bless Us Everyone” – Whiteness and the Church .................................. 89
4.3 Good Little Boys and Girls – A Case Study in Gendered Moral Reform .......... 99
4.4 Battling the Devil Liquor – Booze, Busts, and Boundaries ............................... 106
4.5 Saving Our Souls – Temperance, Morality, and the WCTU .............................. 113
4.6 Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 119
# Table of Contents cont.

## CHAPTER FIVE  ‘White’ Weddings: Whiteness, Gender and Heteronormativity .. 122

- 5.1 Introduction ................................................................. 122
- 5.2 Putting the ‘Public’ in Marital Bliss ................................ 123
- 5.3 Queering Class: “Gentlemen,” the Working Class, and Homo-Iconography 136
- 5.4 Consuming Women: Wedded Bliss, White Womanhood, and Consumption 144
- 5.5 Conclusion ................................................................. 155

## CHAPTER SIX  Conclusion .................................................. 157

## Bibliography ........................................................................ 165

## Appendix A – Anti-Chinese Resolution ............................... 173
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 – Armstrong’s Downtown Core, Circa 1901 (ASMAS # 1501) .......... p.4
Figure 1.2 – Armstrong, British Columbia .................................................. p.5
Figure 1.3 – Chinese Family in Your Mouth? ........................................... p.14
Figure 1.4 – White Meals ........................................................................ p.16
Figure 1.5 – White Laundry ........................................................................ p.16
Figure 3.1 – Augustus and Catherine Schubert, Circa 1890 (ASMAS # 3874) .... p.49
Figure 3.2 – Armstrong-Spallumcheen and the Indian Reserves ....................... p.64
Figure 3.3 – The “Ideal” Immigrants .......................................................... p.80
Figure 3.4 – The “Assimilable” Poles .......................................................... p.82
Figure 4.1 – The Official Directory .............................................................. p.91
Figure 4.2 – The Churches ...................................................................... p.91
Figure 4.3 – The Christmas “Card” ......................................................... p.92
Figure 4.4 – “The Drinkers” (In Armstrong Hotel, Date Unknown. ASMAS # 5282) .p.106
Figure 5.1 – The Holtby wedding in Armstrong, Circa 1903 (ASMAS # 4520) .... p.123
Figure 5.2 – The Homosocial Miners .......................................................... p.137
Figure 5.3 – The “Homo-erotic” Overalls .................................................. p.138
Figure 5.4 – The Gentleman ..................................................................... p.139
Figure 5.5 – Gentleman and his dog ........................................................... p.139
Figure 5.6 – The Heterosexual Couple ...................................................... p.140
Figure 5.7 – The ‘Heterosexual Gaze’ ....................................................... p.140
Figure 5.8 – “Lovely Ladies” .................................................................... p.143
Figure 5.9 – Getting Into the Home ................................................................. p.149
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASMAS = Armstrong Spallumcheen Museum and Art Society

WCTU = Women's Christian Temperance Movements
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Chapter I
Questioning the Past:
An Introduction

My brother and I discovered at an early age that we were different. One day we were riding in a car with one of our cousins, and she kindly pointed out that we were different colours: my brother was brown and I was white.\(^1\) While we both had inky black hair and eyes, I had the light skin of my Scottish mother and my brother had the darker skin of my Cree father. My cousin teased and taunted us about being different—she and her brother were the same colour. But my brother and I didn’t really care. After all, our mother and father were different colours and they loved each other, and loved us, and were loved by others, so being different was okay with us.

But as we got older, things changed. While I could walk into the corner store and shop freely, my brother was followed and harassed by the cashier. I thought perhaps that the cashier just didn’t trust boys, but when she did the same to other dark-skinned boys and girls, I realized the truth—it was our skin colour that resulted in our differential treatment. Things got more complicated when we got to high school, where my brother was readily accepted into the First Nations club, but I was told I was “too white” to be Cree. Furthermore, while I was constructed by staff and teachers as popular and intelligent, and a valuable contribution

\(^1\) There has been some debate about whether one should use quotation marks, or “scare quotes”, when discussing issues of race. Some social scientists have taken to using quotation marks with terms such as race, white, and black, in an attempt to overcome the problems inherent in using such terms analytically—that is, quotation marks suggest the socially constructed nature of race over inherent biological conceptions (Miles and Brown 2003:90). However, as Miles and Brown argue, “race” is too often used as a codeword for race—that is biological conceptions of race (2003:90). Deciding whether or not to use scare quotes was a dilemma for me; however, I have decided, in general, that I will not use quotation marks around such terms. As I am quite clear throughout this thesis that I advocate a conception of race as socially constructed, it seems unnecessary to use scare quotes throughout to reemphasize this point. Furthermore, I find quotation marks an effective means of drawing the reader’s attention to specific words, and as such, would like to reserve them for this more specific purpose. Therefore, unless wanting to specifically draw the reader’s attention to such terms, I will not use scare quotes around terms such as race, white, or non-white.
to the school community, my brother and other First Nations students were constructed as "misfits" and "deviants," and were either forced into remedial courses or out of the school completely. In fact, as a result of such harassment, my brother dropped out of high school just a year before his graduation.

At the same time, however, I have experienced slippages in my own whiteness. The same cousin who established the colour difference between me and my brother, also established a colour difference between herself and me. As children, I remember she held her arm up next to mine and, laughing, said, "You're not really white...you're not brown, but you're not really white!" "She’s mahogany," her dad quickly offered. My brother also likes to remind me that I am not white. During a recent argument, my brother proclaimed, "You think you are so great. You go and get educated and get degrees and stuff, and you think you are so superior. But no matter what, you will always be a squaw!"

What these experiences have made clear for me is that whiteness is a difficult concept to negotiate. In many ways, the privilege of my light skin, and thus my inclusion in the white population, has played an important role in my life. Whiteness has been both a "blessing" and a "curse"- it has excluded me from harassment directed at non-whites, such as that which my brother has faced, but it has also excluded me from embracing my Cree heritage. In fact, it bothers me so much when people “erase” my Cree ancestry by simply “calling it as they see it" and including me in the privileged category of whiteness. At the same time, however, I have been complicit in the erasure and visibility of my Cree heritage. Within the contemporary racial paradigms that structure Canadian society, I have purposely withheld and revealed my Cree ancestry when I have perceived substantial benefit or disadvantage from doing so. However, this privilege of mediating my own racial identity is not one
afforded to my darker-skinned counterparts. For me, the privilege of my light skin has very much allowed me to carefully mediate Canada’s racial/colour line to my own advantage.

Importantly, however, it is these experiences which have served as the impetus for this thesis. My own experiences with the variability and slippages within the white racial category have inspired me to dissect and dismantle the constructions of whiteness. As such, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the social construction of whiteness within the public discourse of the community of Armstrong, B.C., from 1890 to 1930. Focusing specifically on newspapers and city council minutes, I will explore the social construction of multiple white racial identities in the community, using an inclusive and intersectional framework that includes how whiteness is constructed in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality. By employing a critical feminist, Marxist, anti-racist and queer theoretical framework, this thesis is aimed at unpacking and teasing out socially and historically constructed understandings of whiteness.

A Brief of History of Armstrong-Spallumcheen

Armstrong-Spallumcheen, a small community of approximately 10,000 people located five hundred kilometres slightly north-east of Vancouver (see figure 1.1.), serves as the focus of this research for two important reasons. Firstly, Armstrong is my hometown – I grew up, attended school, and continue to spend my summers in this small town. As Antonio Gramsci

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2 I make reference throughout the thesis to “Armstrong”, as well as Armstrong-Spallumcheen, which may be confusing for the reader. However, the two are actually the same thing. When the community was established in 1892, the city centre was referred to as Armstrong, but the surrounding municipality was referred to as Spallumcheen, and it was the municipality that governed itself and the city centre. When Armstrong was consolidated as a city in 1913, it was officially given a separate governing body, but remained attached to Spallumcheen as the only city within the municipality. As such, the area was known as Armstrong-Spallumcheen. To this day, the two areas remain connected, although the Spallumcheen is frequently dropped and the whole community is simply referred to as “Armstrong”. As such, references to Armstrong and Armstrong-Spallumcheen, unless specifically delimited (such as Armstrong city proper or the municipality of Spallumcheen), refer to the community as a whole.
once wrote, "[t]he starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical processes to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory" (1971:324). Thus, in a somewhat selfish attempt to come to terms with the social soil of which I am very much a product, I decided to focus my scholarly attention on Armstrong. However, Armstrong is also an important community for historical social analysis. Not only is Armstrong the product of colonial white settlement, it is an example of rural and interior settlement within the province of British Columbia. Much of the scholarship on whiteness has focused on urban centres or the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island\(^3\) (see, for example, Perry 2001), so I felt it important to explore white racial constructions in a small, rural settlement in the interior of the province. As such, Armstrong emerged as a perfect candidate for my research.

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\(^3\) Elizabeth Furniss’ *The Burden of History* (1999), which examines constructions of racial identities in Williams Lake, B.C., is an important exception.
Figure 1.2- Armstrong, British Columbia
(http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/maps/reference/provinceterritories/british_columbia/refencemap_view_image

The year 1866 marks, in the majority of official accounts, the commencement of the history of Armstrong-Spallumcheen. It was in this year that Alexander Leslie (A.L.) Fortune, a member of the Overlander\(^4\) expedition that brought a large, predominantly male\(^5\) settler

\(^4\) An in-depth discussion of the Overlanders is undertaken in chapter three.
group into the gold fields of British Columbia, made his way into the Spallumcheen Valley and decided to make his home on the bluffs overlooking the current townsite of Armstrong. Commencing Armstrong’s “official” history at this point, however, contributes to the erasure of the histories of aboriginal peoples who had long made their home in the Valley. In fact, when Fortune arrived in the area, both the Spallumcheen/Spe’lmetal/Splats’in and Okanagan/S-Ookanhkchinx Indian tribes had been making their homes in the area for approximately 5000 years (Cowan 2002:2). However, recognizing that my research is centered on the construction of white racial identities, this brief history will focus on a white settler/dominant/official version of the history of Armstrong. This is not aimed at contributing to the erasure and marginalization of First Nations history; however, since this is an analysis of whiteness in Armstrong, and since this whiteness existed within a specific white settler construction of history, I believe it is essential to emphasize and outline the history that serves as the basis for Armstrong’s white settler society.

After Fortune’s arrival in 1866, settlers from all parts of Canada made their way into the Spallumcheen Valley and established homesteads. With Indian reserves firmly established by 1870 (Harris 2002:334), the land within the Spallumcheen Valley had

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5 While the Overlander group was intended for men only, one woman, Catherine Schubert, defied this rule so as not to be separated from her husband who was part of the group. With her three small children in tow, the pregnant Catherine secretly followed the all-male group out of Fort Garry (now Winnipeg). She was soon discovered, and despite pressure on the Schubert family to abandon the trek (as the Indians, it was argued, proved a serious threat against Catherine and the children), Catherine and the children made their way to British Columbia as part of the Overlanders. Please see chapter three for an in-depth discussion of the Catherine Schubert story (Shilvock 1986:6).

6 The three separate names I have included here are all names for a single Indian tribe. “Spallumcheen” is the anglicized version of the historic Indian name “Spe’lmetal” (meaning flat or prairie shore) (Cowan 2002:2). Splats’in is the contemporary Indian name of the same tribe. I have chosen to include the three versions of the same tribe name at this point, as this is a discussion of the erasure of First Nations in the official history of Armstrong, and as such, I do not wish to be complicit in such a process through the erasing of the traditional and contemporary Indian “versions” of Spallumcheen. However, I do recognize that this thesis is centered on the construction of white racial identities, and as such, the “white” version of history. As such, when discussing the “official” white-centered version of Armstrong’s history, I will make use of the anglicized “Spallumcheen”.
effectively been cleared for such settlement. By the 1880s, a small community called Lansdowne was established on the hills just north of the current townsite of Armstrong. The community boasted a general store, a blacksmith, a furniture store, and a confectionary; along with a church, cemetery, and school house (see Serra 1968:5-6). In fact, by the beginning of the 1890s, sixty-eight families made their home in and around Lansdowne (for a complete list, see Serra 1968:7-9).

However, the coming of the railway would have a serious impact on the small community. In August of 1890, the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway, a branch of the Canadian National Railway, announced that they would be building a rail line from Sicamous to Okanagan Landing, which would include the Spallumcheen Valley. As Serra explains,

> Originally the railway interests wished the townsite near Davis Creek [Lansdowne] and attempted negotiations with Mr. Davis who owned the land at the time. Mr. Davis, however, wished the railway to purchase his entire farm so an agreement was never reached. Eventually the railway people were able to make a better deal with Robert Wood for the present townsite of Armstrong (Serra 1968:10).

As such, in 1891, realizing that the railway had passed them by, the citizens of Lansdowne launched a mass exodus and moved their community to the railway and the new community of Armstrong, named after William Charles Heaton-Armstrong, the London capitalist who financed the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway, (Serra 1968:11; Parker, Havinga & Rougeau 1982:2-3).

Although governed by a municipal council since 1892, Armstrong was incorporated as a city in 1913. The townsite, with a population of 1200, formed the city of Armstrong, while the surrounding rural areas remained part of the municipality of Spallumcheen. However, since both areas had originally been governed by the same municipal council, Armstrong and Spallumcheen continued to grow and work in tandem. Thus, while Armstrong served as the central business district for the area, with sales and service industries
dominating the city economy, the surrounding municipality of Spallumcheen, with vast acres of land and an abundance of natural resources, provided an economic counterpart.

Forestry, agriculture, and farming provided the backbone of the community’s economy. Lumber, cordwood, and agriculture products dominated the exports of the community (see, for example, “Armstrong, B.C.” 1908:70). However, Armstrong-Spallumcheen would become famous for, of all things, celery. Once known as the “Celery Capital of Canada” (Critchley 1999:9), Armstrong’s celery was known far and wide, and was shipped by express to every city west of Winnipeg (“Armstrong, B.C.” 1908:70). Importantly, in the making of the “Celery Capital,” while the majority of land was owned and operated by white capitalists, the actual work was performed by Chinese immigrant workers (a consequence of city council and Board of Trade proclamations prohibiting the ownership of land by the Chinese). With a population averaging about 500, although growing as high as 900 men during the First World War, the Chinese performed much of the agricultural work within the community (Critchley 1999:11).

Agriculture remained the leading industry until the 1950s, when competition from California (namely, the ability to cheaply produce agricultural goods, as well as the benefit of year round production) drove industrial agriculture in Armstrong out of business (Critchely 1999:9). However, many companies had established strong economic markets (such as the Armstrong Cheese Factory and the local sawmills), and many more companies made their way into the community (such as Buckerfield’s [seed and animal feed], Roger’s

7 It is important to recognize that the majority of Chinese migrant workers in the community were, in fact, men. Quite simply, there were very few Chinese women in Canada (Roy 1989:17). In the beginning, Chinese men came to Canada to earn money for families they had left at home. However, with the implementation of anti-Chinese legislation, such as the Head Taxes and the Exclusion Act of 1923, many families were prohibited from reuniting in Canada. As such, the Chinese population in Canada was dominated by men (Roy 1989:19, 266). However, some Chinese women did manage to make it to Canada. For an excellent account of the experiences of one of these women, see Denise Chong’s The Concubine’s Children (1995).
Flour, and Colonial Farms [commercial chicken farm]). Furthermore, Armstrong’s sales and service sector continued to flourish and grow, with an emphasis on increasing tourism to the small community.

According to the 2001 Census, approximately 4,256 people make their home in Armstrong city proper (Statistics Canada 2001a), with 5,134 people inhabiting the surrounding municipality of Spallumcheen (Statistics Canada 2001b).

Whiteness as a Subject of Investigation- Race, Racism, and Racialisation

The major problem surrounding whiteness and white racial identities is that, too often, they evade investigation. As scholars such as Frankenberg (1993), Hale (1998), and Hage (2000) have argued, whiteness occupies an invisible and unmarked position in our society. Whiteness, as Frankenberg argues, serves as the non-defined definers of others – an invisible norm used to construct others as “racial” or “cultural,” but nonetheless, different (1993:197). Too often scholarship has emphasized white racism and dominance in Canadian society, but has failed to turn its critical gaze towards the constructions of the dominant white racial identity (for example, Ward 1990).

I have been accused of ‘recentering the centre’ by focusing my critical attention on white racial identities. My goal, however, is not to perpetuate white supremacy, but instead, to dismantle and dissect the social constructions of whiteness that have been employed in establishing white dominance. My goal is to understand the meaning of whiteness and to understand how these meanings served to establish white supremacy in the community of Armstrong. This is important, for as Ruth Frankenberg argues,

Naming “whiteness” displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance. To speak of whiteness is to assign everyone a place in the relations of racism. It is to emphasize that racism is not merely an
option for white people— that, rather, racism shapes white people’s lives and identities in a way that is inseparable from other facets of daily life (1993:6).

To suggest that whiteness is unmarked and unnamed, however, is not to suggest that it is completely invisible. For, as demonstrated by the public documents analyzed for this research project, I would argue that, while unmarked and unnamed, there is a hyper-visibility of whiteness in the public discourse of Armstrong. In fact, I would argue that the public documents provide a sort of handbook of whiteness, detailing appropriate behaviour, facilitating communication amongst the white community, and providing the discursive basis for white dominance in Armstrong. Short of appearances as examples of deviance and racial degeneracy, or as perceived threats against white racial dominance, non-white populations rarely appeared as the subjects of the public discourse. Instead, the subject honour was bestowed almost exclusively on those perceived as white. Importantly, this public discourse was made by and for the white members of the community. The newspapers and the councils were dominated by white, middle-class, men who sought to define and shape discursive constructions that emphasized white racial supremacy and non-white inferiority. The public discourse, as such, reflects the ideas and interests of white Armstrong, which, as a result, makes whiteness hyper-visible within the documents.

Implicit in an analysis of whiteness is a connection to race, racism, and racialization. While I am employing an inclusive framework for my analysis (that is, I am exploring how whiteness is constructed, not solely in terms of race, but also in terms of gender, class, and sexuality), whiteness is nonetheless an intimate part of race, racism and racialization.

One of the most common conceptions of race is that of biologically-based racial categories that separate the human population into hierarchical and discrete categories.
In the past, people were differentiated on the basis of phenotypical features and cultural prescriptives which lead to populations being “represented as distinctive by virtue of a specific profile of (sometimes real and sometimes imagined) biological and cultural attributes” (Miles and Brown, 2003:89). However, in contemporary Europe, North America, and Australasia, “the idea of ‘race’ is now usually used to differentiate collectives distinguished by skin colour, so that ‘races’ are either ‘black’ or ‘white’” (Miles and Brown 2003:89).

Foucault contends that biological definitions of race emerged within the mid-nineteenth century as a means of contending with changes in social discourse (2003:80). Accordingly,

At a time when discourse...was being displaced, translated, or converted into a revolutionary discourse, at the time when the notion of race struggle was about to be replaced by that of class struggle...at the time when this conversion was going on, it was in fact only natural that attempts should be made by one side to recode the old counterhistory not in terms of class, but in terms of race- races in the biological and medical sense of the term (2003:80).

Importantly, however, Foucault argues that this transformation to biological understandings of race provided the basis for racism:

This racism takes over and reconverts the form and function of the discourse of race struggle, but it distorts them, and it will be characterized by the fact that the theme of historical war – with its battles, its invasions, its looting, its victories, and its defeats – will be replaced by the postevolutionist theme of struggle for existence. It is no longer a battle in the sense that the warrior would understand the term, but a struggle in the biological sense: the differentiation of species, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest species...I think that racism is born at the point when the theme of racial purity replaces that of race struggle, and when counterhistory begins to be converted into a biological racism (2003:80-81).

As history has shown, biological conceptions of race have provided an important discursive framework for racial discrimination and genocide.

While perhaps a product of mid-nineteenth century discursive constructions, biological conceptions of race continue to provide the fundamental basis for some academic
and public race discourse. In the 1990's, Herrnstein and Murray released their New York Times Bestseller, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (1996), in which they argued for the biological supremacy of the white race over non-white races on the basis of I.Q. testing. In addition, white supremacists continue to use the discourse of biological race for their cause. In a recent interview with William Pierce, head of the neo-Nazi oriented National Alliance, references to biological notions of race were central to his white supremacist perspectives:

**Interviewer:** Why do you think that blacks can’t compete by themselves?

**Pierce:** They’re biologically different

**Interviewer:** And this biological difference, you think, is the major source of their difficulties here?

**Pierce:** Yes, that’s the major source of their difficulties.

**Interviewer:** You don’t think it’s due to discrimination or poverty or of a legacy of past injustice?

**Pierce:** Well, all of these things are sort of interrelated. If blacks, say, had naturally the same sort of abilities that whites have and they were able to innovate and create and succeed the way whites have historically, I think a lot of discrimination would have disappeared. That is, a lot of the discrimination is based on recognition of the biological differences (Nieli 2003:270).

Biological conceptions of race are, however, just one way of looking at racial identities. Anti-racist scholars have challenged biological conceptions of race, arguing that the variability and inconsistency in racial categorization suggests we are dealing, “not [with] a given, natural division of the world’s population, but the application of historically and culturally specific meanings to the totality of human physiology” (Miles and Brown 2003:89). According to Miles and Brown, “[t]his is made evident by historical evidence that records that certain populations have been categorized as different ‘races’ at different

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8 This interview with William Pierce was conducted on December 27, 1999 by Russ Nieli, lecturer in Politics at Princeton University, and was included in the edited collection *Contemporary Voices of White Nationalism in America* (2003).
historical times and in different places” (2003:89). In terms of whiteness, the works of Hale (1998) and Hage (2000), but particularly that of Jacobson (1998), have demonstrated how different ethnic groups, including Jews, Italians, and the Irish, have been variably constructed as “white” and “non-white.” Such work suggests that these slippages in whiteness are a product of socially constructed and mediated, and not biological or genetically determined, racial identities.

For the purposes of exploring whiteness in Armstrong, I have found it particularly useful to employ a social constructionist perspective of racial identities. As an anti-racist scholar, I am committed to an understanding of race as historically and culturally specific discursive constructs. As Miles and Brown argue, “there is no scientific justification for using the term [race] to refer to a discrete hierarchy of ‘races’ distinguished by phenotypical features such as skin colour” (2003:83). Furthermore,

in the everyday world, the facts of biological difference are secondary to the meanings that are attributed to them and, indeed, to imagined biological difference...Thus, when the idea of ‘race’ is employed, it is the result of a process of signification whereby certain somatic characteristics are attributed with meaning and are used to organize populations into distinct groups that are races (Miles and Brown 2003:88-89).

In fact, I would argue that it is this process of attributing meaning that is of interest for my research. I am not interested so much in arguing the bases for racial separation, but in exploring the processes by which specific racial categories – whether this be through biology or a socially constructed discourse – are produced. My emphasis, as such, is on racialisation-as Miles defines it, “a synonym for the concept of ‘racial categorization’, defined as ‘a process of delineation of group boundaries and of allocation of persons within those boundaries” (in Miles and Brown 2003:100). Racialisation, in essence, is the construction of racial difference – it is “the dialectical process of signification” (Miles and Brown 2003:101).
Therefore, in analysing the construction of whiteness, I am trying to assess the discursive practices – whether rooted in biology or social imagination – through which white racial identities are constructed, and through which meaning is attached to “being white.”

Figure 1.3: Chinese Family in Your Mouth? (Armstrong Advertiser April 2, 1903:1)

One other important element of the study of whiteness is its link to racism. In beginning this study, I expected to find a certain amount of prejudice, but was unprepared for
the prolific and explicit racism that would emerge within the documents. Anti-Chinese, Japanese, South Asian, and First Nations sentiments filled the newspapers and council documents. For example, in an *Armstrong Advertiser* (one of the community’s newspapers) editorial on the “Chinese problem”, it was argued

> This brings us to a point we would make, that although the Chinaman is not wanted as an owner of truck growing land, is he such a very undesirable citizen in other directions? We give the churches due consideration for their attitude towards “a Heathen”, but it takes all sorts to make a world, and as washermen, cooks and house servants...it fills a long felt want. This point does not appeal to the struggling farmer, but, we are not going to be struggling all our lives and will we not experience a time of prosperity? And when this prosperity comes we cannot all be bosses and cooks at the same time. Somebody will have to do the menial jobs and it’s the Jap or the Chink who will then be in demand... (December 11, 1913:4).

Furthermore,

> In other lands where other races are of a more assertive disposition, John Chinaman is a gentleman compared to a Jew. We have no [sic] admitted Jews in trade as yet, they have not made their presence felt, except in the junk market. But wait till the Jews get busy! One healthy Jew will do more harm to prices than ten of the at present despised John Chinamen (*Armstrong Advertiser* December 11, 1913:4).

Such racist sentiments were regularly asserted in editorials, articles, and letters to the editor. Degrading racial stereotypes became common place in advertising: in an Armstrong Pharmacy advertisement for Extract of Sarsparilla (figure 1.3), for example, it was asked, “Have you a taste in your mouth as if a Chinese family had just moved out?” (*Armstrong Advertiser* April 2, 1903:1). In addition, the proclamation “White Labour Only” became the hallmark of business advertising (figures 1.4 and 1.5)

As an anti-racist scholar, but also as a Cree woman, I found reading this blatant and prolific racist discourse painful. It infuriated and enraged me, but made me realize how important critical anti-racist scholarship is. However, despite how troubling it was for me to read, it is important to note that this racist discourse provided the foundation for my analysis
of the social construction of whiteness. One of the most important consequences of racialisation is that the ascription of “real or imagined...characteristics with meaning to

define the Other necessarily entails defining Self by the same criteria” (Miles and Brown 2003:101). As such, within this racist discourse, both white and non-white racial identities are constructed by the dominant white society. Furthermore, constructions of white and non-white are the cornerstone of racist discourse. After all, the purpose of such discourse was to assert the supremacy of whiteness and the inferiority of non-whites, and as such, it was essential to clearly define who was included and excluded from each category. As such, this discourse provides a fruitful resource for culling meanings of whiteness.

In the pursuit of anti-racist discourse that will truly challenge society’s racial hierarchy and its propensity towards racism, it is essential to include critical analyses of whiteness. Social constructions of whiteness, after all, provide the discursive basis for white
supremacy. If we are to challenge white dominance and undermine claims to supremacy, and thus the legitimation for racism, prejudice, and violence, it is absolutely necessary, in conjunction with reclamation projects of silenced racial groups, that we turn our critical attention towards the white race and the meaning of whiteness.

Overview

The central goal of this thesis is to develop an understanding of the social construction of whiteness in the public discourse of the community of Armstrong during the time period 1890 to 1930. Employing a framework that facilitates an inclusive reading of whiteness along the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality, this thesis will focus on the multiple white racial identities that are constructed within the newspapers and city council minutes and legislation of Armstrong.

Chapter Two provides an in-depth examination of the research tools employed in this study. To begin, the chapter provides a review of the existing work on whiteness, followed by a discussion of the research questions and the rationale for the many aspects of the current study. Furthermore, this chapter describes my method of analysis – that is, critical discourse analysis. Finally, the variety of theoretical concepts and frameworks that inform my research are addressed. Chapter Two, as such, provides the reader with the foundational elements of the study.

Chapter Three is an examination of whiteness and its relationship to land use and immigration. I argue that through racially aligned constructions of land use, white settler society was able to affirm and reaffirm their legal and social right to possess the community’s land. Such racial constructions saw white land use equated with “progress” and
“civilization,” while First Nations land use was constructed as “uncivilized” and “wasteful,” and Chinese land use as “bleeding the land.” Furthermore, constructions of whiteness and non-whiteness were deployed as a means of regulating those who had access to land - that is, in terms of immigration. Intimately involved in this are constructions of white masculinity, which serve as the basis for much of the discourse on land use and immigration. As this chapter will make clear, such racialized constructions provide the basis for community legislation that prohibited “yellow” land use, as well as immigration schemes that targeted those specifically constructed as “white.”

Chapter Four focuses on whiteness and its relation to morality. As this chapter makes clear, being a white citizen meant also being Christian and temperate. Through the discourses of Christianity and Prohibition, whiteness is constructed as morally superior to non-whiteness counterparts. In fact, white morality is considered of such a superior nature that the discourse emphasizes the duty of whites to provide their goodness and purity to the immoral – specifically the non-white Chinese and First Nations.

Chapter Five is an examination of whiteness, gender, and heteronormativity. Themed around weddings, this chapter addresses the divide created within whiteness through the institutionalization of marriage. The establishment of a heterosexual norm is further investigated in relation to the constructions of masculinity in newspaper advertisements. Finally, addressing the ideals of womanhood enshrined by marriage, this chapter ends with an analysis of the role of consumption in being a good white wife and mother.

Through the development of each chapter, a clear picture of the construction of whiteness and the variety of white racial identities existing within the public discourse of the community of Armstrong will be established.
Chapter II

Examining Whiteness: Origins, Methods, and Frameworks

While this study of white racial identities in Armstrong emerges from a very personal place – my own experiences with whiteness and my desire to know more about the community I come from- it also involves very practical and technical considerations of methodology: how does one carry out research on the social construction of white racial identities in a small community? As an academic, I am encouraged to formulate a rigorous research design that will withstand academic scrutiny. At the same time, my academic and personal political commitments challenge me to construct a framework that reflects these commitments. Furthermore, the scope and scale of my research clearly impacts the methodological framework I can employ. Methodology, as such, becomes an important issue.

This chapter is an introduction to the methodology of this project. Beginning with a review of the contemporary literature on whiteness, this chapter will outline the origins of my study of whiteness in Armstrong-Spallumcheen, including a discussion of the absences which serve as the impetus for my own research. Furthermore, this chapter will address the practical elements of research methodology, including clarification and rationalization for specific concepts. Finally, this chapter will outline the theoretical frameworks which inform the research project. In combination with the introduction, this chapter will provide the reader with an understanding of the origins, methodology, and theoretical frameworks of this study.
Review of the Literature

In North America, critical anti-racist scholars have long critiqued mainstream academia for its misrepresentation, if not complete neglect, of people of colour (see, for example, Hill Collins 2000; hooks 2000, for example). The solution within much of anti-racist and anti-colonial scholarship has been an intensive archaeology and genealogy of the lives of minority peoples. Yet much of this project has failed to turn its critical gaze towards the very centre of race relations in North America - namely, at whiteness. As Ruth Frankenberg argues,

...the white Western self as racial being has for the most part remained unexamined and unnamed. On the one hand, studies of racial and cultural identities have tended to view the range of potential subjects of research as limited to those who differ from the (unnamed) norm. On the other hand, whiteness has elsewhere been simultaneously ignored and universalized: studies on the dominant race or culture, unless focused on racism per se, bracket issues of race and culture and presume by implication the racial neutrality of the subject (1993:18).

Furthermore, Timothy Stanley contends that

[r]acism is only discussed as something that affected Jews and people of colour, not as a phenomenon that shaped ‘whiteness’; and Anglo-Europeans’ power and privilege...for histories to be meaningful to new generations of young people, mentioning gender, ethnic, sexual, or racialized minorities, while leaving the national grand narratives [of white, Anglo Canadian history] intact, is not enough (2000:90-91).

Thus, within the last fifteen years, a number of academics have undertaken critical research on whiteness. Becoming known as critical whiteness studies (Rasmussen, Klinenberg, Nexica & Wray 2001), this field includes the work of Ruth Frankenberg (1993; 1997), Matthew Frye Jacobson (1998), and Grace Elizabeth Hale (1998) in the United States; Ghassen Hage (1998) working in Australia; and Adele Perry (2001), Sherene Razack (1998; 2002), Frances Henry and Carol Tator (2002), Elizabeth Furniss (1999), and Eva Mackey (2002) in Canada. Employing an array of critical theoretical frameworks, these academics
have begun the process of dissecting and deconstructing white racial identities. This process has included examinations of specific white racial identities - for example, white labourers in pre-confederation British Columbia, as presented by Adele Perry (1998); the variability in the ethnic composition of the “white race” (Jacobson 1998 is a prime example of this), and whiteness as a position of power in society.

In attempting to understand the social dominance of white racial identities, these recent studies of whiteness have been pursued along three major theoretical themes.\(^1\) These themes include:

1. Whiteness as fluid, mutable, and unstable
2. Whiteness as a social construction
3. Whiteness as unmarked and invisible

Furthermore, although on a minor level, whiteness has been examined as a sort of coping mechanism for social instability and rapid change (Hale 1998). In this section, I will discuss the development of these themes within the field of critical whiteness studies.

*Whiteness as Fluid, Mutable, and Unstable*

One of the key findings of the work on whiteness is that of the fluid, mutable, and unstable nature of whiteness as a racial category. As addressed in the introduction of this thesis, many scholars have long attempted to link racial identities - such as White, Asian, Black, and the like - to inherent biological differences (Frankenberg 1993:13; Jacobson 1998:31-38). By linking race to biology, racial categories and, subsequently, racial differences were deemed natural, and thus inevitable.

\(^1\) It is important to note that these themes are not mutually exclusive. As the proceeding discussion will show, these themes intersect and build off one another.
However, one of the consequences of such a conception of race is a reliance on a stable and immutable racial structure. If racial categories and differences are linked inherently to our biology, then such categories should remain relatively stable, as biological make-up will provide clear and precise guidelines for racial division. As such, there should be little to no uncertainty about an individual’s racial make-up or membership in a specific racial category. Yet as much of the work on whiteness makes clear, membership in the white race, and as a consequence, the meaning of whiteness, has been neither stable nor immutable. In fact, as the historiographies of whiteness make clear, there has rarely been consensus surrounding who counts as white.

In *Whiteness of a Different Colour- European Immigration and the Alchemy of Race* (1998), Mathew Frye Jacobson traces the fluidity of whiteness in the United States from 1790 to 1965. Focusing on public documents, such as governmental policy, legal code, and popular culture, Jacobson demonstrates how certain European immigrant groups, such as the Irish, Jews, and those from Eastern European countries, have been variably constituted as “white” and “non-white.” In fact, he argues that the composition of whiteness in the United States can be divided in three epochs:

[First]...the nation’s first naturalization law in 1790 (limiting naturalized citizenship to “free white persons”) demonstrates the republican convergence of race and fitness for self-government; the law’s wording denote an unconflicted view of the presumed character and unambiguous boundaries of whiteness. [Secondly]...fifty years later...beginning with the massive influx of highly undesirable but nonetheless “white” people from Ireland, whiteness was subject to new interpretations. The period of mass European immigration, from the 1840’s to the restrictive legislation of 1924, witnessed a fracturing of whiteness into a hierarchy of plural and scientifically determined white races...Finally, in the 1920’s and after, partly because the crisis of over-inclusive whiteness had been solved by restrictive legislation and partly in response to a new racial alchemy generated by African-American migrations to the North and West, whiteness was reconsolidated: the late nineteenth century’s probationary white groups were now remade and granted the scientific stamp of authenticity as the unitary Caucasian race (Jacobson 1998:7-8).
Thus, throughout American history, who counted as “white” was fluid and mutable. For example,

[In certain regions of the Jim Crow South Italians occupied a racial middle ground within the otherwise unforgiving, binary caste system of white-over-black. Politically, Italians were indeed white enough for naturalization and for the ballot, but socially they represented a problem population at best. Their distance from a more abiding brand of social whiteness... was marked by the common epithet “dago”—a word whose decidedly racial meaning was widely recognized at the time and was underscored by the more obviously racial “white nigger” (Jacobson 1998:57).]

While once welcome immigrants to the United States, the influx of Irish brought about by the Potato Famine in Ireland saw their status as “white” (and thus welcomed immigrants and potential citizens in the US) challenged. The Irish, contended governmental agents, were of an “inherited organic imperfection, vitiated constitution, or poor stock” and were “constitutionally incapable of intelligent participation in the government of the nation” (Jacobson 1998:48). As such, the Irish were considered a bull in a china shop: “the Irish bull amongst the American china – dangerous, you know” (Jacobson 1998:49). With these peculiarities of “Celtic blood,” the Irish were excluded from the white race.

In Canada, Adele Perry’s (2001) work on pre-confederation British Columbia demonstrates how various groups of whites, including miners and men engaging in interracial marriage, had their very whiteness challenged. In the case of miners, social reformers such as the Temperance movement, the Mechanics Institute, and Christian missionaries, disapproved of their “uncivilized” lifestyle (including drinking and living without women in a homosocial environment) and sought to bring the miners back to appropriate whiteness (Perry 2001:95). Thus, according to Perry,

[As much as this discourse [of social reform] pivoted on the romantic idealized view of womanhood often remarked on in the literature on women’s history, it rested on a deep distrust of manhood, especially working-class manhood. In British Columbia, critiques of homosocial culture were also premised on an ambiguous view of settler men’s claim to whiteness. To groups like the Columbia Mission, gold miners were an appropriate object of civilizing efforts akin to those]
directed against the First Nations people locally and indigenous populations throughout the world. This suggests how, for many observers, settler men’s claim to membership on the white side of the imperial divide was far from secure (2001:95).

Furthermore, the proclivity of settler men to sexual relations with First Nations women brought forth challenges to their whiteness (Perry 2001:98-101). In fact, the colonial government, in conjunction with social reform groups, undertook a massive campaign to persuade white male settlers and their Indian concubines to “recreate themselves anew” by undertaking civil marriage. According to Perry, the discourse surrounding civil marriage “used overlapping languages of manliness, race, and morality to convince lax white men to protect both lesser beings and the reputation of their race and the colony” (2001:101; emphasis added). Thus, not only would participation in civil marriage bring the couple closer to whiteness, it would improve “the tarnished reputation of their once-noble race” (Perry 2001:102).

In conclusion, what becomes clear as a result of the work of Jacobson and Perry is the fluidity, mutability, and instability of the “white race”. Such work delineating the variability in white racial membership challenges the notion of a monolithic and all-encompassing whiteness by demonstrating the fractured and turbulent construction of white racial identities. Such findings carry important consequences for race theory, as the mutability and instability of whiteness undermines the notion of stable, biologically based racial categories. As will become clear in the next section, this mutability contributes to an understanding of whiteness and of white racial identities as social constructions.
Whiteness as a Social Construction

As mentioned above, a consequence of the fractured nature and instability of whiteness is the undermining of races as scientific biological categories. Thus, following in the footsteps of other critical anti-racist scholars (Omi and Winant 1986; Miles and Brown 2003), academics within the field of whiteness studies have emphasized the conception of whiteness as a social construction. That is, whiteness is viewed not as a product of biology, but instead as a product of society.

According to Jacobson, whiteness is a “public fiction” (1998:11). That is,

...race resides not in nature but in politics and culture. One of the tasks before the historian is to discover which racial categories are useful to whom at a given moment and why. Racial categories themselves—their vicissitudes and the contests over them—reflect the competing notions of history, peoplehood, and collective destiny by which power has been organized and contested (Jacobson 1998:9).

Yet, and more importantly for Jacobson, race is not just a conception; it is also a perception - "the problem is not just how races are comprehended, but how they are seen" (1998:9). As a social construct, race functions as an ideology to inform social perceptions. Referring to the work of Franz Boas, Jacobson argues "the eye that sees is a means of perception conditioned by the tradition that the possessor has been reared in" (1998:10; emphasis added). As such, race emerges as a product of society that is employed for social comprehension. Furthermore, Jacobson contends that the second part of the equation of race as a social construct “consists of the ways in which those conceptions of difference successfully masquerade as a feature of the natural landscape” (1998:10). In fact, “the awesome power of race as an ideology resides precisely in its ability to pass as a feature of the natural landscape” (Jacobson 1998:10).

To claim that race is a social construction is not to claim that such conceptions do not have real and tangible consequences for people. Ruth Frankenberg, in her work on contemporary white women (1993), also argues for a theoretical conception of whiteness and
race as social constructs. Focusing on the work of Omi and Winant (1986) on the instability of racial categories, Frankenberg contends that,

[i]n order to think about white women and race...it is critical to reflect on the meaning and history...of the category “race” itself, and similarly that of the idea of “racism”. I have found most useful those analyses that view race as a socially constructed rather than an inherently meaningful category, one linked to relations of power and processes of struggle, and whose meaning changes over time (1993:11).

However,

[r]ace, like gender, is “real” in the sense that is has real, though changing, effects in the world, and real, tangible and complex impact on individuals’ sense of self, experiences, and life chances. In asserting that race and racial difference are socially constructed, I do not minimize their social and political reality, but rather insist that their reality is, precisely, social and political rather than inherent or static (Frankenberg 1993:11).

Thus, advocating a position of whiteness as a social construction does not predicate the denial of the real and tangible affects of racial distinctions.

An excellent example of the social construction of whiteness is presented in Elizabeth Furniss’s book The Burden of History (1999). Exploring race relations in Williams Lake, British Columbia, Furniss argues that both past and contemporary conceptions of whiteness and “Indian-ness” have been shaped by what she refers to as the “Frontier Myth” (1999:16).

This complex consists of a form of historical consciousness – an awareness of history – that is culturally conditioned and deeply influenced by Canada’s colonial heritage. This historical consciousness is made manifest as a historical epistemology: a way of knowing about history that provides a certain set of rules and assumptions that guide how “truths” about the past, and by extension the present, are to be created, understood, and conveyed (Furniss 1999:17).

According to Furniss,

[t]he Frontier Myth developed in the United States over a period of three centuries and can be identified in a variety of genres ranging from early settlers’ narratives to nineteenth century dime store novels and Wild West shows to contemporary Hollywood movies. It contains several standard themes. The story begins with the settlers’ journey to the wilderness and their cultural, moral, and material regression to the more “primitive” conditions encountered there. The frontier experience involves a series of encounters with morally opposed forces, the most important being civilization and wilderness, humans and nature, and whites and Indians...
The themes of conflict and violence are central to those encounters as the protagonists (white settlers) struggle against the harsh environment and climate and the unknown and potentially hostile Indians (1999:17-18).

This myth has had real consequences for both whites and Aboriginals. At its roots, the myth creates a dichotomy that posits the [white] settler against the First Nations people. Furthermore, this dichotomy sees the linkages of certain terms and characteristics to each side of the dichotomy. Thus white is constructed as settler, hero, civilized, and morally superior; First Nations, on the other hand, are constructed as uncivilized, wild, primitive, and inferior. Through the examination of public discourse, including textbooks, books published by local amateur historians, and the Williams Lake museum, Furniss demonstrates that this myth has shaped the communities understandings of whiteness and Indianness. Furthermore, and perhaps most compellingly, Furniss examines contemporary interactions between whites and First Nations, in terms of prominent legal battles and the Williams Lake Stampede, and demonstrates how this mythical dichotomy continues to construct race relations - relations which continue to position whites in power and the First Nations as inferior and weak.

This understanding of racial identities as products of society carries important implications for critical anti-racist scholarship. After all, if racial identities are social discursive products - that is, if race is not concretely rooted in biology and the naturalness and inevitability of human genetics – then there is the potential for changing the established racial hierarchy. Such an approach challenges notions of race, particularly the “natural” dominance of white racial identities, by arguing that this dominance is not a product of biology, but is the product of human discursive and material production. By dissecting and deconstructing white racial dominance, critical anti-racist scholars can make important steps towards dismantling white supremacy.
Whiteness as Unmarked and Invisible

As Ruth Frankenberg argues, whiteness tends to be the nondefined definer of other people (1993:197). In many cases, whiteness functions as a norm which individuals and social groups are compared to and judged against. Frankenberg argues, “whiteness comes to be an unmarked or neutral category, whereas other cultures are specifically marked “cultural”’' (1993:197). Here, whiteness operates as the seemingly “un-raced centre of a racialized world” (Rasmussen, Klinenberg, Nexica & Wray 2001:10). The consequences of such a positioning of whiteness, argues Frankenberg, is the simultaneous eclipsing and marginalization of others (1993:196-197).

Importantly, the invisibility of whiteness is dependent on the social context. For, while whiteness may appear to function invisibly from the centre of social relations, it is always visible from the margins of society. As bell hooks contends,

In white supremacist society, white people can “safely” imagine that they are invisible to black people since the power they have historically asserted, and even now collectively assert over black people accorded them the right to control the black gaze. As fantastic as it may seem, racist white people find it easy to imagine that black people cannot see them if within their desire they do not want to be seen by the dark Other...Some white people may even imagine there is no representation of whiteness in the black imagination, especially one that is based on concrete observation or mythic conjecture; they think they are seen by black folks only as they want to appear (1997:168-169).

In fact, hooks observes that, usually, “white students respond with naive amazement that black people critically assess white people from a standpoint where “whiteness” is a privileged signifier” (1997:167). However, as articulated by Frankenberg, “hooks points out [that] communities of colour frequently see and name whiteness clearly and critically, in periods when white folks have asserted their own “color blindness” as well as in times of self-conscious white claims of superiority” (1997:4). As such, it is important to recognize
that whiteness functions invisibly within the dominant, hegemonic elements of society, but is clearly visible for those existing within society’s margins.

For Grace Elizabeth Hale, however, the ability for whiteness to function as a norm in society is absolutely dependent on its ability to remain unmarked and invisible. By denying the existence of a distinct white racial category, whiteness is able to function in a variety of capacities (Hale 1998:xii). Thus, whiteness is not only capable of functioning as a racial norm, but it can also be fused with national identity (as, for example, Jacobson (1998) argues that whiteness is equated with Americanness or as Hage (1998) argues that whiteness is equated with Australianness (Hale 1998:xii)). Thus, not only does invisibility place whiteness in a position of power in terms of racial identities, it allows whiteness to dominate in other social relations.

Finally, the invisibility of whiteness removes white people from the realm of race and race relations, including acts of racism. Jacobson, for example, argues that whites tend to make whiteness invisible by explaining it away: for example, “I’m not white because I have Italian blood” (1998:7). However, this move towards reclaimed otherness, which has become popular in recent years, is highly problematic: it allows one to disavow one’s whiteness even while living lives predicated upon its privilege (Jacobson 1998:7). Again, whiteness is made invisible, through distancing one’s self from the “white race,” while all the time such people benefit from the privilege of their visibly white skin.

As these authors have made clear, whiteness is made invisible in a variety ways. As such, a key for many critical whiteness scholars is the making visible of whiteness, especially its roles and positions in society. Therefore, as Ruth Frankenberg argues, the key to

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2 For a very passionate and personal account of contending with whiteness while existing within the margins of society, please see Himani Bannerji’s essay (1995), “But Who Speaks For Us? Experience and Agency in Conventional Feminist Paradigms.”
confronting this power position is the examination of whiteness as a racial and social
category: “naming “whiteness” displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself
an effect of its dominance” (1993:6). As such, speaking of whiteness is to assign everyone a
place in the relations of race and racism (Frankenberg 1993:6). As Frankenberg argues, such
an approach “emphasizes that dealing with racism is not merely an option for white people -
that, rather, racism shapes white people’s lives and identities in a way that is inseparable
from other facets of daily life” (1993:6).

Before departing from this thematic of whiteness, I feel it necessary to raise some
serious criticism that I and others have had with the notion of invisible whiteness. Such
notions rely on three basic presuppositions: Firstly, notions of invisibility are predicated on
the existence of an unknowing and unseeing white racial group (Rasmussen, et al. 2001:10).
Secondly, invisible whiteness “posits a clear distinction between a group of white insiders
who cannot recognize themselves for who they “really are” and non-white outsiders whose
point of view affords them authentic insight” (Rasmussen, et al. 2001:10). Finally, notions of
invisible whiteness are predicated on a seemingly universal and monolithic white racial
identity.

None of these presuppositions accurately represents the reality of whiteness.
Firstly, the notion of whiteness as a universal experience - a monolithic white racial identity
experienced by all “white” people in the same fashion - is absurd. Whiteness as a racial
identity is not an identity that is experienced separately from other social identities, such as
gender, class, or sexuality (McClintock 1995; Stoler 1995) – whiteness, as such, is
experienced intersectionally with other social identities. As gender, class, and sexuality carry
with each of them certain levels of visibility, power, and value in society, whiteness is
impacted by these other identities. As such, the experiences of a white, heterosexual male
will be much different than a white homosexual male, as homosexuality may be viewed as a
"deviant" identity, and as such, will result in different social experiences for these white men.
In the same manner, the experiences of white men and white women, the white middle class
and the white working class, as well as any other arrangement of the myriad social identities,
will differ from one another. As such, there is no such monolithic whiteness, but instead, a
multiplicity of white racial identities.

Furthermore, for whiteness to operate invisibly, it is necessary for there to be in
existence a white racial group that is unknowing and unseeing, as well as a clear demarcation
between the ignorant "white" race, and other non-white groups, who see the "white" group
for whom they really are. Both of these presuppositions, however, are highly problematic.
The presupposition of an unknowing and unseeing white racial group is problematic on two
counts. Firstly, while many people racialized as white may ignore or be oblivious to their
whiteness and white privilege, there are many others who are aware. In fact, the majority of
critical whiteness research – that is, research aimed at dissecting whiteness and white
privilege – is being undertaken by scholars who would be racialized as white. More and more
"white" academics and citizens are taking up white privilege through involvement in anti-
racist work. As such, the claim to an unknowing and unseeing white racial group is
questionable. In terms of the clear demarcation between white and non-white racial groups,
the recent literature on whiteness demonstrates that there has been variability in the ethnic
groups included in whiteness. This lack of consensus draws into question the clear
demarcation of whiteness, and as a consequence, the clear demarcation of non-whiteness.
Though I don’t believe we should completely dispose of the notion of invisible whiteness, I
do believe that it is important, considering such problematic elements, that we need to
reassess and rearticulate our understandings of invisible whiteness.

Side Note- Whiteness as a Coping Mechanism

This literature review would not be complete without a discussion of the notion of “whiteness
as a coping mechanism” put forth by Grace Elizabeth Hale in her book Making Whiteness-
The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940 (1998). For, although this theme is only
represented in this single text, its uniqueness and creativity as a notion of the nature of
whiteness earns its inclusion in this discussion.

W.E.B. Du Bois once argued that “[t]he problem of the twentieth century is the
problem of the Color Line” (1995:42). While DuBois was very much referring to white
versus black, the Colour Line can also be viewed as white versus non-white, wherein white
depends on those that are not white for their very definition. This is the approach taken by
Hale in Making Whiteness (1998). According to Hale, the consequences of the civil war,
including the abolishment of slavery and the inclusion of the South into America’s expansive
and modernizing capitalism, as well as the rise of a black middle class, created a sort of
“identity crisis” for Southern Whites (1998:284). Without the seeming clear guidelines of
slavery to delimit racial, and thus social, identities, southern white society was thrown into
chaos. Thus,

[These threats made the ritualistic enactment of racial difference [through the
culture of post-bellum segregation] vital to the maintenance of white supremacy
in the twentieth century...Southern whites commanded this performance of seg­
egation for both a local and a national audience, to maintain both white privilege
at home and a sense of Southern distinctiveness within the nation. Segregation, in
turn, helped middle-class white southerners at least mediate these effects (Hale
1998:284).]
As such,

[s]ince southern black inferiority could not, despite whites' desires, be assumed, southern whites created a modern social order in which the difference would instead be continually performed. For whites, this performance, in turn, made reality conform to the script. African Americans were inferior because they were excluded from the white spaces of the franchise, the jury, and political officeholding. They were inferior because they attended inferior schools and held inferior jobs. As the right to consume became central to changing conceptions of American citizenship and as some African Americans became professionals despite discrimination and oppression, African Americans were also and perhaps most publicly inferior because they sat in the inferior waiting rooms, used inferior bathrooms, sat in inferior cars or seats, or just stood. African Americans were inferior because they entered through inferior doors marked "Colored", relieved their needs in inferior restrooms marked "Colored," and watched movies from inferior balconies marked "Colored" (Hale 1998:84).

Thus, to clearly delimit white as a social category, as well as to reassert white supremacy, Southern whites created and employed the culture of racial segregation. From geographical separation, as was the case with "Colored" sections, to the use of stereotyped black slave images in advertising and entertainment (most notably in the Hollywood classic film Gone with the Wind), non-whites were constructed as separate and inferior to whites. This separation between white and non-white, however, escalated to include violence and death, as the act of spectacle lynching (the public and publicized murder of black and other non-white (Jewish/Italian) persons) became a popular means to reasserting racial separation (see Hale, 1998:199-239). Therefore, the clear definition of whiteness created by the culture of segregation in the South, which clearly delimited non-whites, on whom whites were dependent for their very definition, served as a coping mechanism against social change and upheaval for Southerners in the post-bellum period.

The literature discussed in this review has made very important contributions to the field of critical whiteness studies; however, there are many absences in the literature that need to be remedied by future research. Firstly, most of the research undertaken in Canada has explored whiteness as a supplement to larger discussions of race, ethnicity, colonialism and national identity - whiteness, as such, has not been the central focus of much Canadian
research. Much like the work done by Frankenberg (1993;1997), Jacobson (1998) and Hale (1998) in the United States, critical work focusing centrally on whiteness is necessary to develop a strong understanding of Canadian whiteness. Furthermore, much of the literature contends with understandings of whiteness on a national or provincial level. With the exception of Furniss’ investigation on Williams Lake, there is very little micro-level, case study research. In addition, much of the research is focused on large urban settings. Thus, not only are we in need of micro-level investigation, but also research on rural and small-town whiteness. It is the paucity of such research that my thesis will attempt to remedy.

**Tools of the Trade – Research Methodology**

As noted in the introduction, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the social construction of white racial identities of the small, rural community of Armstrong, British Columbia, during the time period 1890-1930. Using newspapers and city council documents, I will explore the discursive construction of whiteness within the realm of public discourse. While an investigation of whiteness implies an analysis centred on race, my research will incorporate an intersectional analysis of white racial identities. As such, I will not only explore the racial constructions of whiteness, but I will also include analyses of the gendered, classed, and sexualized constructions of white racial identities in Armstrong. While I have alluded to them in previous sections, this section will make explicit the underlying theoretical frameworks and research methodology employed in this study. As well, this section will provide clarification and justification of some of the central elements of the project.
While, in the introduction, I addressed the impetus for selecting the community of Armstrong as the focus of my research, it is equally important to justify my emphasis on an historical time period for the project. As a former history student, my sociological work has long been drawn towards historical epochs. The oft-stated possibility of history repeating itself has encouraged me to view historic times, places, and people as important fields for critical contemporary social analysis. Philip Abrams (1982), in fact, contends that history and sociology are intrinsically linked. Claiming that serious questions about the contemporary world are most frequently answered with historical answers, Abrams argues

...the social world is essentially historical...What we chose to do and what we have to do are shaped by the historically given possibilities among which we find ourselves...We can construct new worlds but only on the basis and within the framework of what our predecessors have constructed for us. On that basis and within that framework the content of our activity may re-make or un-make the institutions that surround us. This shaping of action by structure and transforming of structure by action both occur as processes in time. It’s by seizing on that idea that history and sociology merge and that sociology becomes capable of answering our urgent questions why the world is at it is (1982:3).

Because “any relationship that persists in time has a history,” it is important to include historical analysis within contemporary sociology (Abrams 1982:6; emphasis added). As such, in order to fully understand contemporary constructions of whiteness, it is essential to have an understanding of the historical constructions which serve as its basis.

To access Armstrong’s past, my research focused on what I refer to as “public discourse.” Public discourse refers to any document produced by or for the public. For this study, I focused on two particular types of documents – community newspapers and city council records. I have emphasized public documents, for as a sociologist, I am particularly interested in broad social discursive constructions of white racial identities. As such, I am not as interested in the private thoughts of society members, but in the discourse produced and disseminated for public consumption in Armstrong society. Both newspapers and council
documents were good sources of public discourse. In a time period lacking in telecommunications and internet technology, newspapers were the main mode of transmission for social discourse. Newspapers, after all, are aimed at reporting social events and transmitting thoughts and ideas to the community at large. Council documents were equally important, for as records of the public governance of the community at large, they provide important insight into the public discourse of the time.

To explore the social constructions of whiteness in newspapers and city council legislation, I undertook a process known as critical discourse analysis (Reinharz 1992:145-163; Currie 1999; Henry & Tator 2002). This process entails a “double reading” of a document - one reading that focuses on the direct meanings constructed by the author, and a second reading that focuses on the indirect, and perhaps unintentional, meanings that emerge as a result of the document’s discursive construction. Such a method enables a highly nuanced and intensive reading of a document. Furthermore, a double reading facilitates a counter-hegemonic and subversive reading of a dominant-produced/hegemonic document, a reading which is invaluable to the work challenging hegemonic structures of domination.

There are several steps one takes in the process of critical discourse analysis. With the support of an excellent discussion of the process in Henry and Tator’s Discourses of Domination (2002), my method of analysis included the following steps:

1) a general description of the text

2) an interpretation, guided by my theoretical frameworks, of the racial constructions in the text (i.e.: how is whiteness constructed?)

3) an interpretation of the interaction of racial identities (i.e.: how is whiteness constructed in relation to other racial identities? How do non-white racial identities contribute to our understanding of whiteness?)
4) an interpretation of the relationship of these racial identities to the text
   (i.e.: what purpose do such constructions serve for the specific text)?

5) an interpretation of the consequences of the discursive constructions
   (i.e.: what impact does this understanding of whiteness have on life in
   the community?)

By undertaking the multiple steps of critical discourse analysis, I am able to capture the
variety of meaning produced as a consequence of the discursive production of a document.
This enables a highly nuanced and in-depth understanding of white racial identities.

My research is focused on social constructions of whiteness, so one might wonder
why I have included non-white racial identities within the process of my critical discourse
analysis. As whiteness is a relational social identity/location – that is, since whiteness is
dependent on the existence of non-whiteness for its dominance – it is extremely useful to
explore dominant constructions of non-white racial identities to fully understand white racial
identities. Based on the work of Gayatri Spivak, Jennifer Terry contends,

   Because the subaltern subject is in this textual sense produced by the dominant
   historical account, it cannot be understood independent of the documentary
   evidence of the elite. Conversely, in this strictly textual sense, the elite within
   traditional historical accounts is itself a textual effect, the residue of the subaltern
   upon which it is reliant for its very definition (1991:58; emphasis added).

As such, one can explore the meaning of whiteness by examining the constructed meanings
of non-whiteness. It is, therefore, tremendously important to include non-white racial
identities within the process of critical discourse analysis.

Underlying this emphasis on discourse is the work of Michel Foucault. According to
Foucault, "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" - "discourse
transmits and produces power; it reinforces it" (1990:100-101). Equally important, however,
discourse also "undermines and exposes power, renders it fragile and makes it possible to
thwart" (Foucault 1990:101). To be precise,
we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies...Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy...There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite to, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy (Foucault 1990:100-102).

As such, it becomes important that we deconstruct discourse to explore the relations of knowledge and power. Foucault argues that

We must not expect the discourses...to tell us, above all, what strategy they derive from, or what moral divisions they accompany, or what ideology – dominant or dominated – they represent; rather we must question them on the two levels of their tactical productivity (what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure) and their strategical integration (what conjunction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary in a given episode of the various confrontations that occur) (Foucault 1990: 102).

Equally important to my research is Foucault’s work on power. As whiteness is intimately linked to relations of power in society, it was essential to incorporate a theoretical framework that took into consideration elements of power. As such, Foucault’s History of Sexuality (1990) provided this important groundwork. Challenging the notion of Victorian prudery, Foucault (1990) argues that there has been a veritable explosion of discourse surrounding human sexuality since the seventeenth century. Yet, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, Foucault sees discourse as the site where knowledge and power come together, and as such, he sees power and power relations implicit within the discourse of sexuality.

Foucault’s understanding of power surrounds the “multiplicity of force relations immanent in the [social] sphere” – that is, “Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (1990:92-93). Furthermore, “power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations”
Foucault's understandings of power, knowledge and discourse provides an important framework for the analysis of discursive constructions of white racial identities in Armstrong. In terms of textual analysis, Foucault's emphasis on the multiple nodes of power and the production of discourse provides an impetus for social scientists to undertake multiple readings of textual documents, as well as to question the power relations implicit within such documents. By questioning the intents and purposes of the producers of textual records, researchers can enhance their understanding of such documents, as well as better prepare themselves for dealing with both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic texts.

Foucault's analysis challenges notions of benign discourse, encouraging, instead, the critical analysis of the discursive constructs of the social world.

While Foucault's work provides an important framework for my research, I am equally influenced by those that challenge his theoretical conceptions. For anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler (1995), while Foucault's History of Sexuality (1990) provides important insight into Victorian social relations, his failure to address issues of race and colonialism are highly problematic. According to Stoler,

...Europe's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discourses on sexuality, like other cultural, political, or economic assertions, cannot be charted in Europe alone. In short-circuiting empire, Foucault's history of European sexuality misses key sites in the production of that discourse, discounts the practices that racialized bodies, and thus elides a field of knowledge that provided the contrasts for what a "healthy, vigorous, bourgeois body" was all about. Europe's eighteenth-century discourses on sexuality can - indeed must - be traced along a more circuitous imperial route that leads to nineteenth-century technologies of sex. They were refracted through the discourses of empire and its exigencies, by men and women whose affirmations of a bourgeois self, and the racialized contexts in which those confidences were
Separating the discourses of sexuality from their imperial – and thus racial- context is highly problematic as it elides the racial component in the formation of the bourgeois self. For as Stoler makes clear,

By bringing the discursive anxieties and practical struggles over citizenship and national identities in the nineteenth-century back more squarely within Foucault’s frame, bourgeois identities in both metropole and colony emerge tacitly and emphatically coded by race. Discourses of sexuality do more than define the distinctions of the bourgeois self; in identifying marginal members of the body politic, they have mapped the moral parameters of European nations. These deeply sedimented discourses on sexual morality could redraw the “interior frontiers” of national communities, frontiers that were secured through – and sometimes in collision with – the boundaries of race. These nationalist discourses were predicated on exclusionary cultural principles that did more than divide the middle class from the poor. They marked out those whose claims to property rights, citizenship, and public relief were worthy of recognition and whose were not (1995:7-8).

Born out of the movement of white settlers into the British Columbia Interior, Armstrong-Spallumcheen is clearly the product of colonialism. After all, it was colonialism that brought white settlers into the province, and colonialism that relegated the local First Nations to reserve lands, thus freeing up the majority of land in the Spallumcheen valley for pre-emption and settlement by these white “pioneers.” Colonialism was a central element of the social milieu from which Armstrong-Spallumcheen emerged and from which its citizens drew meaning about the world around them. To ignore the community’s connection to the colonial project and exclude colonialism from my analysis would be highly problematic.


Finally, while I have alluded to it in the introduction of this thesis, it is important to understand that my approach to studying whiteness is not based solely on race, but incorporates the construction of white racial identities along the lines of gender, class, and sexuality. As Adele Perry argues,
the processes of colonization cannot be understood without attention to gender, and that gender, similarly, cannot be adequately comprehended outside of the politics of race and colonization. In British Columbia, white and First Nations did not meet as ungendered, undifferentiated racial subjects, but as men and women, and to fail to recognize this is to fundamentally misunderstand the processes of cultural contact and colonial development. Similarly, to analyse gender as an independent and autonomous force is to misunderstand its character (2001:8).

Quite simply,

Race, gender, and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather, they come into existences in and through relation to each other – if in contradictory and conflictual ways (McClintock 1995:5).

Social subjects aren’t simply racialized, but are also gendered, classed, and sexualized – none of these social identities/locations exists in isolation from the others. To focus solely on the racialized construction on whiteness not only elides the entwined and intersectional nature of social markers, but also fails to produce multidimensional understandings of the construction of white racial identities.

Aligned with this emphasis on the intersectional nature of race, class, gender and sexuality, is my theoretical framework rooted in critical anti-racist, feminist, materialist, anti-colonial, and queer theory. As I am interested in the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the production of white racial identities in Armstrong, it is necessary to

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3 While I refer to this theoretical framework as anti-colonialism, it is more commonly referred to as post-colonialism. I have serious theoretical issues with the term “post-colonialism”. “Post”, for the most part, connotes “past” and the notion that something has ended. With the repeated physical invasions on other nations by the United States, particularly in the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, as well as the cultural invasion of the world, I question the “post” position on colonialism. Furthermore, by implying that colonialism is “past” we run the risk of neglecting and ignoring such “colonial” situations in the contemporary world. Furthermore, as Anne McClintock (1998) argues, the prefix “post” has some problematic consequences in terms of time and history. According to McClintock,

the term confers on colonialism the prestige of history proper; colonialism is the marker of history. Other cultures share only a chronological, prepositional relation to a Eurocentred epoch that is over (post-), or not yet begun (pre-). In other words, the world’s multitudinous cultures are marked not positively by what distinguishes them but by a subordinate, retrospective relation to linear, European time (1998:11).

As such, I am uncomfortable with the term “post-colonialism”, and instead advocate use of the term “anti-colonialism”, which I will make use of throughout this thesis.
incorporate a theoretical framework which includes all of these social identities and locations. This is achieved through the framework I have mentioned above. More importantly, however, this framework aligns itself with my political and theoretical commitment to contend with social inequality and challenge the subordination of peoples on the basis of their social location. This intersectional framework encompasses a commitment to end social inequality based on race, class, gender, and sexuality, lending itself nicely to my research. As such, this intersectional framework contributes to the theoretical framework which informs this study.

A Note on Primary Sources

One of the seductions of historical sociology, for me at least, is the prospect of working with primary historical documents. In fact, nothing pleases me more than spending time in archival centers leafing through documents covered with the residue of time in my white cotton archival gloves. There is something so magical about seeing and touching and smelling these documents of history, and I would wish the experience of archival research on everyone.

Fortunately for me, my job during the summer prior to arriving at the University of British Columbia for graduate studies (2002) was as the assistant to the curator at the Armstrong Spallumcheen Museum and Art Gallery. I spent a great deal of time working in the archives – from undertaking research for visitors to preparing and storing archival documents – and became familiar with the wealth of documents existing within the museum’s collection. My work in the archives not only made me aware of this vast untapped archival resource in the community, but also exposed me to the historical discourse which
inspired this research. Many times over that summer, the curator and I shared gasps of incredulity, dismay, and anger over the racist and demeaning constructions encountered in these historical documents, and it was these experiences that inspired my current research.

As such, the summer of 2003 was spent in the archives of the Armstrong Spallumcheen museum. With the vast amount of archival material available to me, it was necessary to narrow my research focus in order to make the material accessible. As a sociologist interested in studying the broader societal environment, it became important for me to select documents that represented society at large. As mentioned previously, both community newspapers and city council documents emerged as the prominent sources of public discourse. Fortunately, the museum archives held complete collections of the newspapers and city council documents on microfilm, as well as nearly complete hardcopy collections. As the archives lacked a microfilm printer-reader, I had the good fortune of reading the actual editions of the newspapers and using a photocopier to make copies for my personal records. As such, all of the newspapers and council documents included in this research project are available at the Armstrong Spallumcheen Museum archives.

For this study, there are four community newspapers included in the analysis: Armstrong Advertiser, Armstrong Advance and Spallumcheen Advocate, Okanagan Advance, and Okanagan Commoner. The Armstrong Advertiser is the oldest and most established newspaper in the community- beginning its publishing in May 1902 and continuing into the present day (Campbell 1948:144; Armstrong Advertiser 2002). Though passing through the hands of several owners, the Advertiser has remained a cornerstone of the community. The Armstrong Advance and Spallumcheen Advocate emerged as an alternative to the Advertiser in 1905, but was eventually sold to the Advertiser in 1906. Finally the Okanagan Advance
and the *Okanagan Commoner*, while separate papers, were both products of the union of the *Armstrong Advertiser* and the newspaper of the nearby community of Enderby. Due to paper shortages during the First World War, the two newspapers joined forces to cut costs, as well as to do their part for the war effort. These two hybrid newspapers ran during 1911 (*Okanagan Advance*) and 1918/1919 (*Okanagan Commoner*).

As for city council documents, I relied heavily on the minute books from both the Spallumcheen Municipal Council and the Armstrong City Council. As noted in the introduction, the Spallumcheen Municipal Council was established in 1892 to oversee the settlements in the Spallumcheen Valley. In 1913, Armstrong was formally incorporated as a city and was granted a city council of its own. However, since the city and the surrounding municipality of Spallumcheen were intimately linked through economics, common governance (from the pre-1913 council), and social affairs, the two councils functioned in tandem, and continue to do so to this day. As such, I included the documents of both councils in this study.

I referred to the minutes books of the councils as this is the only living record of the discussions undertaken during meetings, and as such, provides the only textual evidence of the debate and discussion undertaken in council on public issues. Such a record is important because council meetings provided the opportunity for the public to debate and rule on issues of public concern, and as such, provide a wealth of information on public perceptions and social constructions. Importantly, since these councils were dominated by white, middle class men, city council minutes provide important insight into the hegemonic structures of community, as well as the power relations involved in such a council. Since whiteness is the emphasis of this research, and since the councils were very much white seats of power, it was
important for me to include these textual records within my analysis. As well, these records of debate provide important insight into, as well as provide a context for, formal council legislation (such as by-laws). In fact, without city council minutes, the formal legal statutes of the councils would provide limited information about the public discourse of the time. It is only in understanding the impetus for and the debate surrounding council legislation that we can truly grasp the social impact of community statutes.

Conclusion

"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house"

-Audre Lorde (2001)

When I first encountered Audre Lorde's message quoted above, I took it to mean that tools of the master - that is, the academic research frameworks I was being indoctrinated with in my undergraduate classes - would never achieve the political and social change I so desperately sought, and as such, should be thrown away. However, as I have gotten older, and hopefully wiser, I have come to realize an alternative meaning to this assertion. Rereading Lorde, it becomes clear that this message is not so much about abandoning academic research techniques, but about acknowledging our differences and the real conditions of our existence and drawing strength from these realities, while at the same time, undertaking steps to cross these boundaries and divisions, and to challenge the way that the "master" has constructed and defends these divisions for the master's own purposes.

Thus, with the words of Lorde imprinted in my mind, I am employing the frameworks and methods learned through my education in an attempt to dissect the "master's house." Like the scholars within the field of critical whiteness studies, my goal is to recognize the
differences amongst white racial identities and to understand the realities of existence that these varied identities face. This occurs concurrently with my goal to challenge social inequality (or the way the master(s) would like the world to stay – a state which privileges their existences and their way of life) and thwart the variety of “isms” that plague contemporary society, including racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism. I have employed counter-hegemonic frameworks and methods, tools I hope Lorde would approve of, to undertake this task. It is my hope that this research, much like the other work within critical whiteness studies, will contribute to the dismantling of the master’s house.
Chapter III

"Landless Men and Manless Land"
Whiteness, Land, and Immigration

The official history of Armstrong begins in the year 1866. In this year, Alexander Leslie (A.L) Fortune, after a lengthy overland expedition from Fort Garry (now Winnipeg) in the company of the famed Overlander\(^1\) group, arrived at the bluffs overlooking the Spallumcheen Valley. As he recounted to the community newspaper in 1911,

[the party arrived on June 15\(^{th}\), 1866, at the season when God has completed a finishing touch of glorious beauty to His own flower gardens. The whole was a country of parks and charm...[We] were soon seated on a bench of bare rocks near Lansdowne\(^2\) [sic]. Here [we] rested awhile and greatly admired the panoramic view of the park-like country stretching farther than the eye could see...Much of the country was timbered and a great portion ready for the plow. We ventured to prophecy, and saw with the mental vision, many cabins with prize chickens and eggs everywhere. On every hundred and sixty acres, we had a family of six or thirteen in a band...We could also see the overland railway so much needed to carry cheap tea, and provide easy travel for immigrants to come into the wheat fields of the prairie town we saw, with a happy rural life in all directions (Okanagan Advertiser April 29, 1911:6).

Little did Fortune know that his “imagined community”\(^3\) would soon become a reality – by 1890, not quite twenty-five years after his arrival, nearly sixty families were calling the area home,\(^4\) and a central business district, as well as a school and church, were established.

With the coming of white settlers and the establishment of this “pioneer society,” land became a central issue. To facilitate the pre-emption of land and the establishment of

\(^1\) There have been a number of works published on the Overlanders, including Metcalf 1970 & 1978; McMicking 1981; Merritt 1995; Wright 2000; and Gallaher 2002. As well, artist William Hind's Overlanders Sketchbook '62 is available on line as part of the digital collection of the National Archives of Canada (see www.archives.ca/05/0536_e.htm). Finally, for music fans, please see Mackerras and Ireland's The Overlanders, Suite for Orchestra (1971).

\(^2\) Lansdowne was the original settlement in Spallumcheen. It served as the central business district for the area until 1892, when the S & O Railway (part of the Canadian National Railway (CNR)) was built to the south of this settlement on the current townsite of Armstrong. With the realization that it had been passed over by the railway, the majority of the Lansdowne settlement was relocated to the new townsite.

\(^3\) I am borrowing this notion of imagined communities from Benedict Anderson (1991).

\(^4\) A.L. Fortune includes a complete listing of these families, including dates of arrival, in his 1911 newspaper series (see Okanagan Advertiser April 29, 1911:6).
communities by white settlers, it was necessary to have access to large tracts of land. Yet, while many constructed the colony of British Columbia as a “manless land”, ready for the taking (see, for example, Tennant 1990; Harris 2002), the lands were, in fact, inhabited by Canada’s original citizenry – the First Nations. In the case of Spallumcheen, for example, both the Okanagan and Spallumcheen peoples had historically made their homes in the valley. However, with the establishment of reserves in the area in 1861 (Harris 2002:37), these nations were dispossessed of their land, and the geography of Spallumcheen was cleared for white settlement.

The focus of this chapter is the relationship between whiteness, land, and immigration. This chapter begins with an examination of the Overlander Expedition. Employing Furniss’ (1999) concept of the frontier myth, this section will examine the major themes within this tale – themes that are perpetuated throughout the discourse of the community of Armstrong. Furthermore, this section will examine the colonial discourse of whiteness that enabled white settlement, such as the Overlanders, in the Spallumcheen Valley. In the second section, I will explore conceptions of land use in the community discourse and demonstrate how such discourse falls along racial lines (i.e.: white and non-white). Examining the cases of the First Nations and of the Chinese, this section will show how discourses of appropriate, white land use, and inferior, non-white land-use, were employed as a means of legally dispossessing and disallowing non-white land use and ownership. Finally, the third section will examine the community discourse surrounding immigration. Again, this section will demonstrate how conceptions of whiteness and non-whiteness were employed as a means of controlling immigration into the community. This
In 1862, a group of 150 men left Fort Garry (now the city of Winnipeg) with ox-drawn carts. With the severe climate of Fort Garry, as well as threats from Indians and their savage warfare, the “Overlanders”, as the group would be called, were eager to try their luck in the gold field of British Columbia. Unbeknownst to the party, also making the trip was Mrs. Catherine Schubert and her three small children. Catherine was eager to accompany her husband, despite his insistence that she remain in Fort Garry. In fact, she was so eager to make the overland trip to B.C. that she withheld the fact that she was pregnant with the couple’s fourth child. In defiance of her husband’s wishes, Catherine piled herself and her three small children into a cart, and followed the group of men at a distance. It was several days into the excursion before she was discovered.

Plagued by summer heat and insects, as well as living in constant fear of Indian attacks, the Overlanders made their way across the Canadian prairies. Trapped in boggy swamps, many of their oxen and other animals perished. Furthermore, once they reached the Rocky Mountains, the group faced extreme climbs in a “dangerous and precipitous” environment. When they reached the North Thompson River, the group splintered, with the Schubert Family heading down the river towards Kamloops, British Columbia, as this was thought a safer route for the family.
"After several weeks of hard walking, working, canoeing or rafting, as the nature of the country compelled them to act or shift, they gradually got nearer to Kamloops". However, the family was running extremely low on food- they were living on dried meat, mountain berries, and wild rose buds, and Mrs. Schubert had preserved a little flour in her handkerchief for her children. Further complicating the situation was the fact that Catherine was ready to give birth any day. The family continued towards Kamloops and soon discovered an Indian village. Thinking they could barter for food and supplies, and perhaps could remain in the village until their baby was delivered, the Schubert’s went into the settlement. However, there was no help to be found- the entire Indian population was dead, victims of small pox.

Without help or supplies, the Schubert’s then headed by raft towards Kamloops, which they reached on the 13th of October, 1862, and before daylight, Rosa Kamloops Schubert was born. The little girl was named Rosa after the rose hips that had sustained the family during the trek (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2).

The tale of Catherine Schubert and the Overlander expedition of 1862 is Armstrong’s most important historic tale. For not only is it the heroic tale of the amazing feats of a pregnant mother, it also details the adventure that brought A.L. Fortune to the Spallumcheen Valley and established the settlements which would lead to the founding of Armstrong. As a child, I had memorized the Overlander story by third grade and had many times visited the Catherine Schubert memorial, located in none other than Armstrong’s city park. To this day, groups of elementary school children are brought to the memorial, the tale of the Overlander expedition recounted by teachers or museum tour guides. Aside from the minds of

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5 Because the retelling of the Schubert Overlander story ends in Kamloops, there may be some confusion about how this story is “Armstrong’s most important historic tale”. Firstly, apart from the Schubert family, the Overlander expedition brought A.L. Fortune into the Spallumcheen Valley, where he decided to settle and establish his homestead. This marks, at least in official histories, the birth of the community of Armstrong. Thus the Overlander story is intimately tied to the genesis of the community. Furthermore, while the Overlander expedition initially led them to Kamloops, the Schubert story does not end here. For nearly two decades after their arrival in B.C., while Augustus searched unsuccessfully for gold, Catherine ran a boarding house and taught school in the Caribou (Brown, Lowry & Schultz 1986:109). Towards the end of the 1870s, Augustus homesteaded land in the Spallumcheen Valley, and in 1883, Catherine came to Spallumcheen, where she would spend the rest of her days (she passed away in 1918) (Brown, et al. 1986:109-110). The Schubert’s were very involved in the community – Catherine regularly provided “welcome baskets” for new settlers and taught the young women of Spallumcheen to make candles and soap, and Augustus donated land for a local school (Merritt 1995:47; Serra 1968:9). Therefore, because the Schuberts were part of the famed Overlander expedition that brought A.L. Fortune to Spallumcheen, and because they eventually settled in and made important contributions to the development of Armstrong, their story has become a part of the historical landscape of the community.
elementary children and the concrete memorial, the Overlander story lives on in a variety of ways – from *The Overlander 1862* restaurant I worked in as a teenager, and the immense presence of Rose (nee: Schubert) Swanson mountain, to displays at the local museum, and the street that bears the Schubert family name. Armstrong has long embraced the Overlander tale and has strived to maintain its importance in the minds of its citizens.

Although the Overlander expedition occurred outside of the time boundaries of this research project (1890-1930), it, nonetheless, permeates much of the history of the area. The Overlander story is continually told and retold within the public discourse of the community. The tale is regaled and recounted innumerable times within the community newspapers, and serves as the basis for many a discussion of the area. Furthermore, as I hope to make clear in this chapter, the themes and constructions that emerge from the Overlander myth will weave their way throughout much of the discourse of the proceeding decades. For this reason, I feel it is essential to include a discussion of the Overlanders within this thesis.

Much like Furniss’ “frontier myth” (1999), the Overlander tale tells a tale of good, moral whiteness and its conflict with, and eventual triumph over, hostile environments and savage peoples, in this case, Indians. At the heart of this tale lies an essential binary between white and non-white – for it is constructions of superior whiteness and inferior non-whiteness that not only created the conflict at the centre of the Overlander tale, but also enabled the trip and the grand finale of settlement to occur. More importantly, however, these racial constructions, which provided the basis for this foray into the “wilds” of British Columbia, and which allowed for A.L. Fortune and others to settle in Armstrong, permeate the discourse of future generations, as will be demonstrated in the sections dealing with land use and immigration.
In her examination of the meaning of whiteness and Indianness in a small rural British Columbia community, Elizabeth Furniss (1999) argues that Williams Lake society functions around a “Frontier Myth.” The frontier myth begins with the story of the settlers’ journey to the wilderness and their cultural and moral regression to the more “primitive” conditions encountered there. The frontier experience involves a series of encounters with morally opposed forces, the most important being civilization and wilderness, humans and nature, and whites and Indians… These tensions are ultimately resolved through the settlers’ separation from the conditions of the frontier, typically with the establishment of homesteads and settlements, and by implication, their “conquest” of the wilderness and Aboriginal peoples (Furniss 1999:17-18).

This myth, she argues, is a dominant account of history that shapes our historical consciousness – it is “a way of knowing about history that provides a certain set of rules and assumptions that guide how “truths” about the past, and by extension the present, are to be created and understood” (Furniss 1999:17).

For the community of Armstrong, the Overlander tale is its “frontier myth.” Its formulation is nearly identical to Furniss’ deconstruction of the myth of Williams Lake. At its essence, the story is one of white pioneers and their journey into the wilderness – in this case, the young colony of British Columbia. While small white settlements, mostly related to the Hudson’s Bay Company, had been established on Vancouver Island during the 1840’s, the British colony only began to see a major influx of white settlers in 1858, when “this tiny, isolated oasis of Europeans was inundated, almost overnight it seemed, by would-be gold miners and entrepreneurs in search of sudden wealth” (Barman 1996:61). However, while the gold rush had brought white settlers into the colony, none had settled in the Spallumcheen Valley. It was, of course, not until A.L. Fortune’s leg of the Overland expedition brought him to the bluffs overlooking the future site of Armstrong, that white settlement would make its
mark on the valley. Seen in this light, the Overlander expedition was truly an expedition into the "wilds" of British Columbia.

Furthermore, like the frontier myth, the Overlander tale puts its white settlers in conflict with formidable opponents – namely, nature and Indians. In the absence of the railway, the Overlanders relied on horses and oxen to make their way through the untouched wilderness of British Columbia. However, such a method of transportation failed to protect the group from nature and its elements. They faced extreme heat while crossing the prairies, although “the fatigue and exposure were well borne by the family...they suffered no loss or injury” (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2). Yet, crossing the mountainous terrain that brought them into the interior created many problems for the party. Not only were they forced to ford rivers, “the country was found very difficult to travel on account of boggy swamps where the animals were often unloaded and reloaded, and the men had to make many trips with their stuff on their backs to relieve the animals” (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2). Furthermore, at one point, “the travellers had to make a climb of about 200 feet...there were dangerous and precipitous places passed” (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2). However, “through the passes they pressed on as steadily as they had done over the prairie trails, though the danger and difficulties were many, and mountain storms often soaked them to the skin ... For two weeks they struggled through the pathless forests, up and down steep mountain sides and valleys” (Armstrong Advertiser April 29, 1926:2).

In addition to the formidable obstacles put forth by the wilderness, a variety of Indian peoples also posed a serious threat to the Overlanders. It was, in fact, problems with Indians that had propelled the Schubert family, A.L. Fortune, and the other members of the Overlander expedition to flee St. Paul, Minnesota for Fort Garry. In a 1926 retelling of the
tale, for example, it is detailed how young James Schubert, the son of Catherine, was nearly
kidnapped when a “redskin” broke into the Schubert home (Armstrong Advertiser April 29, 1926:1). Yet once they reached Fort Garry, conflict with Indians was still a pressing danger. According to A.L. Fortune,

\[\text{[It] took all the travellers eight days to Fort Garry. A few weeks after our travel over the region the Sioux Indians rose in rebellion against the government and the white settlers. They murdered most of the whites along our route of travel, besides many in other frontier settlements (Okanagan Advertiser June 1, 1911:6).}\]

For the Schuberts, “[i]n Fort Garry they found the winds and climate very severe, but difficulties more serious were the threatening dangers from Indians and savage warfare” (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2). As such, both parties were easily swayed to continue with the Overlander expedition into British Columbia.\(^6\)

During their travels, the Overlanders were in constant fear of Indian attacks. When Augustus Schubert discovered his wife and children following the party, his central concern was that the children would be stolen by Indians (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2). Furthermore, when the party arrived at Fort Ellis, “Mr. McKay, who was in charge of the station, advised Mr. Schubert not to go any further with his wife and family, for they would surely suffer by Indians” (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2). Furthermore, “this dread of Indians was greatly increasing in the whole party after their [Indian] guide left them and absconded with articles he borrowed to kill Buffalo” (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2). Fortunately for the expedition, “the Indians did not molest them, but a hornets’ nest in a narrow pass was a fearful torment” (Armstrong Advertiser March 17, 1904:2).

\(^6\) While there is a great deal of documentation indicating “Indian hostilities” as a major impetus for the Overlander expedition, there is no discussion of why the group believed, or how they were led to believe, that there would be no hostile encounters with Indians in British Columbia. It would be interesting to know the preconceptions about British Columbia that made it seem an ideal destination for the group. Perhaps the attraction of the gold fields overrode concerns of Indian hostilities. However, this is only conjecture, and a study of the documents pertaining to the Overlander expedition, beyond the scope undertaken in this study, is necessary to ascertain such perceptions.
Yet, within the face of such adversity, the Overlanders held strong and succeeded in reaching their goal. Through “conquest” over hostile nature, and even more hostile Indians, this group of white pioneers found their way into British Columbia’s gold fields, and eventually into the Spallumcheen Valley to establish homesteads and settlements. This establishment of community, as Furniss argues, would ultimately resolve the conflict by separating the settlers from the frontier, and by implication, achieve the “conquest” of the wilderness and Aboriginal peoples (1999:17-18).

While the Overlander myth tells of the coming of white settlers to the Spallumcheen Valley, it also, and more importantly, lays the groundwork for some of the central assumptions of this white settler society. One of the central elements of the myth is the creation of conflict – that is, the construction of morally opposed forces that challenge white settlement, and in the end, substantiate the heroic claims of the tale. As such, the creation of the “Other” – or the categories of “us” and them” – was central to the story. As Simone de Beauvoir argues,

the category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of duality – that of the Self and the Other...Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other against itself. If three travelers chance to occupy the same compartments, that is enough to make vaguely hostile “others” out of all the rest of the passengers. In small-town eyes all persons not belonging to the village are “strangers” and suspect; the native of a country all who inhabit other countries are “foreigners”; Jews are “different” for the Anti-Semite, Negroes are “inferior” for American racists; aborigines are “natives” for colonists (de Beauvoir [1949] 1989:xxii-xxiii)

This construction of the Other, as de Beauvoir’s statement implies, creates not only the duality of “us” and “them,” but also positions these two mutually exclusive categories in direct opposition to one another.
Constructions of otherness are central to the Overlander tale. The duality within the Overlander story, as previously depicted, posits the settler in opposition to both nature and the First Nations people. Particularly important to this thesis is the duality of settler and Indian, as this binary is substantiated and perpetuated along racial lines – for it is a dualism of the “white” settler and the “non-white” Indian. The discourse surrounding the Overlander expedition is replete with constructions of this oppositional pairing. Within this discourse, the “red” Indian is referred to as “savage” (*Armstrong Advertiser* March 17, 1904:2), the stealer of white children (*Armstrong Advertiser* March 17, 1904:2; *Armstrong Advertiser* April 29, 1926:1), and murderer (*Okanagan Advertiser* June 1, 1911:6). Describing Indians as murderous, wild, filthy, depraved, and tainted by drunkenness, A.L. Fortune claimed that these “foregoing observations did not help me form a very hopeful estimate of the Shuswap Indians, nor the Okanagan, when we were preparing to make our home among them” (*Okanagan Advertiser* June 1, 1911:6). Within the retelling of the Overlander story that commences this chapter, the Indians are constructed as “savage” and “brutal” beings whose murder of white settlers serves as the driving force behind the commencement of the expedition (*Armstrong Advertiser* March 17, 1904:2). The Indians prove a constant threat to the Overlanders, a threat that increases with the “treachery” of the one Indian they trusted to lead them into British Columbia (*Armstrong Advertiser* March 17, 1904:2). Thus, within this discourse, Indianness is constructed as morally degenerate and as a threat to the pioneers.

Whiteness, on the other hand, is constructed in a very different fashion – as a sort of positive counterpart to the negative construction of Indianness. There is, for example, no discussion of murder by white settlers, nor any discussion of the possible “threat” against the Indians being posed by white settlement. Instead, A.L. Fortune refers to the settlers as heroes:
hardworking and diligent people who faced all difficulties “in a cheerful, a hopeful and prophetic spirit” (Okanagan Advertiser April 29, 1911:6). The white Overlanders are constructed as “brave,” “noble,” and of a superior moral stature by carrying out the work of God- good Christian gentlemen (Armstrong Advertiser June 7, 1923:2). Furthermore, the men are described as possessing a “sturdy manhood,” while Catherine Schubert is described as courageous and brave for her part in the expedition, which the newspaper claims, “pioneered for her race and sex the way through the passes of the Rocky Mountains” (Armstrong Advertiser April 29, 1926:1). Finally in a speech to the Native Sons of British Columbia, James Schubert, who was a small child when his parents made the Overland trek, proclaimed that the coming of the Overlanders marked “the very genesis of civilization and settlement in the country” (Armstrong Advertiser December 27, 1923:1).

Quite clearly, this white/Indian duality favoured whiteness, constructing it in a positive fashion. However, it is important to remember that this dualism was constructed by members of the white race. It becomes essential, then, to seriously consider the reasons for such constructions, as well as the perceived, if not realized, benefit from employing them.

This creation of otherness, especially within the colonial context, is intimately connected to power. Edward Said makes this explicitly clear in his text Orientalism (1978). According to Said, Orientalism was “a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience” (1978:1). It was “not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment” (Said 1978:6). For

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7 It is interesting to note that the Overlanders are referred to as “gentlemen,” considering that both a woman and children were also a part of the expedition. In this sense, it appears that white settler society is masculinized—that is, equated with men only. This is an important observation and shall be discussed in the next chapter on gender and sexuality (Chapter 5).
Said, “Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”) (1978:43).

Importantly, Said makes clear that Orientalism centered on relations of power:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (1978:3).

Furthermore,

...what gave the Oriental’s world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West... Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world... The Oriental is contained and represented by dominating frameworks (Said 1978:40; emphasis in original).

In fact, “Orientalism depends for its strategy on [the] flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relations with the Orient without ever losing him [sic] the upper hand” (Said 1978:7; emphasis in original). It “express[es] the strength of the West and the Orient’s weakness – as seen by the West” (Said 1978:45).

Issues of power are implicit in the Overlander myth. The Overlanders were settlers, searching for both wealth and land in what would be the province of British Columbia. Yet, the Overlanders were part of a much larger project aimed at colonization and nation-building. With the establishment of the Vancouver Island colony in 1849, and the Crown colony of British Columbia in 1858, the would-be province became a colonial enterprise of the British government (Harris 2002:3). However, there was an important obstacle in the way of British colonization – the First Nations people. As Eva Mackey points out, “nation-building is a dual process, entailing the management of populations and the creation of national identity” (2003:23). In this case, it became essential to manage the First Nations people.
According to Sherene Razack,

a white settler society is one established by Europeans on non-European soil. Its origins lie in the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans. As it evolves, a white settler society continues to be structured by a racial hierarchy. In the national mythologies of such societies, it is believed that white people came first and that it is they who principally developed the land; Aboriginal peoples are presumed to be mostly dead or assimilated. European settlers thus become the original inhabitants and the group most entitled to the fruits of citizenship (2002: 1-2).

A two prong legal approach succeeded in dispossessing the First Nations of their land. The first involved the European legal doctrine of terra nullius, which stipulated that already inhabited nations could be deemed ‘uninhabited’ if the people were not Christian, not agricultural, and not ‘sufficiently’ evolved (Razack 2002:3; Harris 2002:xxi). Declaring the land uninhabited made way for legal possession by white settler society. However, this left the First Nations populations living on the land to be dealt with. The second approach, as such, involved the development of the Indian reserves, which assigned the First Nations to fixed geographical points in the colony (Harris 2002). Not only did this legally and geographically define mutually exclusive white settler and First Nations spaces, but it allowed white settler society to police and manage the Indian population. As Harris argues,

In various ways in different parts of the province, Native [sic] life came to be lived in, around, and well beyond these reserves, but wherever one went, if one were a Native person, the reserves bore on what one could and could not do. They were fixed geographical points of reference, surrounded by clusters of permissions and inhibitions that affected most Native opportunities and movements (2002:xxi).

Buttressed against white settler society, the reserves and their Indian populations could be monitored and regulated by the dominant settler population.

This process of dispossession, however, hinged on constructions of superior whiteness and inferior Indianness. The doctrine of terra nullius, for example, depended on constructions of inferior Indianness – non-Christian, non-agricultural, and most importantly, underdeveloped and insufficiently evolved – to declare British Columbia lands as
uninhabited. Furthermore, the rationalizations for Indian reserves surrounded similar constructions. The reservation system was viewed as a means of protecting the First Nations people, which was “a prime duty of the colonial administrators” (Harris 2002:6). According to these administrators, “Native people had to be transformed from a savage to a civilized state,” and this included their physical circumstances (Harris 2002:7). Again, the First Nations were constructed as inferior ‘savages’, while whiteness was equated with civilization, and by extension, the superior civilizers of others.

Colonial British Columbia, as such, was dependent on constructions of superior whiteness and inferior Indianness for its very existence. As an extension of the broader colonial project, the Overlanders were dependent on these same constructions. As white settlers, the Overlanders existed in a colonial setting that privileged their whiteness, and allowed them the rights and privileges of their white citizenship – including the right to claim ownership to the colony’s lands. This privilege, however, hinged on constructions of inferior Indianness. Thus, to obtain, as well as maintain, white settler dominance, the Overlanders needed to perpetuate such constructions. That this occurred is evident within the discourse surrounding the Overlanders, where Indians are consistently constructed as the ‘savage’ opponent of the glorified white settlers.

While the Overlander expedition, and the broader colonial project, depended on the superior whiteness and inferior Indianness for their existence and survival in the precarious early years of white settlement, as a myth, the Overlander tale provides an important framework for the historical consciousness of the community of Armstrong. As Furniss contends, such myths are a dominant account of history that shapes our historical consciousness – “a way of knowing about history that provides a certain set of rules and
assumptions that guide how “truths” about the past, and by extension the present, are to be created and understood” (Furniss 1999:17). In the next section, I will demonstrate, as in the case of the Overlanders, that dichotomies of superior whiteness and inferior non-whiteness (in this case, both Indianness and Chineseness) continue to pervade the discourse of the community.

Making Use of Manless Land- Whiteness and the Regulation of Land Use in Armstrong

At its most basic level, the Overlander myth is about pioneering and settling. The ultimate goal of the expedition was to reach the gold fields and make money so that these newcomers could establish homesteads in British Columbia. To facilitate this goal, it was essential that land be readily available for the settlers to pre-empt and homestead. Yet, despite certain constructions of British Columbia as a “manless” land, there was a substantial population that made its home on these lands – that is, of course, the First Nations peoples. Colonization, as such, brought white settlers into conflict with the Indian population. For if white settlement was to make a path for itself in this young colony, it was essential that British Columbia’s lands be made available to them.

Constructions of land use and misuse were central to the process of obtaining land for settlement. In his examination of the colonization of British Columbia and the construction of

8 Like whiteness, it is important to recognize that non-whiteness is also a fractured and conflicted category. While Indianness and Chineseness are both included within the realm of non-whiteness, there are important differences between the constructions of the two that make them separate from one another. Indeed, interracial marriage and procreation challenged the neatness and discreteness of whiteness and non-whiteness (see Perry 2001; Mawani 2002). Thus, while at times it seems that I conflate non-whiteness with Chineseness or Indianness, I want to be clear that both, with their commonalities and conflictions, are part of the fractured terrain of non-whiteness. This will be made explicitly clear within this discussion of conceptions of land use, where Indian land uses is equated with “laziness” and “wasteful, and Chinese land use is constructed as “bleeding the land”.

“native” spaces (namely, reserves), Cole Harris (2002) explores the important role that conceptions of land use played in dispossessing the First Nations of their land. Harris argues at its most basic level, the settler discourse surrounding the Native land question was simple and pervasive. White immigrants and settlers in British Columbia in the 1860s took it for granted that the land awaited them. There were protracted arguments about the terms by which the government should make land available but, with rare exceptions, the proposition that almost all provincial land was unsettled and unused – or used slightly in ways that deserved to be replaced by more intensive, modern land uses – was not debated. Natives were wanderers, primitive people who did not know how to use land effectively. They had legitimate claims to their principal settlement sites, also to their burial grounds and small cultivated patches, but not to much more. Their more extensive land use, such as they were, should give way – were bound to give way – to the intensive land uses associated with settlers and civilization. The displacement of the one by the other was inevitable, as the worldwide reach of Europe had shown. In British Columbia, therefore, settlers considered either that they were occupying a wilderness or, where there was some evidence of Native land use, that the superiority of their own uses justified their possession of land (2002:46-47)

While the Indians made basic use of agricultural practices (many, for example, had potato gardens (Harris 2002)), their basic means of subsistence consisted of hunting and gathering. Such a means was not only migratory in nature, but also relied on a relativity uncultivated “nature”- hunting depends on animals, which in turn, depend on a stable and healthy habitat, and gathering involves simply removing things readily available in nature. However, in the eyes of white settlers, who had long moved passed the “primitive” hunting and gathering subsistence (and moved into agricultural-based subsistence), such land use was considered inappropriate and “savage.” As wilderness was seen as an opposing force that needed to be tamed (a theme within the Frontier Myth), “progress”, as seen by white settlers, depended on the cultivation of land and the harvesting of natural resources, including such things as agriculture, forestry, mining and fishing.

Thus, within the colonial discourse, “white” land use was constructed as “progress” and “civilization,” while Indian uses were considered “primitive” and “savage.” Again, whiteness was discursively constructed as superior to Indianness. Yet this power would not
remain solely in a discursive sense – this discourse would serve as the basis for advancement of the colonial project, but more importantly, as the means for dispossessing the First Nations of their land. The colonists argued that since the Indians did not cultivate the land, save for dwelling sites, potato gardens, and burial grounds, and since their existence was of a migratory nature, they did not, in legal or moral terms, own any of the lands they had not cultivated (see Harris 2002:47-56). As such, various governmental groups established reserves that “protected” Indian lands and provided “bonus” acreages for their use. More importantly, however, this process freed up the remaining lands in British Columbia for white colonial settlers.

This is the discourse under which the Overlanders, as well as the other settlers who would soon make their homes in the area, came into the Spallumcheen Valley. Through the process of pre-emption (the legal means of claiming these manless lands), these settlers made use of and enacted the conception of appropriate white land use. In fact, this settlement was dependent on these racially charged conceptions for their very ability to settle in the valley. For without these definitions that privileged whiteness over non-whiteness, Armstrong’s early citizenry may not have been able to take up homestead and establish their community.

Despite the fact the settlers now had in their possession the lands they so desired, the colonial and racialized discourse of land use did not disappear. With the original Indian reserves established at the head of Okanagan Lake by 1861 and in the Salmon River Valley (Spallumcheen) by 1870 (figure 3.2), and a supposedly more amicable reserve settlement
established by the Okanagan Indians and the Joint Indian Reserve Commission in 1877 (Harris 2002:120-129), it seemed possible that both settlers and the Indians could live peacefully, side by side. However, this would not be the case. Throughout the time period 1890 to 1930, white settlers continued to assert their dominance over the lands of Armstrong-Spallumcheen, including the reserves. Through the same racially based discursive constructions employed in the original settlement of the valley, which appear throughout the community newspapers, and the very real enactments of these constructions through municipal legislation, Armstrong's white citizens strove to achieve and maintain white dominance over land use.

In 1892, the year that marked the coming of the Shuswap and Okanagan branch of the Canadian National Railway, Armstrong established its first municipal council. Composed of
Armstrong’s most prominent, white, middle class male citizens, one of the first orders of business for the council was to establish a system of taxation for the community’s lands (Minutes of the Spallumcheen Municipal Council September 24, 1892:3). According to this taxation scheme, uncultivated land would be charged a high tax of thirty-five dollar per acre, while range and cultivated land was to be assessed at a much lower taxation rate of two to ten dollars per acre (Minutes of the Spallumcheen Municipal Council September 24, 1892:3). Furthermore, in December of that year, the council divided all lands in the valley, excluding only the governmentally legislated reserves of the Indians, into wards, which were to be overseen and managed by the municipal council (Minutes of the Spallumcheen Municipal Council December 17, 1892: 22). In doing so, the white municipal council asserted their control over the majority of land in the valley – they placed themselves as the gatekeepers and guardians of Spallumcheen lands. Furthermore, with such legislation as the taxation scheme that privileged white conceptions of land use (and monetarily penalized unacceptable forms), these gatekeepers were able to maintain the community as per their white standards.

Yet while the initial construction of the valley into wards recognized the governmentally legislated reserves, the municipal council, as well as the community, would soon challenge these “native spaces” (Harris 2002). In 1907, when the Coyote Creek Irrigation system was being established to divert water from the reserve to serve the white settlers, the Indians sabotaged the irrigation trenches (Armstrong Advertiser May 10, 1907:1). According to Mr. Irwin, the Indian Agent for the area, the events were a result of a misunderstanding between the chief and would-be chief of the tribe (and not the white appropriation of reserve lands), and as such, the constabulary was sent in to prevent disruption (Armstrong Advertiser May 10, 1907:1). Similarly, in 1910, White Valley
Irrigation wanted to cross a piece of the Indian reserve (Armstrong Advertiser February 19, 1910:1). Instead of speaking with the Indians, the company spoke to the municipal council and had them gazette a road on the reserve (which would then become the property of the municipal council) to be used for the irrigation system.

Within the community, the Indian reserves were attacked in the press. In April of 1911, when Wilfred Laurier’s government introduced legislation to amend the Indian Reserves Act, which would alter reserves that encroached on the growth of cities, the Armstrong Advertiser vehemently challenged the reserve system. According to the newspaper, “progress [was] barred by the fact that large reserves encroached upon towns, taking up some of the most valuable lands and retarding that development and progress which should mark every section of communities with claims to progressiveness” (Armstrong Advertiser April 29, 1911:4). About the Indians, “it is a recognized fact that the Indian is lazy, content with three meagre meals a day and an occasional “blowout”” (Armstrong Advertiser April 29, 1911:4). In the opinion of the newspaper,

In each case the Indians simply are a bar to progress, and while we recognize that as wards of the government the Indians are entitled to much consideration, we recognize the said fact that civilization simply leads the red man to copy the vices of the white race; add them to his already large catalogue. The Indian is apparently the happiest when he has nature in the rough all around them. He can hunt and loaf, and since he will hunt and loaf, he might just as well do it a few miles back from the footprints of civilization rather than acting after the fashion of barnacles on the hull of the ship. While we wish the [Indian] brother no harm, we certainly trust that the enactment will pass through the house and soon become law (Armstrong Advertiser April 29, 1911:4).

Similarly in 1919, when efforts were being made in the Okanagan city of Penticton to obtain reserve lands for settlers, the Okanagan Commoner made similar arguments against the Indians. According to the newspaper

There are many extensive tracts of valuable land on Indian reserves, particularly in the Okanagan, which hitherto have lain idle. A policy is needed to lease such lands for farming or grazing purposes, or to cultivate them, with or without the
consent of the Indians. In many cases where the reserves are too large to be cultivated by the number of Indians located in them, or where for other reasons the Indians neglect or refuse to use their land, the surplus area has been leased to white farmers and ranchers, and thus much good land that would otherwise be neglected is now being made productive (Okanagan Commoner July 31, 1919:2).

Furthermore, the paper argued that it was essential to obtain such land for the soldiers who were now returning from the Great War (Okanagan Commoner July 31, 1919:2; also Okanagan Commoner February 20, 1919:4).

In dealing with the valley’s Aboriginal population, white settler society made use of racially aligned conceptions to demonstrate inappropriate land use, which they argued put the Indians in a position of default in regards to land use duties, and as such, defaulted their ownership over such lands. While the irrigation project in 1907 is, in fact, an attempt by white settlers to divert valuable resources from lands within Indian possession, the sabotage by the Indians is constructed, not as a response to a conflict created by whites, but as the by-product of conflict within the tribe. As such, it is the Indians that are constructed as a threat to white progress. Within the discourse of the 1911 and 1919 attempts to obtain reserve lands for white use, the newspapers employed racialized constructions as a means of demonstrating inappropriate (and non-white) land use, and thus, the forfeiture of Indian ownership rights. The Indians are racially constructed as “lazy,” “backwards,” and as “a barrier to civilization.” In addition, their method of survival is referred to as “hunting and loafing,” reasserting the lazy and primitive nature of the Indian peoples. Finally, in a coup de grâce of sorts, the Indians are compared to a barnacle on a ship – a life form that attaches itself and makes use of the ship, but provides no benefit in return. In contradistinction, whiteness is constructed in terms of “progress” and “civilization.” As with the Overlander myth, in a society where whiteness holds a position of dominance – such as Armstrong’s white municipal council, for example – the white citizenry are able to define and deploy their own conceptions of society:
the traits assigned to whiteness are viewed as superior. Inferior traits are then assigned to the Indian population as a discursive means of providing evidence for very real actions against these people – namely the reduction of the reserves and the loss of their land.

The “Yellow Peril” – The Chinese and White Racism

However, it was not only the First Nations who experienced discursive degradation and legal land use sanctions. Similar conceptions were employed in arguments directed at the Chinese. These arguments would form a body of discourse that would, in the end, provide the basis for municipal legislation prohibiting use of the land by the “yellow” Chinese. Yet while the Indians were constructed as lazy and negligent in terms of land use, the Chinese, with their industrious agricultural techniques and lower standards of living (which in turn, resulted in lower prices for their produce than that of the white agriculturalists), were perceived as aggressive in their land use, and as such, a threat to white lands.

While there is no way of pinpointing the exact date that the Chinese first arrived in Armstrong, the major influx of Chinese migrants occurred during the first two decades of the twentieth century. While the recruitment of Chinese workers to build the railway was responsible for much of their movement into the interior of the province (Avery 1995:46-47), the evidence suggests that it was the readily available work in the agricultural industries of the Okanagan Valley that brought many of Chinese migrants to the community (Critchley 1999:10-11; Avery 1995:43). Attracted by agricultural work and market gardening, the permanent Chinese population in Armstrong rose to approximately 500 during this period, reaching a high of about 900 during the First World War (Critchley 1999:11). The population

9 The term “Yellow Peril” was a hegemonic white phrase used to describe the perceived invasion of, as well as the danger posed by, Chinese migrants in Canada (see Ward 1990:6).
was made up solely of men until 1920, when worker Lee Bak Bong had saved sufficient funds to bring his wife to Canada (Critchely 1999:14). The maleness of the Chinese community was not uncommon, for as Patricia Roy points out, traditional concerns for the well-being of the family and the lineage, as well as Canadian immigration laws and the generally hostile treatment of the Chinese in Canada, discouraged female emigration (1989:xi). While the majority of the Chinese grew celery and other vegetables on a large scale on land leased from white owners (Roy 1989:250), some were able to purchase small tracts of land to establish their own market gardens or other business, including restaurants and laundries (Critchley 1999). By the 1920s, a small Chinatown had been established on property purchased by Chinese countryman (Critchley 1999:11). Located near the centre of town, the small Chinatown provided homes for the male workers, who lived communally, as well as provided an opportunity to socialize (Critchley 1999:11-12). Most importantly, however, “the Chinatown communities offered protection from the discriminatory society and provided the Chinese with security and company” (Critchely 1999:11). However, Armstrong’s Chinatown was razed by fire in 1922, and the men were forced to find other living arrangements. Some established another Chinese settlement near the previous Chinatown, while others lived in shacks on the rented fields or took up residence in one of the boarding houses in Armstrong (Critchley 1999:14).

During the first decades of the 1900s, the work of the Chinese gardeners succeeded in elevating Armstrong to the status of “celery capital of Canada” (Critchely 1999:9) Yet despite the proclamation in 1908 that the Chinese were among the best gardeners (Armstrong

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10 It is important to note that, while this statement implies the Chinatowns were the product of the Chinese community, these enclaves are equally the product of white communities. In her analysis of Vancouver’s Chinatown, Kay Anderson (1991) demonstrates the role of white society in the production of racial discourses and material conditions that also contributed to the shaping of Chinatown.
Advertiser August 1, 1908:1), the "yellow" agriculturalist, although engaging in agricultural practices [cultivation] constructed in relation to the Aboriginal issue as appropriate, were soon perceived as a threat to white settlers and their use of the land. The Chinese, many of whom were willing to work for lower wages, posed a serious threat for white labour (The Armstrong Advertiser April 21, 1904; The Armstrong Advance and Spallumcheen Advocate March 30, 1906:2). In 1913, the Armstrong Advertiser reported that the Chinese had purchased a large block of land within the city limits (October 30, 1913:1). The newspaper argued

Until recently the growing of vegetables, especially celery and cabbage has been entirely in the hands of the whitemen, but if the Oriental is to be allowed to acquire control of such large holdings, we fail to see how the white man can hope to successfully compete. It will either be a case of the white man lowering his standards of living to the level of the Oriental or the white man will have to go out of business. We all know that the Oriental will not raise his living standards and customs to the level of the whiteman (Armstrong Advertiser October 30, 1913:1).

However, instead of banning Chinese labour altogether, which white industrialists could and would use for their own benefit, Armstrong City Council passed a resolution aimed at preventing Chinese ownership of any lands in the community, and thus dissuading Chinese immigration to Armstrong (Minutes of Armstrong City Council November 10, 1913:1-21). This resolution, in fact, was the only legal recourse that white Armstrong could take against Chinese migrants – in 1884, when the legislature of British Columbia attempted to pass into law a prohibition against Chinese land ownership, the Canadian federal government had ruled that such a law was discriminatory and that land rights were under their jurisdiction (Roy 1989:55). As such, Armstrong's city council could not legally prohibit land ownership by the Chinese, but they could pass a resolution discouraging Armstrong's white citizens from selling land to the Chinese.

11 A full copy of the Armstrong City Council resolution is included in the Appendix.
According to the declaration,

Be it resolved:
1. That the council desires to see legislation enacted, whether local or provincial in its scope, whereby the area referred to [the city of Armstrong] would be prevented from further passing into the permanent possession of the Chinese:

2. That this Council strongly deprecate the further disposals of lands in sale to Chinamen by proprietors within the city: (Minutes of Armstrong City Council November 10, 1913:2).

Two weeks later, Armstrong’s Board of Trade issued a resolution of its own:

Whereas, the citizens of Armstrong and the farmers of the municipality of Spallumcheen in open meeting assembled passed an unanimous resolution that they would not during the period of five years sell any of their lands to Chinese or Orientals, neither would they after the present leases expire lease their lands to Chinese or Orientals (Armstrong Advertiser November 27, 1913:5).

A copy of this resolution was forwarded to the B.C. legislature, along with a request that the provincial government take immediate steps towards passing an exclusion act, as well as pass legislation prohibiting the ownership of British Columbia farm lands by the Chinese and Japanese (Armstrong Advertiser November 27, 1913:5).

This anti-Chinese discourse surrounding land was, in fact, an extension of the general anti-Chinese environment existing in Armstrong at the time. Literally from the Armstrong Advertiser’s inception in 1902, the community newspapers were the site of contestation about the Chinese. Letters to the editor hotly debated the “Chinese problem.” These debates surrounded issues such as Chinese cleanliness (Armstrong Advertiser October 2, 1909:4); Chinese immorality (including gambling and the use of illicit substances) (Armstrong Advertiser December 18, 1909:5); Chinese land use and ownership (Armstrong Advertiser November 27, 1913:5); the use of Chinese labour (Okanagan Commoner February 27, 1919:1); and Chinese immigration (Armstrong Advertiser January 29, 1920:2). However, the vast majority of these letters supported a white Canada. This same opinion was voiced in editorials and columns. Such articles decried the use of Chinese labour (Armstrong
Advertiser July 26, 1907:1) and the renting of lands to the Chinese (Okanagan Commoner June 20, 1918:3). Articles entitled “Keeping B.C. for the White Man” (Okanagan Commoner April 11, 1918:2) and “Awakening to the Danger” (Okanagan Commoner March 20, 1919:1) called on white Armstrong to “ACT – NOW!” to prevent the community from falling into the hands of the Chinese.

Anti-Chinese sentiment wasn’t limited to the pages of the newspapers. Chinese homes and businesses were regularly raided, the police searching for evidence of illicit activity, including gambling and opium use (Critchely 1999:12; see for example Armstrong Advertiser December 20, 1923:1). Similar raids were performed to ensure the cleanliness of Chinese homes and businesses (Serra 1968). As Critchely makes clear, such activities were never carried out against the white citizens of Armstrong (1999:11). In addition, the Chinese were plagued with mysterious deaths, and their small Chinatown was suspiciously burned to the ground (Critchely 1999:12). As one Chinese man recounted,

The old Chinatown used to be on the corner. But the funny thing was a building stuck out partly on the road. It was a big wooden building. Lo and behold, not much longer after the city said ‘cut it back,’ they had a big fire. It might just be coincidence… (in Critchley 1999:12).

Such anti-Chinese sentiment was not uncommon for the time. The province of British Columbia was extremely hostile towards the Chinese. Claiming that they were a threat to Canadian [white] workers and that “their habits [were] subversive of the comfort and well-being of the community”, the provincial government passed three anti-Chinese bills in 1884: one preventing Chinese immigration, one aimed at regulating the Chinese population in Canada, and one preventing Chinese acquisition of crown lands (Roy 1989:54-55). While the federal government disallowed the acts on the basis of discrimination (that the acts discriminated against the Chinese and individuals who aided the Chinese) and jurisdiction (it
was argued that immigration was a federal matter) (Roy 1989:55), the province continued to petition the federal government for a solution to the 'Chinese problem'. In 1885, the federal government enacted the first of a series of immigration acts aimed at curtailing Chinese immigration to Canada. The 1885 Immigration Act imposed a fifty-dollar head tax on Chinese immigrants entering the country. While initially stemming the flow of Chinese into Canada, the head tax was a poor deterrent in the long run (Roy 1989:66-67). In 1901, the head tax was raised to one-hundred dollars, and to five-hundred dollars in 1904. While briefly interrupted by the First World War, anti-Chinese sentiment in British Columbia, including a flurry of agitation in the Okanagan, reached a peak post-War and into the 1920s (see Ward 1990:118-129). In response to extreme pressure from British Columbia, an immigration act was introduced in 1923 that limited the entry of Chinese nationals to diplomats, children born in Canada who were returning after having been educated in China, merchants, and students (Roy 2003:73). The Exclusion Act, which took effect on July 1, 1924, also legislated the registration of all Chinese in Canada, including those who were Canadians by birth or naturalization (Roy 2003:76). The anti-Chinese sentiment and legislation in Armstrong, as such, is endemic of the racially charged atmosphere existing in British Columbia during the time period. The Armstrong-Spallumcheen anti-Chinese movement was, in fact, similar to other municipal level actions (Roy 1989), and contributed to the much larger anti-Chinese movement existing in the province and the country at the time.

To pass this resolution against Chinese land ownership, city council relied on social constructions of whiteness and non-whiteness. In the preamble to the resolution, it is stated that “the wide difference between those Orientals and the rest of our Canadian population in
language, tradition and customs of life make difficult, if not possible, the appreciation by the Oriental of our social, political, and national ideals, and the assimilation of the Oriental into our national body" (Minutes of the Armstrong City Council November 10, 1913:1). In this simple statement, the white settler society separates itself from the Oriental population. In fact, this document goes as far as saying, “they are not like us and never will be.” Because of the vast differences in language and culture that exist between “those Orientals” (yellows) and “the rest of our Canadian population” (white settlers) – because this non-whiteness can never be transformed into our whiteness – it was argued by white ‘city fathers’ that the Chinese should be excluded from land ownership.

Furthermore, these discourses construct the non-white Chinese as the threat – as the aggressor against whiteness. For it is the Chinese and their lower standard of living that will hurt white business. It is the Chinese practice of “bleeding the lands held to the last remnant of productive power” (Okanagan Commoner June 23, 1921:2) that will harm white Canadian lands. It is the Chinese which are the threat – threatening both the economic well-being and the future of land for white Armstrong. In positioning the Chinese as the aggressor – which in turn, requires swift and decisive action by the bureaucracy to protect its citizenry – Armstrong City Council and the Armstrong Board of Trade were able to pass legislation against Chinese ownership of land.

What is perhaps most startling about the discourse surrounding the Chinese is how quickly and quietly whiteness became equated with Canadianness and citizenship. Within the discourse of the Armstrong City Council resolution, the parties are simply referred to as “Orientals” and “the rest of our Canadian population.” Similarly, the parties within the resolution of the Board of Trade are referred to as “Chinese/Oriental” and “citizens of
Armstrong.” Yet at the very basis of these arguments is racial rhetoric – the construction of white and non-white. However, in the process of labelling, whiteness is equated with “Canadian” and “citizen” of Armstrong – thus, whiteness is placed in a position of dominance within Canadian and Armstrong society. As such, citizenship, and the rights, responsibilities, and privileges that come with it, aren’t based solely on residence within a country or a community – in this case, citizenship is also constructed along a colour line, where whiteness (and perhaps the ability to pass as white, which is indicated by the assessment of assimilation noted within the City Council legislation) is a criterion for citizenship. In such a way, the Chinese could be prevented from land ownership (a right guaranteed by provincial legislation for settlers) because they were not “citizens.”

In the case of land use, it is clear that white settler society made use of conceptions of whiteness and non-whiteness to protect their interests in the lands of the Spallumcheen Valley. By racially separating themselves from the Indians and the Chinese, and constructing both groups as inferior and threatening to the white population and its settlement goals, Armstrong’s white citizenry was able to establish itself as the gatekeepers and guardians of the community. Such discursive constructions of white and non-white, in turn, provided the legitimation for very real legal sanctions – specifically the dispossessing of land and the prohibition of non-white land ownership. However, land use was only one area of the land issue that needed to be regulated – equally important to achieving and maintaining white-dominant settlement was the regulation of immigration.
Landless Men- Whiteness and the Regulation of Immigration

An integral part of the colonial project and the settlement of British Columbia was the movement of settlers into the province. Canada – as a vast country with acres of “free” land and myriad natural resources – was seen as the land of opportunity. It was a chance for many to make a fresh start in a new world. Armstrong was very much a product of this “dream.”

A.L. Fortune and the other white settlers present at the “genesis” of the community were immigrants to Canada who just happened to stumble into the Spallumcheen Valley and decide to make their homes there. Yet, despite the fact that it was the process of immigration that had brought them to the valley, Armstrong settlers would soon see immigration as an issue of concern for the community. For while it was necessary to populate the area for the “advancement of civilization,” it was equally necessary to regulate the types of immigrants coming into the community. As this section shall make clear, this regulation of immigration – and thus, the access to land – was influenced and shaped by dominant conceptions of whiteness and non-whiteness.

In the previous section, it was demonstrated how Armstrong City Council and the Board of Trade went about regulating Chinese land use. Yet, this was only one part of the approach to dealing with the “Chinese Problem.” To ensure a ‘white’ Armstrong, it was equally necessary to stem the flow of Chinese immigration into the area. In terms of land use, the Chinese were constructed as non-white, and as such, lacking in the rights of citizenship. In this light, the Chinese could be barred from possessing land. In addition, the Chinese were constructed as a threat to white settlement – a parasite that needed to be removed from Armstrong before its “citizens” were affected. It is these same arguments- arguments made
throughout the early decades of Armstrong’s history – which were employed to regulate Chinese immigration to the area.

From the turn of the century, Chinese immigration was perceived as a serious problem. A 1904 edition of the Armstrong Advertiser carried a lead story entitled, “Chinese En Route – Over One Hundred Came to Canada Yesterday” (April 24, 1904:1). According to the article,

Just as Canada in general and British Columbia in particular were beginning to indulge in self-congratulation that the augmentation of the capitation tax on Chinese immigrants has effectually solved this great industrial problem which has long perplexed this province, news is received which bursts the alluring bubble... The R.M.S. Empress of China is due tomorrow evening from Hongkong [sic] and Yokohama... There are according to the steamship company’s advices, no fewer than 112 bequed passengers in the white liner’s steerage, each and all of whom fall within the definition of the objectionable class against which the so-called excessive poll tax is directed (Armstrong Advertiser April 21, 1904:1).

While an explanation for the sudden spurt of Chinese immigration is difficult to uncover, it is believed that “the Chinese have come to the conclusion that it is better to pay the price than forgo the pleasure of earning Canadian money in unequal competition with Canadian workingmen” (Armstrong Advertiser April 21, 1904:1). In closing, the newspaper laments

The one unwelcome fact remains that the Empress of China brings 112 Chinese, each of whom has already deposited his $500 for the right to enter and make his home in the Canadian Dominion (Armstrong Advertiser April 21, 1904:1).

While the exact threat posed by the Chinese was not outlined in the 1904 article, the problem was explicitly detailed in a 1914 report on the meeting of the Armstrong Farmers’ Institute. Importantly, whereas the 1904 argument presented the threat at a provincial level, the report of the Institute brought the threat much closer to home. According to the report, 

Whereas a few years ago there were only some half dozen resident Chinamen in Armstrong, last year there were over 250. This so-called cheaper labour was erroneous as wages ranged from $40 per month to as high as $3 per day and even more in extreme cases. The danger lay, not so much, in the number of Orientals as in their gaining control of the farm lands. Rents had risen for best bottom lands from $30 per acre to $60 per acre. The Chinese had also
purchased considerable lands here (Armstrong Advertiser February 26, 1914: 1).

Furthermore,

There was also a grave danger of unfairness of competition through practically slave labour among them and also because they are content to live in a condition such as even the poorest of whites would not be satisfied with, or as Mr. Patten put it, “we should have to reduce our standard of living to a rice and chopstick basis and heard [sic] together like swine in a pen.” Under these conditions the Chinamen can undersell us in the open markets, They are here to make money, not to share our ideals. They break our laws, especially those relating to Sabbath observances (Armstrong Advertiser February 26, 1914:1).

Within the discourse of the Institute, the Chinese are explicitly excluded from whiteness and positioned in direct opposition to white Armstrong. Within the discussion of the living conditions, it is made clear that the Chinese are “not white,” as they live in conditions within which even the poorest of whites would not be satisfied. It is not so much the difference in living conditions that mark their exclusion from whiteness, as it is the comparison between “us” and “them”. For within the statement, “they are content to live in a condition such as even the poorest whites would not be satisfied,” the Chinese were not only compared to poor whites, but to all whites. By implication, no whites would be willing to live in such conditions. References to poor whites makes explicit the point that even the most extreme case of disadvantaged whites would not degrade themselves further by existing within the living conditions of the Chinese. In such a way, the Chinese are clearly separate from white Armstrong.

In addition, the Chinese are constructed as posing a threat to Armstrong and its white citizens. The article makes clear that the lower standard of living and the willingness to employ “slave labour” allows the Chinese to undercut white prices. In essence, the Chinese

12 The mention of the Chinese breaking “our laws, especially those relating to Sabbath observances” is particularly poignant, as in the case of Armstrong, Christianity emerged as an important criterion for separating white from non-white, as well as good whites from problematic whites. An in-depth discussion of Christianity and whiteness will be undertaken in Chapter Four.
pose not only a threat to white economic wealth, but to white power – if the Chinese are able to take control of farming in Armstrong, the white citizenry will be removed from its position of power in terms of agriculture and land use. By constructing the Chinese in such a fashion, by making clear that it is really the Chinese who pose the threat, the bureaucratic structures of Armstrong (also controlled by whites) can “justly” take action to ban Chinese land use and immigration into the community.

Yet while municipal legislation may have been one way to stem the flow of Chinese (and non-white) immigration into Armstrong, author Rudyard Kipling posed another option, one actively taken up by the community. According to Kipling, the remedy for the Asiatic problem was “to pour in immigrants” from the mother country: men and women of our own race and blood, thus preserving Canada as a white man’s country” (Armstrong Advertiser November 1, 1907:2). As a means of obtaining the settlers needed for the colonial project, as well as contending with the threat posed by Asiatic labour, white Armstrong launched an aggressive campaign to obtain their ideal immigrants. Making clear who was included within the white racial category deemed desirable, Armstrong continued to regulate immigration to the community.

Within the public discourse of Armstrong, the ideal type of immigrant was constructed. At the most basic level, the ideal immigrant was a member of the white race. Citing a speech by the Canadian National Railway president to the citizens of Armstrong, for example, the Armstrong Advertiser reported that “our prospective settlers should be of the white race, because we want no colour problem here” (August 13, 1925:1). But who exactly, according to the discourse, was the “white race”? 
To begin with, certain countries and nationalities were indicated as being included as white. England\textsuperscript{13}, Scotland, and Ireland\textsuperscript{14} were quickly identified as nations who could supply these ideal white immigrants. Starting with Kipling’s assertion that it was essential to bring in immigrants from “the mother country” (England), it was made clear the immigrants from these nations were welcome in Armstrong. In relation to the Kipling quote, the Advertiser asserted that

\textsuperscript{13}For an excellent discussion of the historic privileging of English whites, see Jones 2001.

\textsuperscript{14}It is somewhat ironic that the Irish are included within the category of “white”, as the Irish have been, on occasion, excluded from whiteness. As discussed in my literature review in Chapter Two, while once welcome immigrants to the U.S., the influx of Irish settlers during the 1840s resulted in a change of discourse which questioned their poor stock and challenged their inclusion in the white race (Jacobson 1998: 48-49). However, by the 1920s, the Irish were firmly back in the white race, the problem of their questionable stock superseded by the ‘negro’ problem in the US (Jacobson 1998).
Great Britain is the most successful colonizers of all nations. English, Irish and Scotch have for centuries opened up new countries and have literally hewed their way through every difficulty and commenced the foundation of the grandest heritage ever known on earth. Does it not follow that what these pioneers have begun can be successfully continued and finished by others of the same kith and kin? (Armstrong Advertiser November 1, 1907: 2).

Furthermore, it is immigrants from these countries that were celebrated within the press. In extended newspaper columns, immigrants from Dorset-Blandford (Armstrong Advertiser April 23, 1925:1) and Devonshire (Armstrong Advertiser April 1, 1926), communities in England, were introduced and given a hearty welcome to the community. Similarly, Scottish immigrants were celebrated in a short article, which included two pictures of these “sturdy” and “excellent type” of settlers (Figure 3.3). These photos, showing light-skinned individuals, make clear that these immigrants are members of the “white race.” Importantly, it is towards members of these nations that immigration schemes for the area were explicitly aimed (Armstrong Advertiser October 25, 1907:2; January 24, 1924:2; March 19, 1925:1).

Other nationalities that bore consideration for membership in the white race were Scandinavians and Poles. Emphasizing their ability to assimilate, “Polish Flappers” were celebrated for “at once adopt[ing] Canadian styles” (Armstrong Advertiser May 6, 1926:3), and the newspaper ran a short article celebrating the arrival of such settlers in Canada. Within the same article, Scandinavians – Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes – were celebrated as being the “best agricultural type” (Armstrong Advertiser May 6, 1926:2). In regard to the mass

15 I find the use of the term ‘flapper’ in the title of this piece interesting. The Canadian Oxford Dictionary defines a flapper as “a fashionable and unconventional young woman of the 1920s” (1998:527). The etymology of the word corroborates this usage – its root flap, sixteenth century origin, refers to “a young woman with loose character” (Harper 2001: www.etymonline.com). Well I cannot be sure of the intended meaning of this statement, the attaching of the Poles to the term flapper seems to signify their status as “marginal” whites. Morality, as shall be demonstrated in Chapter Four, emerged as an important criterion for establishing good whites from bad whites. Thus, to connect the Poles to the loose morality of the term ‘flapper’ is to imply that their status as whites is questionable. Indeed, as Jacobson makes clear, the whiteness of the Polish has been called into question at various times in the history of American society (1998:68).
influx of immigrants of this type into the country, the newspaper commented about “the outstanding feature...therewith is the vastly superior type which is coming to this country” (Armstrong Advertiser May 6, 1926:2). Along with the article were two pictures (figure 3.4), which the newspaper claimed “speaks for itself as to the standard of the settler.” As with the Scottish settlers featured in figure 3.3, the photograph makes clear the whiteness of these immigrants.

Figure 3.4- The “Assimilable” Poles (Armstrong Advertiser May 6, 1926:3)

The connection of specific nationalities to whiteness is quite interesting. Within the community immigration discourse, both the Polish and Irish are counted as white. Both,

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16 I find the use of the term ‘flapper’ in the title of this piece interesting. The Canadian Oxford Dictionary defines a flapper as “a fashionable and unconventional young woman of the 1920s” (1998:527). The etymology of the word corroborates this usage – its root *flap*, sixteenth century origin, refers to “a young woman with loose character” (Harper 2001: www.etymonline.com). Well I cannot be sure of the intended meaning of this statement, the attaching of the Poles to the term flapper seems to signify their status as “marginal” whites. Morality, as shall be demonstrated in Chapter Four, emerged as an important criterion for establishing good whites from bad whites. Thus, to connect the Poles to the loose morality of the term ‘flapper’ is to imply the problematic status of the Poles within the white race. Indeed, as Jacobson makes clear,
however, have also been excluded from whiteness. As Jacobson demonstrates, the massive influx of Irish immigrants to the United States during the Potato Famine resulted in an interpretation of whiteness that excluded the Irish (1998:7). However, by the 1920s, with a new racial alchemy generated by African-American migrations to the North and West, whiteness was reconsolidated to include the Irish (Jacobson 1998:8). Similarly, in the beginning years of the twentieth century, Americans challenged the whiteness of Poles. Producing a sort of whiteness scale, it was argued by the Senate Commission on Immigration in 1911 that “Poles are “darker than the Lithuanians” and “lighter than the average Russian” (in Jacobson 1998:69 & 79). Along with Greeks and Italians, the Poles were considered “ethnic” (Jacobson 1998:68).

Yet while neither Greeks nor Italians are included within the whiteness of Armstrong’s immigration discourse, the Poles and Irish are explicitly included. Perhaps by the 1920s, like their American counterparts, white Armstrong readily accepted the Irish and Polish as white. Or perhaps Armstrong’s status as a white colonial settlement created issues which overshadowed internal fracturings of whiteness. Colonial settlement, in the first instance, put white settlers in conflict with clearly non-white Indians. With the added conflict created by the immigration of the non-white Chinese into Armstrong, perhaps, like their American counterparts, the new racial alchemy, which put whites in direct conflict with those whose dark skin colour and non-European cultural traditions clearly made them not white, resulted in a reconsolidation of whiteness, which included the incorporation of “provisional” whites like the Irish and Poles (Jacobson 1998:7). Perhaps the precarious nature of white

\[17\] In fact, both Greeks and Italians are absent from the discourse of the community. This silence implies a sort of ambivalence on the part of white Armstrong on the status of these two groups as white. Jacobson (1998) has outlined that both the Greeks and Italians have been excluded from whiteness in the United States. In Canada, Iacovetta, Perin, & Principe (2000) have addressed the precarious status of Italians in Canada.
settler society – being surrounded by literally hundreds of non-whites, who at any moment could challenge white authority – and the need to maintain white dominance in Canada encouraged the inclusion of provisional whites, such as the Irish and Polish, which would increase the size of the white racial pool from which settler society could draw from to boost its own numbers, and thus safeguard their society. Importantly, many of the early settlers in the Spallumcheen Valley were Irish. The 1901 Census of Canada lists the racial origins of several of the founding families – including the O'Keefes, Greenhows, Coughlans, and Hardings – as Irish. Catherine Schubert was born and raised in Ireland (Merritt 1995:37). Thus, to question the whiteness of the Irish, or to exclude them from immigration, would call into question the status of many of the founding families of the community.

Yet, even members of one of these ‘white nations’ could be excluded from the desirable immigrant category. For example, white agriculturalists were the preferred class of immigrant, as “the country has been crying out loudly for farmers” (Armstrong Advertiser August 16, 1907:2). In an immigration scheme presented in the Armstrong Advertiser, the four classes of immigrants being sought included:

1. Young men inexperienced in farm work, wishing to learn practical farm work and horticulture.
2. Experienced farm hands, unmarried.
3. Experienced farm hands, married (with families or otherwise) whose wives are willing to take service with their husbands.
4. Women domestics (October 25, 1907:2).

Furthermore, criminal behaviour most certainly excluded one from the desirable white immigrant category. In an editorial note in the Armstrong Advertiser, the community was cautioned about the criminal, and it was made clear that such people were “undesirable” and that they would “get all that is coming to him” (February 4, 1902). Furthermore, in a 1906

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18 The national emphasis on obtaining white, English agriculturalists is also noted in Parr 1990:18.
column, it was expressed that “what Canada has to guard against more than anything, is allowing a class of criminals to enter the country” (*Armstrong Advertiser* May 4, 1906:2).

Interestingly, both the call for agriculturalists and exclusion of criminals emphasizes masculinity. The first three definitions of desirable agricultural immigrants explicitly target men, while the discussion of criminality only mentions men (notice the “get all that is coming to him” comment above). Women appear only within the context of being married to the ideal male immigrant or their proclivity towards performing tasks within the realm of the home (female domestics). These constructions of the ideal agricultural immigrant deny women a subject position of their own, regarding them only within the context of their relationships with men. Furthermore, these constructions serve to reaffirm that a woman’s place is in the home. For even if they chose to work, the ideal female worker will remain in the home as a domestic. These definitions of the ideal white immigrant, as such, emphasize the dominance of men and reaffirm the subordination of white womanhood.

Furthermore, these constructions emphasize heterosexual marriage. Marriage is an important defining element of two of the four points. The reference to the term ‘wife’ in point three, clearly establishes marriage as heterosexual. While there is no discussion of homosexuality, its absence, in conjunction with the explicit emphasis on marriage and heterosexuality, makes it clear that the ideal white agricultural immigrant is also heterosexual.

While it may be clear how defining those undesirable as an immigrant is a means of regulating immigration, it is equally important to understand how the defining of who is desirable – in this case, who is included within the bounds of whiteness – is also an act of regulation. Making clear who is included within desirable immigration, like defining the
undesirable, establishes criteria – guidelines and rules – for immigration into the community. In the case of the public discourse of Armstrong, the criteria for immigration were established along racial lines. In this case, whiteness is constructed as desirable, and non-white (or yellow, in this case) is constructed as undesirable, through constructions that demonstrate the superior qualities of the white race and the threat posed by non-white immigration. In such a way, white Armstrong made a tangible case against undesirable non-white, immigration, which in turn, enabled the community to take very real action to discourage such immigration (such as the resolutions to prevent Chinese land ownership or support for Chinese exclusion).

Conclusion

Perhaps the overriding theme within the discourse surrounding land and land use is the construction and maintenance of white power. Within the discourse of the Overlanders, dominant, white-produced constructions of whiteness and its superior nature (which effectively erased the Indians from the colony’s landscape by proving their inferiority, and as such, legally defaulted their claims to land ownership) provided the basis for the arrival of white settlers in a “manless land” where they were free to pre-empt and establish a white settler community. To protect this new community and the dominance of whiteness within it, the settlers relied on these same constructions of superior whiteness and inferior non-whiteness to control access to land. In this case, such constructions were deployed to regulate both land use (particularly by the Indians and Chinese) and immigration into the community. To frame it within the vocabulary of Foucault (1990), whiteness became a deployment of power for white settlers within Armstrong – it became a tool, constructed and maintained by
themselves, and for their own benefit. Constructions of whiteness became the means through which white settler society was able to obtain ownership of the lands of the Spallumcheen Valley, and through which they were able to maintain their control over these lands.
Chapter IV

“Good White Folk”:
Whiteness and the Moral Realm

On March 18, 1893, the Spallumcheen Municipal Council signed into law their fifth by-law. Titled “A By-Law for preventing offences against Public Morals; and to regulate driving and riding on Highways and Public Bridges,” the by-law enacted

That no person shall utter or make use of any profane, swearing, obscene, blasphemous or grossly insulting language, or be guilty of any other immorality, or indecency, in any street, highway, public building, or other place within the said municipality (Minutes of the Spallumcheen Municipal Council March 18, 1893:39).

For a council that had only ever passed by-laws relating to land and taxation, this by-law protecting the morality of the community was new territory. Nonetheless, Council felt it was necessary to take a stand on the issue of public morals and ensure that the moral fibre of the community was protected.¹

However, this was only the beginning – the issue of public morality, in fact, would become a central issue for Armstrong’s white citizenry. Throughout the public discourse produced between 1890 and 1930, issues relating to morality – such as religion, temperance, and crime – would appear on a regular basis. Concerns over the moral fibre of the community were expressed in relation to such issues as alcohol and drug use, the sexuality of

¹ While Council records revealed further discussion of moral issues, such as drunkenness (January 18, 1904; December 14, 1907), gambling (August 25, 1906), and a curfew for the town’s youth (November 30, 1912) to name a few, there is no record of anyone being charged/fined/jailed in relation to By-Law Five. Furthermore, there was no mention within the nearly thirty years of newspaper (1902-1930) I covered for this study of anyone being charged in relation to the by-law. Though local court records may have proven otherwise, these records were not readily available for this study. In fact, neither the Armstrong Museum nor the Armstrong or Spallumcheen Councils knew where the records of the community’s magistrates were stored. I contacted the court house in nearby Vernon, B.C. (which served as the central provincial court house for the North Okanagan Regional District) and they also had no information pertaining to such records. Finally, I performed searches of the holdings of both the British Columbia Provincial Archives and the National Archives of Canada for court records pertaining to Armstrong, and neither had such records in their possession. Thus, while court records would have been extremely beneficial to this analysis of morality, their status as ‘missing’ precluded their presence in this study.
young white girls, and the moral training of white children. A variety of experts – more times than not, members of Christian organizations – came forth to offer the means and actions necessary to protect the morality of the community. For many, morality became a *cause célèbre*.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the relationship between whiteness and morality as constructed in the public discourse of the community of Armstrong. Through the analysis of discourses surrounding such issues as religion, sexuality, education, alcohol consumption, and the family, this chapter will demonstrate how issues of morality came to separate white from non-white and reaffirm the dominate position of whiteness in the community. Furthermore, this chapter will demonstrate how these same discourses delineated appropriate and inappropriate morality within whiteness itself. Indeed, the policing and regulating of white morality became an important means of maintaining the boundaries between white and non-white populations in Armstrong, as well as maintaining white dominance in the community. As this chapter will demonstrate, many white residents of Armstrong believed, in fact, that the survival of their white settler society depended heavily on moral regulation and reform.

"God Bless Us Everyone"- Whiteness and the Church

Within sociology, there seems to be very little consensus about the role of religion in society. Karl Marx, for example, referred to religion as "the opium of the people"—a veil employed as a means of distracting human beings from their very real suffering within capitalist society (1978 [1844]:54). In contradistinction, Emile Durkheim saw religion as an essential element of social cohesion, as "the individuals which compose [a religion] feel
themselves united to each other by the simple fact that they have a common faith” (1997 [1912]:234). Finally, in a rejection of Marxian materialism, Max Weber (2002 [1904-05]) saw religion as the basis for capitalist development – that the Protestant belief in the moral value of hard work (which served as proof of salvation) was the real driving force behind the capitalist economy. Nonetheless, while there is a lack of consensus about the role of religion in society, it seems clear that sociologists have seen religion as an important social institution worthy of their critical assessment.

In the case of Armstrong, it can be argued that religion was a central element of white society. As an anecdote in the Armstrong Advertiser regaled:

“Armstrong is quite a church-going town,” remarks a newcomer. The fact was demonstrated, we are told, last Sunday morning when the services of worship in the Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches concluded within a few minutes of each other, and the three congregations made a united stream. By a little analysis, it may be stated there were three hundred people on the sidewalks or in vehicles homeward bound. Three hundred is an average attendance in these three churches on a Sunday morning (March 29, 1923:2)

The Baptist Church’s Sunday evening services added another 175 people, and the five churches serving rural Spallumcheen each added 80 people to the overall community total for regular church attendance (Armstrong Advertiser March 29, 1923). Thus, according to the Advertiser, 875 of the citizens of Armstrong-Spallumcheen attended church on a regular basis in 1923 – and this did not include the services of the Seventh Day Adventist or Roman Catholic churches, who did not report attendance numbers (Armstrong Advertiser March 29, 1923:2). With a combined population of around 1500 (as enumerated in the 1921 Canadian Census²), regular church attendance in Armstrong-Spallumcheen was a reality for over fifty percent of the community’s population.

² Population values of Armstrong and Spallumcheen for the 1921 Canadian Census are available from the government of British Columbia. The document, entitled “British Columbia Municipal Census Population, 1912-1971” is available online at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca. Census data for 1921 is also available as part of the
Numeric Data Collection at UBC’s Koerner Library. However, this is solely a numeric file, and without access to the accompanying codebook and/or without knowledge of working with numeric data, it is unusable. It is equally difficult to locate historic data on the Statistics Canada website (www.statcan.ca). Thus, the British Columbia Statistics website of the BC Provincial government is extremely useful for finding both historical and current data about the province of British Columbia.
The public discourse of the community is replete with reference to the church, clearly demonstrating its importance in the community. Nearly every issue of the *Armstrong Advertiser* included a section entitled “Official Directory”, which listed the churches, the dates and times of their services, and the names of the white males who lead each congregation (figure 4.1 and 4.2). The community newspapers reported on all the latest church news, such as special presentations to religious leaders (*Armstrong Advertiser* February 19, 1910:4) or church celebrations, such as picnics (*Armstrong Advertiser* August 20, 1925:1) or confirmations (including complete lists of candidates accepted into the church) (*Armstrong Advertiser* March 13, 1909: Supplement). Finally, in celebration of Christmas, the newspapers would run a religious “greeting card” of sorts for their readers (figure 4.3)

![Christmas Card](image)

*Figure 4.3 - The Christmas "Card" (Armstrong Advertiser December 19, 1929:1)*
The implication of this emphasis on religion in the public discourse is the linking of whiteness to Christianity. It becomes clear that to be a good white member of Armstrong society, one needed to be Christian. As there appears to be no hierarchical ordering of the community churches within the public discourse, it would seem that the emphasis, as such, was not on denomination, but simply on being a member of a Christian faith. This uniting of Christian faiths is important because I argue that this public affirmation of white Christianity in its totality was critical to establishing boundaries between white and non-white in Armstrong-Spallumcheen. As touched on in Chapter Three, Christian faith played an important role in the declaration of *terra nullius* and dispossessing the First Nations of their land. One of the criteria for deeming land ‘empty’ was religious affiliation – the non-Christian status of the First Nations people was considered evidence of lack of satisfactory human evolution, and thus, forfeiture of their rights to own Canadian lands (Razack 2002:3; Harris 2002:xxi). Christianity, in this case, played an important role in constructing boundaries between white and Indian.

In Armstrong, I argue that the construction of racial boundaries was central to the emphasis on white Christianity. In a young white settler society, buttressed against Indian reserves and inundated with Chinese male migrants – non-white populations who could possibly challenge white dominance in the community – racialized boundaries became an important means to contend with threats to white power. As Kim Greenwell argues, “[a]lthough frequently ruptured and blurred in colonial contexts, dichotomous constructions...were, nonetheless, rhetorically and visually indispensable as imperial indexes dividing the ruling from the ruled...” (2002:6). The embrace of Christianity in the public discourse of Armstrong served to link whiteness to the Christian faith. Furthermore,
the lack of hierarchic ordering of specific denominations in favour of a broad definition of
Christian faith served as a means of uniting the variety of Christians under a single “Christian
front.” This provided white Armstrong with a large, unified Christian identity which, in turn,
facilitated a clearly constructed demarcation between white and non-white Armstrong on the
basis of religion. Christianity in Armstrong, as such, became an important boundary between
white and non-white – an index for dividing the ruling from the ruled.

This link between Christianity and whiteness is intensified when we examine the
discourse surrounding non-white populations and religion. In the case of the Chinese, it has
been clearly established that they are not “us,” and thus, not “white.” This, for example, is
made expressly clear in the pre-amble to the anti-Chinese Land Ownership resolution (see
Appendix):

WHEREAS the wide difference between those Orientals and the rest of
our Canadian population in language, tradition and customs of life make
difficult, if not impossible, the appreciation by the Oriental of our social,
political, and national ideals and the assimilation of the Oriental into our
national body (Minutes of the Armstrong City Council November 19, 1913:1)

Within the discourse surrounding religion, this separation is increased. Whether or not there
were actually any Chinese who identified as ‘Christian’, their perceived lack of Christian
faith became fodder for anti-Chinese sentiment. When discussing the “Chinese Question,”
for example, Rev. W. Stott of Armstrong’s United Church claimed that the Chinese were
“showing [themselves as] more and more anti-Christian” (Armstrong Advertiser August 20,
1925:1). Furthermore, the Chinese were consistently referred to as “heathen” (see, for
example, Armstrong Advertiser December 11, 1913:4). The very fact that the Chinese were
labelled “heathen” separates them from white Christianity— for the term “heathen” quite
literally refers to “a person who does not belong to a widely held religion, as regarded by
those who do” (Barber 1998:651). By labelling the Chinese as “heathen,” white Christians separated themselves from the non-white Chinese by creating a religious “other.”

However, it was the First Nations people who would receive the most attention from white Christian Armstrong. The First Nations were quite clearly non-Christian – after all, the conversion of the heathen Indians to Christianity had long been a part of the colonial project in Canada. Indeed, it was the First Nation’s lack of Christian faith that colonists argued precluded them from legal land ownership which, in turn, allowed the colonists to declare Canadian lands empty (*terra nullius*) and claim them for themselves. Yet, unlike the Chinese who were viewed as “inassimilable,” “most missionaries considered that Natives were children of God who, like [almost] anyone else, could enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Harris 2002:5). In fact, many Christians viewed Indian conversion as their duty – as their contribution to bring the Indians into civilization (see, for example, Harris 2002:8-9). In fact, Kim Greenwell (2002) argues that missionaries worked hard to construct “savable savages.” However, as she points out, “[c]onstructed as savable savages, Aboriginal peoples were *civilizable*, but this very status, conferred upon them by those who were *always already civilized*, denied the possibility of ever concluding the process” (2002:20; emphasis in original). As such, despite Christian reform, the First Nations would always be excluded from white Christianness.

In Armstrong, many Christians, both men and women, took up this “duty” to the Indians. For example, in a 1912 article, entitled “The Indians and Civilization – What the White Man Has and Has Not Done for Him,” it is argued

That we Canadians are a great good Christian and just people there can be no doubt. We ourselves are prepared to admit it. But we have a penchant for leaving things unfinished. We trust a great deal in the Lord Almighty. Which is all very well. But we don’t do our part as well as we should, with the result that we have many things well started but poorly finished. One of these things is our Indian
policy...Away [sic] back somewhere about 50 or 100 years ago the happy thought was evolved to select the choicest parcels of land in British Columbia, and up on this land to put the Indians...This was all very good of us. The Indian was running wild...We confined him [sic]. We corralled him. We put him into smaller quarters to tame him. It was the first step to his uplift— his civilizing. It was the first step. It was also the last step. We haven’t stepped any higher in the civilizing business...We shoved him off into paradise when he was only acquainted with the other place— The open church, the open school...all was a myth. No doubt the intent and purpose of the law were most commendable. But we didn’t finish the job... (Armstrong Advertiser December 5, 1912:1).

Despite this complaint, the local churches regularly celebrated their efforts in converting the First Nations. In 1904, the Armstrong Methodist Church brought a well known Methodist missionary, Rev. Thomas Crosby, to speak to their congregation. In their report to the Armstrong Advertiser, the church celebrated Rev. Crosby, as he “has done more than any other white man in this province to bring the Indian work and its needs to the attention of the churches” (January 28, 1904:1). Similarly, His Lordship Bishop Dart of the St. James Catholic Church, “paid a high tribute to the work of the Ladies Auxiliary and showed how their selfdenying [sic] labours had aided the Church in her many spheres of work”— one of which was “the Indian children in our church schools” (Armstrong Advertiser March 13, 1909: Supplement).

While the discourse around the First Nations, like that surrounding the Chinese, constructs a racial divide out of religion, this discourse is particularly troubling because of the construction of power relations between the First Nations and white Christians. By constructing themselves as ‘civilized’, and thus with the potential to ‘civilize others’, white Christianity is posited a dominant position in relation to the objects of their civilizing projects — in this case, the First Nations. By constructing the First Nations as “savable savages” (Greenwell 2002), white Christians assert their relational superiority to the uncivilized, non-

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3 An excellent critical discussion of the civilizing work of Thomas Crosby is included in Kim Greenwell’s article, “Picturing “Civilization”: Mission Narratives and the Margins of Mimicry” (2002).
Christian First Nations, and thus legitimate their dominance in Armstrong society. Implicit in this relationship, however, is a safeguard to prevent a blurring of the line between white Christian and First Nations convert. As Greenwell makes clear, the First Nations are permanently excluded from Christian whiteness because they needed to be converted by those who were always already Christian (2002:20). As such, the status of “convert” permanently excludes the Indian from whiteness, and thus from the position of dominance accorded by membership in the white race.

Equally important within this discourse is the conflation of whiteness with Canadianness. In the article “The Indians and Civilization – What the White Man Has and Has Not Done for Him” (December 15, 1912:1), the Armstrong Advertiser explicitly refers to whites as Canadian. Indeed, the article doesn’t even employ the term ‘white’, but uses Canadian in its place. In this manner, whiteness is inextricably linked to Canadianness. This connection is further intensified by the explicit use of the term ‘Indians’ to refer to the First Nations, which blatantly excludes them from being ‘Canadian’. In this discourse, Canadian replaces white, and as such, the Canadian identity is explicitly racialized as white. As an act of nation-building, the conflation of whiteness with Canadianness clearly establishes the Canadian national identity as being a white racial identity. Such a construction argues that whites are the only true Canadians, and as such, legitimates their dominance in Canadian – and in this case, Armstrong – society.

Though I have discussed Christian missionary work solely in relation to the First Nations, this is not intended to suggest that white Christians reserved their reform work solely for aboriginal populations. In fact, white Armstrong also fell under the gaze of Christian reform. Since Christianity was an important racial divide between white and non-
white, it was essential to ‘police’ the divide and ensure that white citizens remained on the appropriate side of the racial boundary, as to avoid any blurring of the line between white and non-white.

This process began by asserting the importance of Christianity in the development of moral white citizens. For example, in an advertisement for a boarding school, it was asserted that their program was offered in “combination with a Christian home life that makes for cultured and strong womanhood” (Armstrong Advertiser July 24, 1902:2). When concerned about the shady practices of business, the editor of the Okanagan Advertiser wrote, “we need business men and neighbours – which we are – to be practical Christians. We must not be like the boy’s father who was a Christian but was not working at it” (July 27, 1911:6). This statement made clear that, although being a Christian was important, it was equally important to be a practicing Christian. Bridal couples were told, “[r]emember that it matters little what “people think” provided you are true to God…” (Armstrong Advertiser July 24, 1902:3). Finally, in the case of children, a Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) article stated, “…we have taught our boys and girls that the very essence of happiness is honesty, sincerity and truthfulness to trust in God” (Armstrong Advertiser June 25, 1914:2). Such discourse made clear the important role that Christianity played in creating strong, moral, white citizens.

The second step toward ensuring white Christian morality was the demonstration within the public discourse of the actions appropriate to good Christians. Such statements went beyond influencing beliefs, and worked towards coercing particular actions from the citizenry. The above statement by the WCTU, for example, concludes by saying, “that to be really happy [boys and girls] must live good, clean, temperate, upright and pure lives”
(Armstrong Advertiser June 25, 1914:2). In an anecdote from 1905, Armstrong’s “boys” were told that tri-daily church services were absolutely necessary to ensure a strong moral character (Armstrong Advertiser August 10, 1905:1). In the same year, the newspaper reported that there would be an extra Sunday in 1905, and that “this extra Sunday can be utilized in attending church” (Armstrong Advance and Spallumcheen Advocate November 10, 1905:3). Finally, the editor of the Armstrong Advertiser chastised men who did not make contributions to the church, arguing that “we have never heard of a man going bankrupt on account of his church contributions” (October 10, 1929:2). Through this discourse, white Christians were able to label, as well as perhaps influence or coerce, appropriate behaviour for/from Armstrong’s white Christians.

Quite literally, white Armstrong’s belief in God answered many of their prayers. Christianity served as a means of clearly delimiting white from non-white, an important boundary for a young white settler society trying to survive in the face of perceived non-white ‘threats’ posed by the First Nations and Chinese. Furthermore, particularly in the case of the First Nations, Christianity proved useful in establishing white racial dominance over non-Christian Indians. However, to maintain Christianity as a racial divide, it was important to police it and ensure that whites remained on the appropriate ‘Christian’ side of the divide. For Armstrong, as such, Christianity emerged as an important factor in legitimating and maintaining white dominance in the community.

**Good Little Boys and Girls – A Case Study in Gendered Moral Reform**

In addition to the Christian-based movement to ensure the strong Christian fibre of Armstrong, there was strong community concern pertaining to the morality of white children.
Although both girls and boys were subject to the moral reform gaze of community members, the focus of such reform concerns were distinctly gendered. As an advertisement discussing British Columbia’s progress made clear, “The Boy of today is the Man of to-morrow...The Girl, the future Mother of our citizens” (Armstrong Advertiser July 26, 1928). As suggested by this quote, while moral concerns about white girls centered on sexuality and training for wifedom and motherhood, the moral concerns about white boys surrounded issues pertaining to education and moral training that would prepare them for leading the community.

Importantly, this concern over the moral well-being of girls and boys was limited solely to white racial groups. There was no discussion about the moral health of non-whites outside of the Christian conversions of the First Nations people. However, as the products of members of white Armstrong, it seems clear that the newspapers and city council documents would only make reference to the moral issues of white boys and girls. After all, it is their white settler community, I would argue, that they are trying to protect through attention to the moral fibre of the community’s white youth.

The major public outcry in terms of young white Armstrong boys surrounded formal education. As future leaders of Armstrong, if not the province and nation, white boys needed a firm education to prepare them for their roles as ‘bread winner’. In 1903, for example, shortly after the opening of the public school, a complaint was lodged in the newspaper about the small attendance (Armstrong Advertiser August 13, 1903:1). Focusing on male students, it was argued that “[b]y absenting himself during the first few days of the term a pupil places himself at a great disadvantage for the whole term” (Armstrong Advertiser August 12, 1903:1). When a night school was opened in 1909, a call was issued for all young men, “stranger or acquaintance, new arrival or old settler” (Armstrong Advertiser January 2,
1909:4). It was argued that the skills learned in night school would benefit the [male] students in their occupations – for example, “Practical geometry is useful to all people [sic], especially so to those contemplating mechanical occupations” (Armstrong Advertiser January 2, 1903:1). The school principal, E. Wilson, asserted,

> We are keenly interested in arousing the intellectual life of our youth, since we know that success in life in our century depends altogether upon intellectual development (Armstrong Advertiser January 2, 1904:4).

While Wilson’s statement refers to ‘youth’, and the term ‘people’ is used in the previous comment on geometry, the youth/people in question was clearly male, as the title of the article was “Wake Up! Young Men” and the invitation to attend the night school was explicitly extended to young men.

The major concern for white Armstrong surrounding the morality of the community’s white boys, as such, was preparing them, through formal education, for their role as social leaders. Education, it was argued, would provide these young men with the tools necessary to be good breadwinners and strong leaders for the nation. This emphasis on ‘breadwinner’ and ‘leader’ served to situate white males in a position of dominance in Armstrong society. As ‘breadwinner’ he is head of the household and family, including his wife and children. As ‘leader’, he is head of the nation and all who inhabit it. Thus, the education of white boys was an education in dominance.

In contradistinction, the moral concerns voiced about young white Armstrong girls surrounded issues of sexuality. While there is no discussion of prostitution within the newspapers or city council records, the sexuality of Armstrong’s white girls, nonetheless, received attention within the public discourse. Of the utmost importance in the discourse was

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4 This is not to suggest that there weren’t female breadwinners. For an excellent historic study of both male and female breadwinners, see Parr 1990.
the protection of female sexual purity. A 1908 article, for example, outlined for fathers that it is unacceptable to allow a young man to stay late, and that he should take action to enforce a strict curfew (Armstrong Advertiser January 31, 1908:7). In fact, it was up to the father to protect the purity of his daughters, as “the girls say they can’t tell the young men they must go at 10 o’clock and the girls’ mother doesn’t seem disposed to either” (Armstrong Advertiser January 31, 1908:7). Furthermore, when a public bath for the community was being contemplated in 1924, there was concern about protecting young girls from the sexual perils of mixed bathing (Armstrong Advertiser August 28, 1924:2). In fact, this protection of young girls was so important that council momentarily broached the issue of including a woman on their all-male Bath Committee (although there is no evidence that a woman was ever included on this committee) (Armstrong Advertiser August 28, 1924:2). Importantly, this same discussion is not undertaken in regards to males and mixed bathing.

Concerns about female sexuality were not uncommon in Canadian history. Joan Sangster’s (1996) work on Ontario’s Federal Refuges Act, which from 1920 to the late 1950s provided parents, police, and other such state departments with the legal jurisdiction to use incarceration as a means to regulate the sexual and moral behaviour of women perceived to be “out of sexual control,” (p.224), and Carolyn Strange’s (1995) work on single, wage-earning women in Toronto during the time period 1880-1930, demonstrate that female sexuality has come under the gaze of the state and moral reformers. Mariana Valverde’s The Age of Light. Soap and Water (1991), an examination of moral reform in English Canada between 1885 and 1925, includes a large section discussing sexual purity education for girls (and boys also) (pp.67-76). As these examples make clear, female sexuality was a concern for many in Canada.
To protect the purity of Armstrong’s white girls, it was suggested that a strong education preparing girls for marriage and motherhood was necessary. An advertisement for Toronto’s all-girl Moulton College stressed that a “girl’s education be essentially womanly – fitting her for the home” (Armstrong Advertiser July 24, 1902:2). In 1925, Miss G. L. Bollert, Dean of Women at UBC, gave a speech about the importance of education for young women (Armstrong Advertiser April 23, 1925:3). Miss Bollert “pleaded that the widest possible extension of higher education for our girls should be sought” (Armstrong Advertiser April 23, 1925:3). For the dean, however, this meant higher education in the domestic sciences:

London, Ontario [is] making a great mistake in contemplating abandonment of all high manual training and domestic science teaching...Domestic science [means] much more than sewing and baking – the homemaker should be a good reader, should know something at least of figures, of science in general. The girls need health habits, physique, grace, hygiene – sex hygiene also, which the literature now available could be taught helpfully in schools (Armstrong Advertiser April 23, 1925:3).

Thus, training young women in the appropriate roles and norms of their gender could protect the sexual purity of these white women.

The constructions surrounding female sexuality in the public discourse of Armstrong are problematic in terms of the gendered divisions implicit in their construction. In the article for fathers about young men staying late, daughters are excluded from discussions and actions pertaining to protecting their own sexuality. Within the article, the issue is tossed around between a father and his son, but does not include the daughter (Armstrong Advertiser January 31, 1908:7). In fact, the subtitle to the article’s main title, “If the Young Man Stays Late” is “What Can the Sleepy Father of the Young Woman Do About It?” (Armstrong Advertiser January 31, 1908:7). Similarly, in relation to girls and public bathing, it is an all-male committee, with perhaps the inclusion of a single adult woman, who would discuss concerns about co-educational bathing. In both cases, the sexuality of young white females is
discursively distanced from them. It is constructed as something that needs to managed by people other than themselves – specifically, men. Such a construction infantilized young white women by constructing their sexuality as something that they, themselves, were unable to protect on their own.

Furthermore, the discourse surrounding female sexuality, as argued by Joan Sangster, “proscribed women’s sexuality within the bounds of a gender order defined by hegemonic masculinity and the sanctification of the nuclear, father-headed family” (1996:264). The road to salvation for white girls was the path that led to wifedom and motherhood – roles which have been traditionally gendered female and subordinated to the ‘public’ roles of men (see, for example, Oakley 1974; Parr 1990). Thus, the means to protecting female sexuality was to ensure that women adopted their appropriate, subordinate female roles of wife and mother.

Importantly, this emphasis on marriage and motherhood also exposes a heteronormative current within the public discourse. Issues of female sexuality are broached solely in reference to men and within discussions of marriage, thus stressing the importance of heterosexuality as the main sexual identity for white Armstrong. Not only does this effectively ‘erase’ other sexual realities from the social landscape and establish heterosexuality as the only viable option for white Armstrong, but it implies that sexual relations other than heterosexuality are considered deviant to the social hetero norm. Finally, this emphasis on heterosexual relations serves to reaffirm the primacy of the male-headed nuclear family, thus placing women firmly in the male-dominated hierarchy of patriarchal heterosexuality.

Masculine control of female sexuality was important to the maintenance of patriarchal society, but sexuality was something that also needed to be controlled in order to

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5 For further discussion of the heteronormativity involved in white Armstrong society, please see Chapter Five.
maintain the purity of the white race and to prevent the blurring of racial lines. As Sangster makes clear, sexual non-conformity has often been linked to sex with non-white men (1996:257). In particular, sexual relations with non-white men that produce progeny were highly problematic, as they offered a serious challenge to the rigid racial divisions perpetuated by white society. Mixed-race individuals failed to fit into tidy dichotomies of white and non-white. As Renisa Mawani asserts, settler society “feared that miscegenation would produce a class of “undesirables” who would thwart their illusory goals of a homogenous and respectable white settler society” (2002:53). She argues that mixed race peoples confused racial hierarchies and thus straddled the divide between colonizer and colonized. Mixed-race progeny ambiguously and dangerously bridged the imperial divide by blurring the differences between Native [sic] people and whites. However, these fears were not merely symbolic or metaphorical, but deeply embedded in material concerns about land. Many whites feared that the growing class of “half breeds” in [British Columbia] would not only destabilize racial hierarchies – as mix-raced people were not always easily catalogued by race – but would also undermine European supremacy by posing real geographical implications (Mawani 2002:50).

Indeed, as Adele Perry’s (2001) work on gender and race in pre-Confederation British Columbia makes clear, the regulation of mixed-race sexual relations has been an important part of establishing white settler society in the province.

White dominance, as such, lay at the centre of discourses concerning the morality of white boys and girls in Armstrong. While the emphasis on male education prepared Armstrong’s white boys to dominate society, the emphasis on female sexuality served to reassert subordinate female roles and protect the racial boundaries established by white settler society. Through discourses of morality and white children, white Armstrong was able to lay the groundwork that would maintain and replicate their white-dominant society.
As Craig Heron (2003) demonstrates, alcohol has been a part of Canadian society since the first European ships landed on Canadian shores. It has been used to barter with Indians, it helped European settlers survive Canada’s harsh climate, and served as a form of payment for labour and military service (Heron 2003). Alcohol became entwined in
Canadian life. Yet, as early as the 1830s, people began expressing concern about alcohol consumption, and temperance advocates began to emerge in the social landscape (Heron 2003:131). As Mariana Valverde makes clear, “alcohol has been problematized for at least 150 years, not only at the level of individual consumption but also at the level of national populations” (1998:1). From regulating bars and saloons to passing federal legislation prohibiting all First Nations people in Canada access to alcohol, liquor emerged as a social issue that needed to be regulated through social means.

Of social ills, none received more attention in the public discourse of Armstrong than alcohol. In fact, it had been an issue from the very beginning of white settlement in the Spallumcheen Valley. In an article recounting some of his first experiences after settling in the area, A.L. Fortune wrote:

> Whisky and rum was brought to the Indians by smugglers...The effect of the drink on the natives was sad to contemplate. After a debauch, we could hear the cry of the murdered and the lamentations of the wounded, together with the groans of the dying...Once whiskey was obtained there was no peace or quietness till the consignment was finished...The foregoing observations did not help me form a very hopeful estimate of the Shuswap Indians, nor the Okanagan, when we were preparing to make our home among them (Okanagan Advertiser June 1, 1911:6).

However, it would not end there. In the decades following the establishment of Armstrong, members of the community would launch crusades against liquor. The local hotels that sought to sell alcohol were frequently harassed. As Campbell (2001) and Valverde (1998) make clear, this focus on bar rooms was not at all uncommon. Regulating parlours and saloons, after all, “shaped the behaviour and attitudes of those who sat and drank” (Campbell 2001:3), and as such, bar rooms emerged as an ideal target for those battling against alcohol.

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6 The federal Indian Act of 1876 denied all Aboriginal peoples in the dominion of Canada access to alcohol. Defining “Indian” as those aboriginal peoples who had signed treaties with the Crown and their direct descendants on the male line only, the Act made it an offence to sell, barter, or give alcohol to Indians. This Act was not repealed until 1951. For a discussion of the Indian Act, see Herron 2003:135 and Valverde 1998:165-167.
In 1903, for example, the Okanagan Temperance League, functioning out of the Armstrong Presbyterian Church, passed a resolution and petitioned Council to increase licensing fees for hotels, as well as to restrict and regulate the business hours of bar rooms, in the hopes of curbing the liquor trade, particularly to Indians (Armstrong Advertiser February 26, 1903:4).7

In 1913, Armstrong celebrated the new Liquor License Act, which severely curtailed hours for liquor sale, prohibited the sale of alcohol to certain “classes of persons” (including dipsomaniacs8, Indians, vagrants, and chauffeurs), and opened the saloon to public scrutiny (windows, for example, could not be obstructed in any matter that would prohibit passers-by from seeing into the bar) (Armstrong Advertiser February 27, 1913:2). Furthermore, in both 1924 and 1925, Armstrong held “beer plebiscites,” asking the community to decide whether bars could sell beer by the glass (Serra 1968: 91-92; Armstrong Advertiser February 5, 1925:2). In both cases, the community voted against the proposed sale.

The movement against alcohol, however, revolved around certain constructions of racial identities – again, with a clear division between white and non-white. Within the discourse, the First Nations (non-whites) were intrinsically linked to alcohol, but more importantly, to drunkenness. The newspapers were littered with articles about Indians brought up on charges of alcohol possession (Armstrong Advertiser October 2, 1902:4; November 5, 1903:1; Armstrong Advance and Spallumcheen Advocate February 9, 1906:2, to name a few) or pertaining to Indian crime and death while under the intoxication of alcohol (Armstrong Advance and Spallumcheen Advocate February 9, 1906:2 Armstrong Advertiser

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7 While the Indian Act of 1876 prohibited Aboriginal peoples access to alcohol, the consumption of alcohol by the First Nations remained a serious issue in Armstrong. A discussion of the First Nations and alcohol will be undertaken later in this section.

8 Dipsomania, invented by a German physician in 1819, was a medical term used to describe what we might now refer as alcoholism. For an in-depth geneology of the term, see Valverde 1998:48-49.
May 21, 1903:1; November 10, 1905:4, for example). Furthermore, in recounting the
Dominion Day festivities of 1906, the *Armstrong Advertiser* reported that

> as bees are attracted to honey, so Indians are with sports. The whole
> reserve was here. Lemonade was the strongest drink they could procure,
> although Painkiller or Peruna [local alcohol] would have been more
> preferred on so warm a day (July 6, 1906:1).

Apparently, it was impossible to imagine Indians without also including alcohol.

Interestingly, there were equally as many articles concerning whites who provided
alcohol to the Indians. A 1903 article reported that

> there has been a good deal of liquor being sold to the Indians of late and the
> authorities are keeping a vigilant watch and will deal stern justice to all and
> sundry caught in the business. Last Thursday afternoon T.B. Fulton was brought
> before Magistrates Wallace and Wright charged with supplying a klootchman
> [Indian] with a bottle of gin. After hearing the evidence the magistrates fined
> Mr. Fulton $50 and costs or six months imprisonment (*Armstrong Advertiser*
> November 5, 1903:1).

Similarly, in 1926, the *Advertiser* featured a three column spread about a café proprietor,

> “Joe” Stingo, who was brought up on charges of supplying Indians with intoxicants (August
> 12, 1926:3). After being previously warned by the police chief, Stingo served alcoholic cider
to an Indian, who was later arrested for his drunkenness. Despite the fact the Stingo claimed
not to know that the cider was, in fact, an intoxicant, he was fined $50 or one month’s
imprisonment (*Armstrong Advertiser* August 12, 1926:3). However, the most scathing attack
against whites providing alcohol to Indians was provided by the editor of the *Armstrong
Advertiser* in 1908. In an article entitled “Whisky and Indians,” F.C. Wolfenden (a white man
himself) wrote

> The homicide at Shuswap last week serves once more to call attention to the
> urgent need for amending the law in such a way as to provide adequate punish­
> ment of those vile wretches who supply liquor to Indians...Several tragedies
> have taken place in this district of recent years in which the slayers have been

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9 Interestingly, Joe Stingo is featured in the community directory on p.91 of this thesis (figure 4.2). The city
directory lists Stingo as a house cleaner, thus suggesting the possibility that Stingo may have lost his café license
as a result of the charges he faced in relation to providing Indians with alcohol. There is, however, no
conclusive documentation explaining Stingo’s departure from the restaurant industry.
Indians, have all followed a bout of drinking, and he has exacted the utmost penalty for that crime, but those who provided the liquor escaped with little or no punishment....Here we have a tragedy, the direct outcome of a spree and liquor that inflamed [the Indian's] mind so that he was seized with the blood lust, was provided by two men who have already been given their punishment. One of them has been sent up for six months, the other for sixty days, with the option of a fine! And the Indian, an untutored native, will either be hanged or, if justification in some measure be shown, may escape with his life but end his days in the penitentiary. Justice is blind... (Armstrong Advertiser September 12, 1908:8).

Thus, while the issue relating to the Indians was their drunkenness, the heart of the issue for whites was the supplying of alcohol to Indians. This created very clear constructions of racial identities. The Indian was an “untutored” individual, as F.C. Wolfenden pointed out (Armstrong Advertiser September 12, 1908:8). Not possessing the proper moral training, the Indian was unable to assess actions as either right or wrong. This argument is simply another version of the colonial maxim that Indians were “backwards” and “uncivilized”. It was this view which prohibited the sale of alcohol to Indians in the first place – the federal Indian Act of 1876 prohibited such sales on the basis that Indians were basically “children” and were incapable of using alcohol “responsibly” (Heron 2003:134-135).

Whites, on the other hand, were expected to know better. For as the antithesis to the drunken, uneducated and uncivilized Indian, a white citizen was moral, educated, and civilized. As constructed within the discourse, drunkenness was not associated with good white folk. Rarely, within the newspapers, did one come across an article about white drunkenness, but when one did, non-whites were to blame for the debauch. When, for example, four white young men got drunk and broke windows in town, the Chinese were blamed for their intoxication:

The four young men who over stepped the mark on Wednesday night, no doubt are extremely sorry that they went so far, and it is only fair to say that the citizens of this town are just as sorry. But the main question is, what caused the trouble? From reliable information, we learn it was Chinese whisky; the young men had been down to see the chinaman, and had been treated to Sam Sue, which is frightfully potent; and will create a rumpus quicker than any other
kind of liquor. The chinamen are to blame for dispensing liquor; which has been
the primary cause of a lot of complaint, though this is no excuse for breaking
windows (Armstrong Advertiser February 12, 1910:4).

White drunkenness was the exception, not the rule, and as such, was simply not part of the
moral fibre of whiteness. Furthermore, since whites were civilized and had been “tutored” in
the moral subjects, they knew the difference between right and wrong. This, ultimately,
makes them responsible for ensuring that the “simple” and “untutored” Indians do not have
access to alcohol. Such a construction again positions whiteness as the superior moral being
to their non-white counterparts.

As Mariana Valverde contends,

like age-related exclusions, race-related liquor laws define maturity, citizenship,
and responsibility... Specific prohibition use alcohol as a means of site for the
governance of ‘problem’ subpopulations. Specific prohibitions separate those
whose drinking has to be controlled externally through a simple ban from those
(the ‘general population’) whose drinking patterns are subject to self-control and
the exercise of one’s own will. The problem subpopulations are not allowed to
develop a relation of self to self in the practice of drinking – or in the usually

The constructions of the First Nations and whites in relation to alcohol serve to establish a
barrier between the two groups. The constructions define ‘maturity’, ‘citizenship’, and
‘responsibility’ as traits belonging to white Armstrong, while their subordinate counterparts
of ‘immaturity’, ‘not a citizen’, and ‘irresponsibility’ are firmly attached to Armstrong’s First
Nations population. The discourse surrounding alcohol consumption constructs the First
Nations as a problem population that, because of its immaturity, needs to be managed by the
superior white population. Clearly, not only do these constructions surrounding alcohol
create a divide between white and Indian, but they construct whiteness in a position of
dominance and authority over Indianness.

Importantly, while female drinking has traditionally been a central focus of moral
reform movements (Valverde 1998:53-59), attention to drinking by white women is absent
from the public discourse of Armstrong. In fact, aside from the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), white women are apparently excluded from community discussions pertaining to alcohol consumption. It is middle-class white men who wrote letters to the editor, headed the major Temperance groups (such as the Okanagan Temperance Union), and sat on the councils that passed alcohol legislation. Furthermore, according to the newspaper reports, it was only white men who were arrested for providing alcohol to Indians. Perhaps the gendered divide of the public world of men/private world of women (the home) limited female access to alcohol and participation in public temperance activities.

Furthermore, perhaps alcohol was being established as a ‘male’ activity, and white women were excluded to maintain the patriarchal sanctity of the beer parlour. In fact, the exclusion of white women from the discourse surrounding alcohol consumption may have served as a means of constructing a social norm – that no acceptable white woman should be interested in consuming alcohol. This, of course, posed serious problems for white women who may have been alcohol-dependent, as the lack of social support and resources directed at female drinking would leave white women without any place to turn to for help. Although, considering the extreme emphasis placed on being the good wife and mother in the public discourse, it seems odd that the issue of female alcohol consumption, which could interfere severely with women’s performance of their ‘ideal’ roles, was not broached within the public discourse.

In contrast, alcohol consumption by both male and female First Nations was addressed in the public discourse of Armstrong. Although focused centrally on Indian male consumption, the consumption of alcohol by female Indians was not ignored. For example,

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10 This issue will be further discussed in the next section of this chapter.
when the body of an Indian woman was pulled from a creek in 1905, the *Armstrong Advertiser* issued the following report:

"Down the Valley"

On Thursday last the body of an Indian woman, Rosy, was taken from the creek, which passes through the outskirts of Vernon. She and her husband had been camping in the vicinity for some days. At a corner's inquest held the following day, evidence was given, from which it appeared that the deceased must have fallen into the water while in a state of intoxication (November 3, 1905:2).

In the eyes of white Armstrong, Indian women were still Indians, and since alcohol consumption was problematized for all Aboriginal peoples, they were necessarily included within the alcohol-drenched reports on the First Nations included within the public discourse of the community.

The discourse surrounding alcohol consumption in Armstrong served to establish yet another boundary between white and non-white. Through constructions of good, responsible white citizenry, and immature, irresponsible, problem Indians, the discourse was not only able to establish difference between whites and Indians, but also established superior whiteness in a position of authority over the First Nations. Importantly, this superiority was not solely discursive, as white Armstrong took action, in terms of local legislation and policing, to enact their authority over the First Nations people.

**Saving our Souls – Temperance, Morality and the WCTU**

One of the only ways that white women in Armstrong had the opportunity to express their views on alcohol was through involvement in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The WCTU was started in Ohio in the 1850s, when “evangelic groups of women stood and prayed outside or even inside bars in an effort to shame men into avoiding bars and turn them into responsible, domesticated husbands” (Valverde 1991:58). By 1870,
the WCTU had made its way to Canada, and a national branch of the organization was established in 1883. As Herron notes, “it was the first Dominion-wide, non-denominational women’s group in Canada” (2003:153). While alcohol was the major concern of the group, the WCTU also attacked tobacco, child neglect, and the moral dangers for working women (Herron 2003:154). Proudly wearing their white ribbons, the symbol of the WCTU, these women “were determined to attack all the forces in their society that they believe threatened the home” (Herron 2003:153).

However, as Mariana Valverde points out, “the WCTU in Canada was largely a small town-organization, particularly in the West” (1991:58). Armstrong, in fact, was one of those small Western towns that developed a local branch of the WCTU. Prior to the arrival of the group, there had been prohibition movements in the community – the Okanagan Temperance League, for example, was based in Armstrong’s Presbyterian Church (Armstrong Advertiser December 11, 1902:4; February 26, 1903:4). Many members of the community, as such, were waging a war against the trade in liquor. However, women who wished to engage in the Temperance movement were somewhat curtailed in their efforts. As reported by the Armstrong Advertiser in 1902,

> Events of the past week have brought to light a serious omission in the laws governing our municipality. We have been informed...that women are not

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11 It is strange that Heron would refer to the WCTU as ‘non-denominational’ considering the appearance of the term ‘Christian’ in its name. Heron does not explicate this potentially problematic statement. Perhaps the WCTU can be considered non-denominational in that it use to broad term ‘Christian’ as part of its identity instead of a specific church affiliation. Thus, the WCTU can be considered non-denominational in the sense that it does not exclude any Christians on the basis of specific church affiliation, as long as one is Christian. However, as denomination is defined as “a religious sect or body with a distinctive name and organization,” (Oxford Canadian Dictionary 1998:374), Christianity, in comparison to other religious groups (such as Hinduism, Judaism, etc.), can be considered a denomination in and of itself. As such, Heron’s use of denominational is problematic, as it ignores Christianity’s position within the religions of the world.

12 It is not clear exactly what Herron meant by the term ‘working women’. While it is clear from Herron’s work that working women included working-class women, there is no clarification if this term also included reference to prostitutes or other sex workers (such as ‘Good Time Girls’, who provided entertainment and sexual pleasure for men (see Morgan 1998)).
allowed to vote on the question of granting liquor licenses, the act making no provision for the exercise of the franchise by women...This is the only district in B.C. where ladies are not allowed to vote on the liquor question (July 24, 1902:4).

Yet, as the article points out, “the liquor business effects the home and for that reason wives and mothers are intensely interested” (Armstrong Advertiser July 24, 1902:4). As such, there was growing demand for representation of the Temperance needs of the women in the community.

While there is no documentation showing the exact point at which the WCTU arrived in Armstrong, the group’s newspaper column began appearing in January 1909, and would appear through to 1915. Within these columns the WCTU offered commentary, not only on Temperance, but also on other important moral issues affecting the community. On the issue of alcohol, the group focused on the impact of drinking on the white home and family, arguing that “the bar is the only place where a man drinks out of the sight of the family...[yet] when [he] goes to his beer garden or his “café”, he takes his family with him” (Armstrong Advertiser February 19, 1910:5). In support of abolishing the bar, the group contended that

_no man has the right to drink if it prevents him from fulfilling his obligations to his family...The man whose family dreads to see him with a glass of liquor in his hands, should be man enough to take the terror out of the minds of the people whom he was sworn to love and protect. To shadow their lives with a great dread merely that he may satisfy a by no means noble appetite marks him as either callous or cowardly...The decent community as a whole would support legislation to “abolish the bar” (Armstrong Advertiser February 19, 1910:5).

Importantly, it is concern about white male drinking which is the focus of the Temperance discourse of the WCTU. It is the ‘father’ and ‘husband’ that the group is concerned about. In conjunction with the absences of discourse surrounding female consumption, as well as the absence of female voices outside of the WCTU on the topic of
alcohol consumption discussed earlier, the discourse of the WCTU contributed to the
gendering of alcohol consumption as essentially masculine. This construction clearly
removes white women from the ‘problem’ of liquor, thus establishing them as non-drinkers,
and as such, perfect candidates for patrolling and regulating all men’s immoral drinking.
Constructing white women outside of the immorality of alcohol establishes the authority of
women to police those who are imperilled by alcohol – namely men.

Importantly, the same separation from alcohol consumption that constructed female
authority over male drinkers could have also been extended to include the First Nations,
whom, as demonstrated previously in this chapter, were inextricably linked to problematic
alcohol consumption. Yet the discourse of the WCTU never engaged with non-white
consumption. As discussed on several occasions in this thesis, one of the most important
goals of white settler society was the maintenance of white dominance in the society. Within
the discourse, white Armstrong was constantly concerned about perceived threats by the First
Nations and Chinese. One means of battling against such threats was to ensure the stability
and strength of the dominant white race. For the WCTU, the means of protecting white
families, and thus the strength of white Armstrong, was through patrolling and regulating the
alcohol consumption of white men. Issues of non-white drinking were not broached
specifically because the goal of WCTU reform was not saving problem populations, but
protecting their own [white] kind.

The temperance discourse of the WCTU also reaffirmed the male-led nuclear family.
The groups stressed that it is the duty of the father to protect his family from the evils of
alcohol by abstaining from consumption. Thus, while the discourse of the WCTU put women
in a position of dominance over males in relation to alcohol consumption, her status in the
family remained as a subordinate to the male head. Furthermore, the family emphasized within the discourse was explicitly heterosexual, thus excluding queer sexualities from the discourse. In fact, the emphasis on heterosexuality contributed to its establishment as a social norm for white Armstrong. Queer sexual identities, as such, were then posited as deviant identities to the hetero norm. Finally, the emphasis on male-led and heterosexual families marginalized families who did not take on this form – such as single-parent, female-led, or multi-generational family units. In fact, since non-white racial groups in Armstrong commonly lived in ‘deviant’ family units – the First Nations lived in communal, egalitarian, and multi-generational families (Cowan 2002:5) and Chinese men, who were separated from their families living in China, lived in communal homosocial families (Critchley 1999:11-12) – the male-led nuclear family served as yet another criterion delimiting white from non-white.

This emphasis on family, however, went beyond discussions of male alcohol consumption and proceeded to discussions of women and the home. In particular, the WCTU focused on mothering and the proper moral training of children. In 1913, for instance, the group organized a “Mothers’ Circle” – a group where Armstrong’s mothers could be educated by “experts” (doctors, nurses, and Christian ministers) on the appropriate moral training for children (Armstrong Advertiser April 30, 1914:5). Believing that “to the younger people of our country lies our greatest duty,” the WCTU argued that women needed to devote themselves to the moral training of their children (Armstrong Advertiser April 30, 1914:5). In fact, it was the duty of a “good” mother to ensure such training occurred—

The women of today have a habit of growing discouraged because they do not count for much in the world. We have our minds set on doing a great thing, helping the world or making a lasting impression on our generation. We do not realize what we count for to the people nearest to us. We find women everywhere more and more willing to shift the training of the child-
ren to other shoulders—shoulders which are willing to help her work out the problem but which can never be a substitute. The home influence is and always shall be the predominating influence in the life of the child (Armstrong Advertiser June 25, 1914:2).

Furthermore,

There is no doubt that our life was intended to be one grand, sweet song and when we have taught our boys and girls that the very essence of happiness is honesty, sincerity and truthfulness and to trust in God and do the right, that to be really happy they must live good, clean, temperate, upright, pure lives, then we will know we have done our best to train our young people to be temperate, pure, loyal citizens of the fair Canada of ours—the land of which we may well be proud (Armstrong Advertiser June 25, 1914:2).

As in the case of alcohol consumption, the discourse and actions of the WCTU focused solely on whites. Again, the WCTU reaffirmed the male-led family and all that it implied. In addition, this discourse surrounding mothering contributed to the reaffirmation of patriarchal familial and social relations by explicitly situating women in the home. The discourse situated white women in the private realm of the home (notice the reference to “home influence” above), thus reaffirming the gendered public/private division that removed women from the public world of men. Furthermore, the discourse inextricably linked white womanhood to motherhood. Because the WCTU addressed women solely in the role of ‘mother’, it established motherhood as the only acceptable role for women.\(^{13}\) Not only does this problematize women who don’t want to or are unable to have children, but since the ideal white family is constructed as a male-led nuclear unit, it reconfirms woman’s subordinate location in the patriarchal family.

The employment of outside professionals, such as nurses, doctors, and Christian ministers, in the WCTU’s Mothers’ Circle program established a clear divide between a field of ‘experts’ and white mothers. Mothering, as such, was constructed as something external to

\(^{13}\) The role of ‘wife’ is implicit in this emphasis on motherhood, for as previous discussions of the discourse have made clear, the only acceptable family unit is the male-dominated heterosexual family. According to the discourse, to be a mother is also to be wife, so wife and mother emerge conjoined as acceptable female roles.
women – something that needed to be taught by [mostly male] professionals. This denied a mother’s autonomy in performing her mothering duties and discounted a woman’s independent knowledge and skill as a mother. In this fashion, women (as mothers) were subjugated by a class of experts (again, mostly men) who possessed the power and dominance to define and regulate white motherhood. White women, as such, were denied autonomy as mothers.

The WCTU, through its policing of mothers, also constructed a divide between white women. The discourse clearly established that the good white mother stays at home and ensures the proper moral training of her children. As such, white women who were unable to stay at home because they needed or wanted to work were problematized. Furthermore, white women whose children engage in immoral acts were stigmatized by the WCTU, and their failure as a ‘mother’ made an issue of public concern. In fact, the WCTU constructed itself, through its many expert affiliations, such as the doctors, nurses, and the like, in a position of authority on motherhood. The discourse, as such, not only made the WCTU the spokeswomen for appropriate white womanhood, but also established their authority in policing white motherhood.

Conclusion

Within the public discourse, the morality of Armstrong was brought under scrutiny. Moral reformers from all walks of life and a variety of affiliations sought to protect the moral fibre of the community. However, the discourse of such reformers constructed a very specific morality that was rooted in the perceived superiority of whiteness. Christianity, which was regarded as a hallmark of white civilization, became an important racial divide between
whites and the non-white First Nations and Chinese. Furthermore, through the association of “drunkenness” with the First Nations, whiteness was constructed as temperate, and as such, morally superior. In fact, drunkenness was constructed as so not a part of whiteness that, when it did happen, non-whites were to blame for their debauchery. Finally, with the introduction of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, a white, middle class, heterosexual, and Christian morality was established as the “standard” for Armstrong men, women and their children. In all of these cases, the moral superiority of whiteness constituted a position of dominance, which, in turn, permitted the policing and regulating of problem non-white and white populations.

As with land use, the relationship between whiteness and morality was rooted in power relations. Indeed, “social purity was a campaign to regulate morality...to preserve and enhance a certain type of moral life”- in this case, a “white” moral life (Valverde 1991:24). In order to succeed at this campaign it was essential to create disciplined and obedient bodies— for as Foucault asserts, “the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive and a subjected body” (1995:26). Though the ability to define and dictate an appropriate moral life is a position of power itself, the ability to observe and modify the lives and practices of other social actors is truly an exercise of power. As Foucault makes clear, such power “go right down into the depths of the society,” to the level of the individual (1995:27). “This power is not exercised simply as a prohibition on those who ‘do not have it’: it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure on them...” (Foucault 1995:27). As such, moral reform locates relations of power at the level of the individual in white Armstrong society. Through their work, therefore, moral reformers were able to actively mould individual people into a white defined morality, and as such, create
good citizens who would not rebel against the dominance of the white moral reformers. In the end, morality became a tool for ensuring social conformity and the production of Armstrong's good, white folk.
Chapter V

'White' Weddings:
Whiteness, Gender, and Heteronormativity

For many, weddings are an important social event. As a public celebration of a couple’s relationship, weddings provide an opportunity for individual members of a society to come together and “joke, gossip, and reaffirm kin and community ties” (Strong-Boag 1988:91). While the wedding itself marks the formal union of a couple, marriage also brings the couple’s families together and creates new and extended family lineages. Furthermore, the marriage ceremony, performed under the watchful eye of church and/or state, serves to legally and religiously sanctify a couple’s bond in the public world. Indeed, weddings are a social affair.

Yet the institutionalization of marriage in society has resulted in the marginalization of many individuals. As marriage has traditionally been defined as a union between a man and woman, same-sex relations have been excluded from the rite of marriage, and have been denied the benefits conferred in our society through marriage (such as tax and spousal death benefits (see Ingraham 1999:32, for example)). The development of a multi-billion dollar wedding industry has seen the ideal wedding elevated to a status obtainable by only the middle- and upper-classes of society – working-class couples, as such, are marginalized within this industry. As these examples demonstrate, the social institutionalization of marriage has had serious consequences for many members of Canadian society.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the relationship between whiteness and weddings in the discourse of Armstrong during the time period 1890 to 1930. Through an examination of wedding and golden wedding announcements, I will explore the
institutionalization of marriage and its roles in constructing a patriarchal and heteronormative conception of white human relations. To further explore the heteronormativity of white Armstrong society, I will conduct an examination of constructions of white masculinity. Finally, continuing the emphasis on marriage, I will analyze the role of the newspapers in constructing the roles of wife and mother as ideals of white femininity. Furthermore, in an analysis of advertisements, I will explore the relationship between white womanhood, the ideals of wife and mother, and consumption.

Putting the 'Public' in Marital Bliss

Figure 5.1- The Holtby1 wedding in Armstrong, Circa 1903 (ASMAS Reference #4520)

1 I originally selected this photo as simply a wonderful illustration for this section on weddings. During the editing of this chapter, a member of my thesis committee requested that I find out more about the photo. The curator at the Armstrong Museum researched the photo, discovering it was from the Holtby wedding of 1903. Ironically, I had already included mention of a senior Holtby couple in my analysis of golden wedding announcements. This, of course, is not the couple featured in the wedding photo, but the George Holtby featured in the photo (the groom) is a grandson of the elderly Holtby couple.
"Nothing shall assuage your love but marriage; for such is the tying of two in wedlock, as is the tuning of two lutes in one key: for striking the strings of one; straws will stir upon the strings of the other; and in two minds link'd in love, one cannot be delighted but the other rejoiceth. (Armstrong Advertiser July 19, 1917:1)

While the decision to marry is perceived by some as the private decision of a couple, the practice of marriage is, in fact, the public confirmation of a couple's relationship. Indeed, marriage is the legal and religious sanctification, by the public institutions of the church and state, of a couple's union. Yet there are many other ways in which a couple makes their union "public." In the case of Armstrong during my period of research, 1890 to 1930, the most common method of publicly reporting a marriage was the wedding announcement. Ranging from a simple one-paragraph announcement to an extensive report of the affair, but almost always featured on the front page of the newspaper, such announcements were the hallmark of the public celebration of marriage. Frequently appearing in groups of three or more, simple wedding announcements provided the basics of the wedding day:

Anderson-Ross

A very quiet wedding took place on Wednesday, April 16 at 4 p.m. at the Presbyterian Manse, Vernon, B.C., the Rev. William Guy officiating, when Sara Isabel, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Ross was united in marriage to Mr. Otto E. Anderson, son of Mr. and Mrs. B. A. Anderson, late of Camrose, Alta., now of Armstrong (Armstrong Advertiser May 1, 1924:1)

2 While it is unknown whether couples had to pay to have their announcement included in the newspaper, the evidence suggests that they did not, in fact, have to pay. While the Advertiser regularly solicited advertising space for a fee, there was not a single reference to a fee charged for publishing marital announcements (or classified ads for that matter). The newspaper was committed to reporting on the community, and I would suspect that marriages were treated as another event to be reported. Furthermore, in a small town with limited events of a 'newsworthy' nature, the spectacle of a large wedding would certainly have been considered worthy of inclusion in the community news. However, the detail of the announcements suggests that there was perhaps some involvement from the couple or other members of the wedding party – whether supplying lists of guests and gifts or sharing details about the special day.
Mohr-Lancaster

Mrs. Elizabeth Lancaster, late of Manchester, England, was united in marriage to Mr. J.H. Mohr of Revelstoke, B.C., at the Grandview Methodist Church, Vancouver, on Thanksgiving Day. Mr. and Mrs. Mohr will reside in Revelstoke. Mr. Mohr will be remembered in Armstrong, being the editor of the Advertiser for a number of years (Armstrong Advertiser November 16, 1922:1).

As these examples make clear, it wasn’t necessary to reside in Armstrong to have one’s wedding reported in the Advertiser – in fact, any connection to the community – such as being a former resident or having parents residing in the community – was enough to warrant inclusion in the wedding reports.

However, the exquisite detail of extended announcements was reserved for important members of the community, as well as all those wedded in the community. Such reports, frequently taking up several newspaper columns, reported every detail of the blessed event:

Simington-Leverington

On Wednesday, June 12 at one o’clock, a very pretty wedding was solemnized at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Leverington, Eastview [a section of Armstrong], when their eldest daughter, Pearl Victoria, was united in marriage to Mr. F. L. Simington. The bride was becomingly gowned in white Oriental silk, trimmed with Oriental lace and carried a shower bouquet of carnations, roses and ferns. She was given away by her father and attended by her sister, Miss Zella, who was prettily dressed in cream silk. The groom was attended by his brother, Mr. E. Simington and Miss Beatrice Leverington, sister of the bride played the wedding march. The ceremony, which was performed by Rev. S. J. Green, took place under an arch of cedar and white peonies, in the presence of relatives and immediate friends.

After the ceremony a dainty luncheon was served, the table decorated with white peonies and carnations. Among the beautiful presents received by the young couple were, a piano from the bride’s father and a Happy Thought range from Foreman & Armstrong. The groom’s present to the bride was a gold locket and chain; to the bridesmaid, a gold bracelet; and to the groomsman, gold cuff links.

The happy young couple left for the Coast cities on the afternoon train. The bride’s going away costume was a tailored suit of Copenhagen blue and she wore a cream hat with a willow plume. As both young people were very popular in Armstrong, many of their friends were at the station to bid them God speed with many hearty good wishes. On their return to Armstrong they will reside at their future home on Wood avenue.

The Advertiser wishes to join with the many friends of Mr. and Mrs. Simington in extending to them the heartiest and best wishes for prosperity and happiness (Armstrong Advertiser June 20, 1912:1).
Other such reports also featured extended lists of guests and the wedding gifts they offered.

The following is from the Skyrme-Turner wedding announcement:

The following are a few of the many presents received: Check [sic] and carving set, Mr. and Mrs. J.M Thomas; Carving set, J. McLeod and Sam McCallum; Carving set and knife rests, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Sharpe; Salad bowl, Mr. and Mrs. J. Blackburn; Silver teapot, W. and F. Skyrme, England; Marmalade set, Edith Skyrme, England; Butter dish, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Watson; Side board set, Bert and Bess Skyrme, England; Towels, Mrs W.D. George; Biscuit jar, Miss C. Watson; Hand painted plates, Mr. and Mrs. J. Monk... (*Armstrong Advertiser* July 17, 1913:1).

This list, in fact, is only a small portion of the extensive listing of guests and gifts featured in the Skyrme-Turner announcement.

Along with announcing new marital unions, the newspaper also featured “golden” celebrations as a means of highlighting lasting marital commitments. When a couple’s marriage had reached its fiftieth year, the newspapers devoted extensive column space to chronicling the successful marriage. From the initial union to the many achievements attained during the nuptial bonds, all aspects of the couple’s marital life were celebrated. For example, in celebrating the Golden Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Holtby, the *Advertiser*, about the initial union, commented that:

...[t]he people of Upper and Lower Canada had just nicely gotten through with the inaugural celebration of confederation, that meant so much for Canada’s good when Mr. and Mrs. Holtby confederated interests too by entering into the bonds of matrimony just fifty years ago on Tuesday (*Armstrong Advertiser* July 19, 1917:1).

The column emphasizes the achievements of Mr. Holtby in his career – from his success in agriculture in Minnesota to his family farm on Armstrong’s Knob Hill (*Armstrong Advertiser* July 19:1917:1). In contradistinction, Mrs. Holtby is discussed in terms of her character and the variety of roles she served in relation to others:

*His very esteemable [sic] wife and companion of so many years is, in spite of her great age and infirmity, still a charming personage, and it is safe to presume none of the numerous children and grand children, who are taking part in the celebration of her golden wedding day, will enter into the spirit of the occasion with more joyous nature than her own, and as of yore, many will be the flashes of real Irish wit, that may perhaps go over the heads, but will never escape the*
ears of her numerous guests. Although partially invalided for upwards of thirty years, her cheery disposition would never betray her infirmity. Her indomitable Christian faith, her cheerful nature, and her sparkling Irish humor, endear her to all who are afforded the pleasure of her acquaintance (Armstrong Advertiser July 19, 1917:1; emphasis added).

Furthermore, in a fashion similar to the wedding announcements, Golden Wedding reports also recounted the events, gifts and visitors participating in the celebration. For the Gamble Golden Wedding, the Advertiser reported:

A beautifully fine and pleasant evening favoured Wednesday’s gathering, which was held largely upon the pretty lawn which looks out from its empowering pines, across the southern part of the city to the mountains just beyond...Here there gathered from Armstrong and its neighbourhood, from Vernon and other places beyond, a company that numbered, by the time the evening was half way through, more than a hundred...It was a very bright and merry gathering. Several of her old friends, gentlemen as well as ladies, availed themselves to the traditional privilege to salute the bride...At a suitable moment, Mr. and Mrs. Gamble were cajoled together to the centre of the lawn, and then a pretty surprise was sprung on them, when a little chain of tiny tots swung out from the conservatory, singing “The Old Gray Bonnet” and going up to “Grannie and Grand-dad,” presented to them a floral basket. A golden swan floated in the midst of this, surrounded by big marguerite blossoms that represented pond-lilies (July 23, 1925:1).

Veronica Strong-Boag makes clear that weddings were often a public celebration (1988:91), and the community newspaper was the perfect platform to make the couple’s special day a public affair. Through the careful recitation of every detail of the celebration, the public could vicariously experience the special day in the comforts of their own home. Yet this publicizing of weddings was not without consequence. Importantly, it was only white, and particularly middle- and upper-class, couples that were featured in wedding announcements. In the nearly thirty years of the Armstrong Advertiser I examined for this study, not one First Nations, Chinese, or mixed-race marriage was ever featured in a wedding announcement. In the case of the Chinese, the dominantly male population (the first Chinese woman did not arrive until 1920) could explain the absence of Chinese wedding announcements; however, this does not explain the absences of mixed-race or First Nations
announcements. The exclusion of such couples can be construed as an attempt by Armstrong’s white citizens to produce constructions of ideal whiteness that would assist in maintaining white dominance in the community. As discussed in previous chapters, the First Nations were never understood to be white, and as such, were excluded from white practices, such as wedding announcements. Furthermore, as non-whites, the marital celebrations of the First Nations were of no interest to the majority of white Armstrong. The exclusion of mixed-race couples is extremely important, as it is mixed-race progeny which posed a special threat to white dominance. As demonstrated in the previous chapter on morality, mixed-race individuals threatened white settler society’s racial hierarchies by blurring the line between white and non-white. This, in turn, could bring into questions white dominance in the community. Thus, to advocate and publicly celebrate the wedding of a mixed-race couple would be perceived by many white Armstrong citizens as committing ‘race suicide’.

Interestingly, while non-white couples are excluded from wedding announcements, elements of non-white culture are included. For example, in the announcement for the Simington-Leverington wedding, it is reported that “the bride was becomingly gowned in white Oriental silk, trimmed with Oriental lace” (Armstrong Advertiser June 20, 1912:1). While the Chinese people were seen as posing a threat to white Armstrong, Chinese silk and lace, it would seem, were deemed perfectly acceptable for white weddings. Lacking in threat, this touch of the foreign and the exotic was welcomed into white culture, while the Chinese people faced persecution and exclusion in the same environment. Such a construction clearly established that the inclusion and exclusion of non-white populations and cultures was something to be managed by the dominant white populations, to be included or excluded when benefiting white Armstrong society.
While the exclusion of non-white populations played an important part in constructing white dominance in Armstrong, emphasis on whiteness itself was essential to the establishment and maintenance of white power. Notions of white superiority are embedded within the wedding announcements. The repeated reference to England in the gift list of the Skyrme-Turner announcement (Armstrong Advertiser July 17, 1913:1) linked members of white Armstrong to the Empire and its dominance in the world. This connection stands as a testament to the superiority of white Armstrong, and its inclusion legitimates their dominance in the social landscape of the community. Furthermore, in the Golden Wedding announcement for the Holtby’s, the couple’s initial nuptials were related to confederation (Armstrong Advertiser July 19, 1917:1). In reference to confederation, the newspaper comments that it “meant so much for Canada’s good” (Armstrong Advertiser July 19, 1917). This statement affirms that confederation – or the establishment of the white country of Canada achieved through the defeat of the First Nations people – was good for the nation. It makes clear that white dominance has contributed to making Canada a better place. Indeed, reference to confederation, an event which most white Anglo Canadians look upon favourably, if not celebrate with pride, contributes to the establishment of a common white Canadian identity based on the shared history of confederation. This reference, as such, can be seen as an attempt at nation-building – the construction of a white Canadian national identity based on a common history. By establishing Canada as a white nation, and as such, white ‘Canadians’ as the nation’s true citizens, such constructions affirm the dominance of whiteness in the country, and as such the Canadian community of Armstrong.

Importantly, the wedding announcements contributed to the construction of ideals of whiteness. Embedded within the announcements are social norms and expectations for the
white citizens of Armstrong. In fact, the announcements serve to establish ‘marriage’ itself as a social institution. The public celebration of the wedding serves to enshrine the practice as ‘acceptable’ and ‘normal’ within the discourse of Armstrong. The emphasis and attention paid to marriage establishes its importance in the community. Combined with the lack of attention to other ‘couple relationships’ (such as co-habitation without marriage), and thus the absence of alternative relationship forms, marriage is established as the only viable and acceptable option for white Armstrong.

This institutionalization of marriage, moreover, contributed to the institutionalization of heterosexuality in Armstrong’s white society. The wedding announcements focus solely on heterosexual couples. Much like the honeymoon (Dubinsky 1999), I argue that the wedding announcement was a “public declaration of heterosexual citizenship” (p.1). As Chrys Ingraham argues, “weddings are one of the major events that signal readiness and prepare heterosexuals for membership in marriage as an organizing practice for the institutions of heterosexuality” (1999:4) The announcements were a means of publicly demonstrating not only that the couple had successfully accepted the social norm of marriage, but also established that the two individuals involved were indeed heterosexual. Thus, the celebration of marriage within the public discourse can equally be seen as the public celebration of heterosexuality. Coupled with the absence of references to same-sex relations within the community discourse, this emphasis on heterosexual couples clearly established the ‘institution of marriage’ as the ‘institution of heterosexual marriage’.

To be clear, it is important to emphasize that the terms “heterosexual” and “homosexual” are clearly absent from the documents themselves. In fact, of the contemporary sexual orientation terminology, only “bi-sexual” appeared within the public
discourse during my time period, 1890 to 1930. In its sole appearance, the term was employed in a similar fashion to “co-ed”, describing the intermingling of female and male students in traditionally sexually segregated classes, such as sports and cooking (Armstrong Advertiser February 29, 1912:1). As queer historian Jonathon Ned Katz (1995) establishes, our contemporary terminology and division of “heterosexual” and “homosexual” is exactly that – relatively contemporary. It has only been in the twentieth century when “creatures called heterosexuals emerged from the dark shadows of the nineteenth-century medical world to become common types acknowledged in the bright light of modern day” (Katz 1995:83).

In fact, the terms themselves have been employed in a variety of ways throughout Western history. For example, in the work of Drs. James Kiernan and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the term “heterosexual” referred to a mental condition, “psychical hermaphroditism”. Heterosexuals experienced so-called male erotic attraction to females and so-called female erotic attraction to males. That is, these heterosexuals periodically felt “inclinations to both sexes”. The hetero in these heterosexuals referred not to their interest in a different sex, but to their desire for two different sexes. Feeling desire inappropriate, supposedly, for their sex, these heterosexuals were guilty of what we now think of as gender and erotic deviance (Katz 1995:20).

Importantly, as Katz and other scholars, such as Mary Louise Adams (1997) and Becki Ross (1998), contend, conceptions of sexual orientation are, in fact, historically specific – products of a specific place and time – and as such, do not exist as universal norms of labelling and delineation.

Yet, while the terminology is absent from the public discourse of the community of Armstrong, I argue that the emphasis placed on heterosexual marriage clearly established heterosexuality as a social norm for Armstrong’s white citizens. By only reporting marriage, and thus only heterosexual relations, the newspapers contributed to the construction of a public discourse that emphasized and celebrated heterosexuality. There were no public
celebrations of same-sex unions (or of Armstrong citizens who did not marry, or who were divorced, for that matter). And while I did not find a publicly recorded backlash against same-sex unions, I argue that the erasure and silencing of such relations is an act of violence itself. For while a public outcry may condemn the existence of homosexuality, public erasure denies homosexuality an existence at all.

This institutionalization of marriage and heterosexuality carried serious consequences for many members of white Armstrong – for the institutionalization of marriage contributed to the marginalization of many whites. As mentioned, the emphasis on heterosexual marriage marginalized homosexual/bisexual whites, as well as those whites who chose not to marry or were divorced. The enshrinement of heterosexual marriage also reaffirmed the patriarchal male-led nuclear family. This constructed an ideal for white woman that saw them ghettoized to the home, and thus as marginal to the world of men. Furthermore, this emphasis on male-led families marginalized white families that did not take on this form (such as single-parent, extended families, or female-headed families). Also, the emphasis on Christianity in wedding announcements, such as the inclusion of the name of the clergy member who performed the ceremony or the reference to Mrs. Hotlby’s “indomitable Christian faith” in her golden wedding announcement (Armstrong Advertiser July 19, 1917:1), served not only to firmly embed marriage within the Christian faith, but also to reaffirm the Christian boundary between white and non-white discussed in the previous chapter on morality. Constructed as

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3 It is important to note that a divorce was extremely difficult to obtain. Although British Columbia possessed divorce courts prior to the First World War, a female petitioner of a divorce had to prove that she had been deserted for more than two years and that her spouse had committed adultery (ironically, men only had to prove desertion) (Strong-Boag 1988:99) Remaining on the legal books until 1925, this burden of evidence prohibited many women from obtaining a divorce. Furthermore, the legal costs associated with obtaining a divorce, as well as the stigma attached to divorce, dissuaded many from legally divorcing (Strong-Boag 1988:100). Indeed, the 1921 Census for Armstrong and Spallumcheen does not list a single individual, male or female, as divorced. However, this is not to suggest that couples remained together. In fact, many spouses simply left their partners (Strong-Boag 1988:100).
an act of Christianity, 'marriage' would alienate and marginalize whites who did not identify as 'Christian'.

Important class distinctions were produced as a result of the wedding announcement and the enshrinement of marriage. Clearly, weddings could be expensive affairs. Costs associated with wedding attire, invitations, flowers, food, and music could contribute to making a wedding extremely costly. Yet it was these types of expensive affairs that were featured extensively within the community newspaper. The extended wedding announcements carefully recounted every detail of a couple’s expensive wedding day. The Simington-Leverington announcement, for example, included such details as the bride’s two wedding day outfits (her exotic Oriental silk and lace wedding dress and her Copenhagen blue travel outfit), the exquisite flowers (her bouquet of carnations, roses, and ferns; the white peonies attached to the cedar arch), and the honeymoon travel plans of the newlyweds (a train trip to the Coast cities) (*Armstrong Advertiser* June 20, 1912:1). The note about the couple’s new home that would be awaiting their arrival home from their honeymoon further established the material wealth and stability of the couple. Furthermore, the inclusion of extensive gift lists established the relationship between wealth and weddings. The Simington-Leverington announcement mentioned that the young couple received a piano from the bride’s father and a new range from a local merchant (*Armstrong Advertiser* June 20, 1912:1). The Skyrme-Turner announcement includes an extensive list of material goods given to the couple. Evidence of wealth, as such, was embedded throughout the extended wedding announcements.

This emphasis on the expense and material benefit of weddings, however, served to establish class boundaries within whiteness. The explicit attention to expensive weddings
constructs the ideal white wedding as something belonging to the middle- and upper-classes. This is not to say that working-class couples did not have expensive weddings. Indeed, the emphasis on such weddings held them up as something appropriate for working-class couples to strive for. Yet to achieve the ideal upper-classed wedding would have meant a much larger material sacrifice for white working-class couples than for their middle- and upper-class counterparts. As such, the idealized white wedding would have been, quite simply, out of reach for many white working-class couples. In fact, as Veronica Strong-Boag points out, many couples in English Canada "lived together without benefit of clergy because they were in no position to do anything else" (1988:84). In this manner, such couples were marginalized by the expensive white wedding ideal.

The class polarization produced as a result of emphasizing a middle/upper class wedding as a societal norm is further exacerbated by the practice of gift giving. Gift giving, while aimed at providing the marital couple with some of the material requirements of their new family arrangement, served to redistribute material goods in such a fashion as to replicate the existing class structure. Since limited budgets meant limited guests, or for some, no wedding at all, white working class couples would receive a much smaller wedding booty in comparison to their middle and upper class counterparts. However, working class couples would not only receive less material wealth, but quite possibly material wealth of a lower quality – members of the white middle and upper classes would, after all, not only be able to afford more gifts, but also better quality gifts. Thus, while a white working-class couple might receive a few small household items, a middle- or upper-class couple, such as the Simington-Leverington or Skyrme-Turner couplings, would receive an abundance of household items, including such things as a range (Simington-Leverington) or multiple
carving sets (Skyrme-Turner). As Chrys Ingraham argues, “marriage primarily benefits
groups that are not disproportionately represented among the poor and that are able to secure
and maintain goods and property” (1999:32). In the case of white Armstrong, such an
assessment was clearly appropriate.

While some may view marriage as the private decision of a couple, the wedding, and
in the case of Armstrong, the wedding announcement served to establish marriage as a public
institution. By embracing marriage in the public discourse, the practice was established as a
social norm for white Armstrong. This wedding norm served as a boundary between white
and non-white in Armstrong, and it also created divides within whiteness itself. Similarly, the
emphasis on heterosexual marriage marginalized those who did not or chose not to engage in
the practice of marriage. Since the discourse emphasized marriage as a union between a man
and a woman, heterosexuality was established as the relationship norm for white Armstrong.
As such, same-sex relationships were subjugated to the white hetero norm. Furthermore, the
institutionalization of heterosexual marriage reaffirmed the patriarchal male-headed nuclear
family, which ghettoized women to the marginalized world of the family and the home, as
well as marginalized families, such as single-parent, female-headed, or multi-generational
family units, who did not take this ideal form. Finally, marriage produced class divisions
amongst Armstrong’s white citizens. As the ideal wedding was explicitly classed – the
weddings receiving the most attention in the community newspaper were expensive middle-
and upper-class affairs – and weddings were shaped in such a manner as to materially benefit
these classes – marriage created a divide between working-class whites and their upper class
counterparts. Therefore, while marriage served as an important divide between white and
non-white in Armstrong, as a social norm and institution, it served to divide and hierarchically order Armstrong’s white citizens.

Queering Class: “Gentlemen”, the Working Class, and Homo-Iconography

One of the important consequences of the institutionalization of marriage was the construction of a heterosexual norm for white Armstrong. Yet while marriage and wedding announcements were in the foreground of discourses of appropriate sexual relations, advertisements offered another series of images and discourse which drew a class/sexuality line through the lives of Armstrong’s men. This classed-based division within masculinity is particularly interesting, because as a community involved in both commercial and natural resource industries, Armstrong had a large number of middle- and upper-class capitalists, and an even larger number of workers. Though not explicitly addressing sexual identity, the advertisements, however, seem to address middle-class perceptions of sexuality, and particularly anxieties over perceived homo-social, and thus, implied homosexual, behaviour. To dissipate middle-class anxieties over their perceived sexual orientation, white “gentlemen” formulated constructions of their social persona that left no ambiguity about their heterosexual orientation. Pictured alone or in the presence of beautiful women, middle-class white gentlemen strove to maintain explicitly heterosexual constructions of themselves. However, this blatant hetero construction was not afforded for their working class counterparts – in fact, white working class men were consistently portrayed in male-only groupings.

Although there has been some distance between gay history and labour history (Maynard 1993), concerns over male sexuality, particularly that of working class men, has
been an issue in previous times in Canadian history. In her research on pre-confederation British Columbia, Adele Perry (2001) addresses the moral panic that arose out of concern for the intense homosocial environment of working class men, particularly those working in natural resource industries. In the early days of colonial British Columbia, it was men who composed the majority of white migrant settlers (Perry 2001). As such, male-only households dominated the landscape of the young colony (Perry 2002:21-22). However, as Perry argues, "no clear line definitively and irreparably divided the homosocial from the homosexual" (2001:32). As such, "while colonial British Columbia was a society that tolerated a certain amount of male same-sexuality," there was also a tendency for certain men to be singled out for their same-sex practices (Perry 2001:35). For example, in British Columbia as elsewhere, there was a special connection between seamen and same-sex practice. In 1866 Matti Rasid, a Greek sailor belonging to the HBC's [Hudson Bay Company] Princess Royal, was found guilty of sodomy in the case that initially indicted Rasid and another sailor for a series of sexual acts committed with four boys over at least a three-week period and inadvertently revealed a working-class shipboard culture where sex between men was not uncommon. In 1870 or 1873 a popular sailor named John Kingswell was found guilty of having attempted sodomy with another sailor at the Ship's Sun, an Esquimalt pub (Perry 2001:35).

Figure 5.2: The Homosocial Miners

*Armstrong Advertiser September 17, 1903:*3)
Within the public discourse of the community of Armstrong, white working class men were consistently represented in homosocial settings. In an advertisement for Victor Brand Evaporated Cream (figure 5.2), which actually aimed its product at the homosocial environments of the mining camp and forestry shanty, a group of miners is depicted dining together on a meal made from the company’s evaporated cream (*Armstrong Advertiser* September 17, 1903:3). Similarly, in what could be classified as homoerotic, a W.J. Boyle and Company advertisement featuring Peabody’s Overalls (figure 5.3), depicts two working class men (after all, it is working class men that would need such a product) in a single pair of overalls (*Armstrong Advertiser* July 9, 1910:5). The image constructs a degree of intimacy between the two men, for not only are they together in a single pair of overalls, their heads
are tilted towards and gently resting against each other, common signs suggesting a degree of affection and intimacy between the two subjects.

In contradistinction, the heterosexual orientation of the white middle-class gentleman was made explicitly clear through solo or heterosocial constructions in advertisements. In most advertisements, the majority of which were related to fashion, the gentleman appears alone (figures 5.4 and 5.5). Featured in the epitome of middle costume, the suit,\(^4\) the gentleman stands stylishly by himself, gazing off to the side (figure 5.4) or at "man's best friend" (figure 5.5). The independence of the gentleman is particularly emphasized in figure 5.5., with the addition of the caption "We offer you garments that carry the stamp of Individuality in every line" (Armstrong Advertiser August 21, 1909:3).

\(^4\) The suit has long been connected to the middle class. For an excellent discussion of this topic, please see John Berger's 1991 chapter, "The Suit and the Photograph."
However, this is not to suggest that gentlemen always appeared alone. In fact, several advertisements featured two gentlemen together, however, *always in the presence of a woman*. In figure 5.6, an advertisement for E. Rhian, Gents’ Furnisher, two gentlemen are depicted in the same scene, yet on the arm of one of the men is a beautiful white woman. Similarly, in an advertisement for C.T. Daykin’s General Store (figure 5.7), two gentlemen are featured chatting on roller skates. However, the image of a white woman gazing adoringly is positioned between, albeit behind, the two men. In both cases, the inclusion of the female figure mitigates the construction of the perceived homosocial behaviour of the
men. She serves to reaffirm the heterosexuality of the two men, by directly attaching her sexuality to that of one of the men (figure 5.6), or by using her "heterosexual gaze" to transform the homosocial encounter of the two gents on roller skates. As such, she becomes the symbol of heterosexuality, employed in homosocial constructions of middle class white men to assure the reader of their heterosexuality.

These differential constructions of masculinity produce a divide between white working class men and their middle- and upper-class counterparts. The individuality of the upper class men plays an important role in distinguishing them from their working-class brothers. One of the central tenants of liberal thought, individuality is believed to be the distinguishing factor in making an individual 'human' (Brown 2003: 11). The liberal human subject is "capable of exercising free will and...this capacity to make choices defines what it is to be human" (Brown 2003:11). The liberal human subject has power over his/her own reality, and as such, is the ideal citizen for liberal democratic society.

The emphasis on the individuality of the 'gentleman' in these advertisements constructs middle and upper class white men as true liberal human subjects. It constructs them as those in power of their own reality, free of the influences and persuasions of society. Importantly, since liberalism is intimately tied to colonialism – liberalism is, in fact, considered one of the key symbols of modern Western society (Stoler 1995:16) – the individuality of the white gentleman serves to reaffirm his dominance in Armstrong society. If liberalism was the cultural hallmark – proof of the 'civilized' and 'modern' nature of white imperial society – that legitimated white colonial superiority, then the white middle- and upper-class gentlemen, as true liberal subjects, are the embodiment of this white supremacy.
Through constructing himself as representing the ideal liberal citizen, the white gentleman reaffirmed his dominance in the community. The individuality of the white gentleman, and thus his dominance in Armstrong society, is further constructed through the employing of collective images of white working class men. The appearance of these men solely within the context of a group setting – that is, pictured with other white men of his class – denies the individuality of white working class men. This, in turn, denies these men the liberal human subject position and calls into question the ‘civilized’ and ‘modern’ nature of working class white men. Therefore, if the degree of civilization represented by the white working-class man is called into question, then his status within white masculinity is subjugated to the clearly individual and liberal white gentleman.

Interestingly, along with white working-class men, white women of all classes are featured in homosocial settings. In an advertisement for the Armstrong Skating Rink (figure 5.8), two women are depicted skating hand in hand (Armstrong Advertiser December 14, 1906:4). Like the male overall advertisement, there is a degree of intimacy suggested by the holding of hands and the face to face contact of the two women. Thus, like their white male working-class counterparts, white women are denied the liberal human subject position. This reaffirms white women’s subordinate position to white men; however, this link between white working-class men and white women also reaffirms the subordination of white working class men. Drawing parallels between white working class men and white women serves, much like the contemporary practice of denigrating men by using derogatory feminized terms (such as “pussy”), to feminize, and in patriarchal society, denigrate such men to a status similar to the white women they are compared to. This serves to delimit white
masculinity along the lines of class, with middle- and upper-class masculinity being constructed in a position of dominance over inferior – indeed, feminine-like – working-class masculinity.

Queering working class masculinity furthers the divide between white working-class men and their middle- and upper-class counterparts. As Steven Maynard argues, “gay sexuality, far from a discrete realm of experience important only to a minority in the population, was in fact deeply constitutive of heterosexuality and heterosexual masculinity” (1993:189). To affirm the heterosexual masculinity of the white gentlemen, it was important to establish an oppositional queer masculinity against which this gentleman’s heterosexual masculinity could be compared and established. Much like the construction of the racialized ‘other’, the queering of working class men provide middle- and upper-class gentlemen with a relational category of masculinity that helped establish and maintain their explicit status as heterosexual. Though not explicitly constructing white working class men as homosexual,
these men are represented solely in homosocial settings. The all-male setting, with the explicit exclusion of women, suggests the potential for homosexual activity. This potential, however, was enough to produce questions as to the heterosexual status of working class men. As the institutionalization of marriage within the public discourse of Armstrong clearly established heterosexuality as a norm for white Armstrong, the perceived possibility of working-class male homosexuality served to marginalize these men in relation to their clearly heterosexual gentlemen counterparts. Thus, not only did the homosocial construction of white working-class men produce questions about their masculinity, but also about their status as heterosexuals, and thus, as members of dominant white masculinity.

Though white weddings established male dominance in the community of Armstrong through the emphasis on the patriarchal male-headed family, these advertisements clearly establish that not all white men were ‘created’ equal. Problematizing the heterosexuality and masculinity of white working-class men, including their legitimacy as true liberal human subjects, the white male gentleman of the middle- and upper-classes marginalized their working-class counterparts, and as such, reaffirmed their dominance in Armstrong.

Consuming Women – Wedded Bliss, White Womanhood and Consumption

With the establishment of marriage as a public institution, white women were inextricably tied to patriarchal ideal feminine roles of ‘wife’ and ‘mother’. Because definitions of marriage within the public discourse of Armstrong emphasized heterosexual marriage, and thus the male-headed nuclear family, white women were expected to readily take up the roles of wife and mother. This emphasis left very little room for women to

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5 This is not to suggest that working-class men were absolutely not homosexual. Indeed, as Steven Maynard (1993) makes clear, homosexuality and effeminate gender performance were an important part of working-class culture.
negotiate their own realities. With other options, such as being single or earning a wage, effectively erased from the discursive landscape of the community, it was clear to Armstrong's white women that the only acceptable roles for them in their white settler society were as wives and mothers. In this section, I will explore the role that the public discourse played in establishing these roles as white feminine ideals. Furthermore, I will explore the development of the link between white womanhood and consumption.

In her study of the lives of women and girls in English Canada, 1919-1939, Veronica Strong-Boag argues that females were groomed, practically from birth, for marriage (1988:105). Examining female culture, Strong-Boag states

> Girls and adult women were more likely to summon up thoughts of lovers, husbands and babies. This fascination reflected the fact that most female Canadians not only expected to marry but took it for granted that marriage would provide satisfaction, security and purpose” (1988:81).

Indeed, the training of females in Armstrong for their inevitable roles as wives and mothers began early within the community discourse. An advertisement for Moulton Ladies’ College of Toronto, for example, was regularly featured within the *Armstrong Advertiser*. Their advertisements argued that “a girl’s education should be essentially womanly – fitting her for the home and for wider influences as well. Moulton College gives such an education” *(Armstrong Advertiser* July 24, 1902:2; emphasis added). Thus, for the well-to-do girl whose family could afford an education in Toronto, Moulton College offered formal training for her role as wife and as mother.

Though Moulton College’s formal training was limited to wealthy white girls, the behaviour of white Armstrong girls of all classes was chastised, and ill-behaviour cautioned against, in newspaper columns aimed at preparing young girls for wifedom and motherhood.
In a 'Woman's World' column from 1902, the Advertiser ran a small piece entitled, “A Bad Girl to Marry” (October 2, 1902:3). The piece read

A bad daughter seldom makes a good wife. If a girl is ill-tempered at home, snarls at her parents and snaps at her brothers and sisters, shirks her ordinary duties, the chances are ten to one that when she gets a home of her own she will make it wretched. There are girls who fancy themselves so far superior to their parents... While their mothers are busy with domestic duties they sit in the easiest chair or lie on the softest sofa, feeding on trashy novels, and cherish the notion that they are very literary individuals...If she will not assist her mother in the domestic labours, is she not likely to be equally slothful and ill-tempered when she marries? If she now thinks herself too fine to work is it safe to think that her views as to the matter would radically change if she became a wife? (Armstrong Advertiser October 2, 1902:3).

Similarly, in 1914, the Advertiser ran an article, entitled “Don’t Be Wild, Girls,” that admonished inappropriate female behaviour out of concern for its impact on her marital status. The article argued

Wildness is a thing which girls cannot afford... It is the first duty of a woman to be a lady. Good breeding is common sense. Bad manners in a woman [sic] is immorality. Awkwardness may be ineradicable. Bashfulness is constitutional. Ignorance of etiquette is the result of circumstances. All can be condoned... But self-possessed, unshrinking and aggressive coarseness or demeanour may be reckoned as a state's prison offence, and certainly merits that mild form of restraint called imprisonment for life (Armstrong Advertiser May 28, 1914:7).

According to the article, the ‘wild’ girl not only punished herself with such ill behaviour, but also potential male suitors:

The natural sentiment of man toward woman is reverence. He loses a large means of grace when he is obliged to account her a being to be trained in propriety. A man’s ideal is not wounded when woman falls in worldly wisdom; but if in grace, in tact, in sentiment, in delicacy, and in kindness, she should be found wanting, he receives an inward hurt (Armstrong Advertiser May 28, 1914:7).

Such articles contributed immensely to constructions of patriarchal ideals of white womanhood in Armstrong. They reaffirmed white woman’s role as wife by discussing young girls solely within the context of this inevitable wife role. The discursive exclusion of alternative realities – such as wage-earning, having a same-sex lover, being single, or not having children – served to make explicitly clear that ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ were the only
acceptable roles for Armstrong's young white girls. By publishing such tracts, the newspaper publicly affirmed that ideal white womanhood entailed being a wife, and suggested that the training of wives should begin at youth. Such a construction offered very little opportunity for escape.

Furthermore, by addressing young women solely within the context of marriage, such discourse reaffirms the heterosexual norm of white Armstrong society. As the ideal white wife within the discourse is paired with her male breadwinning husband, marriage is explicitly sexualized as heterosexual. Thus, the patriarchal ideal of white women as wives and mothers is inscribed within a heteronormative social framework. As such, not only is she expected to become a wife and mother, she is also expected to be heterosexual.

While these articles emphasized the roles of 'wife' and 'mother' as the ideals for white femininity, they also constructed behavioural norms for white women – norms, I argue, that shaped female behaviours in a manner appropriate to their inevitable roles as wives and mothers. Indeed, the shaping of young women's behaviour was as much about constructing ideal wives and mothers as it was about reforming problematic female behaviour. As such, the ideal female was not to be 'wild' or 'ill-tempered' or 'lazy'. Neither aggression nor rudeness were traits associated with white femininity – the 1914 article, for example, argues that aggressiveness in women was a criminal offence warranting imprisonment (Armstrong Advertiser May 28, 1914:7).

Indeed, the ideal white female was to be poised, polite, and passive. She was expected to be helpful and perform housework, as well as be the refined and well-mannered companion of her male suitor. Such articles constructed an ideal white femininity that went hand in hand with patriarchal conceptions of womanhood. If a white young girl was someday
to become the subordinate to a white male – that is, to become a wife – then it was necessary to groom her in such a fashion that she could successfully take on her ideal patriarchal role. Publicly condemning particular behaviours, and praising particular others, ensured that young white women, as well as those who had contact with them, understood that their future inevitably meant being a wife, and that passive and non-threatening behaviour was the means assuring success in this role.

Though the newspapers spent a great deal of time ensuring that young white girls understood their position in white patriarchal Armstrong society, they spent even more time ensuring that white adult women knew the same. Such constructions of white womanhood emphasized ‘wife’, ‘mother’, and ‘homemaker’ as ideal adult feminine roles. Interestingly, consumption was intimately tied to womanhood and successfully performing such feminine roles. Retailers solicited female shoppers, who were spending their breadwinning husband’s dollars, by promoting their products as important and valuable tools for performing their roles as wife, mother, and homemaker. Insidiously, these advertisers frequently played on perceived anxieties about a woman’s performance in these roles as a means of capturing her purchasing power. Though intensely patriarchal, as the advertisements emphasized marginalized ideals for white womanhood, also embedded within the shopping discourse was a heterosexist construction that emphasized the white female consumer as spending the money earned by her breadwinner husband to care for him, his home, and his children.
In the December 12, 1912 edition of the Armstrong Advertiser, a small ad appeared, buried, perhaps as an afterthought or place filler, on page 3 (Figure 5.9). Entitled “Getting into the Home,” the advertisement featured a quaint picture of a large cat and two small kittens settling into a little basket. However, it is the small bit of text attached to this image that is truly important:

Women buy more than two-thirds the merchandise sold in retail stores and every woman reads the Classified Want Ads. Our paper goes into the homes and will reach the spenders (Armstrong Advertiser December 12, 1912:3).

Figure 5.9- Getting Into the Home (Armstrong Advertiser December 12, 1912:3)

I read this statement and then attempted to reconcile it with the image of the cat and kitten. While I am quite positive that the newspaper intended the construction to suggest a mother and her children, I truly think it is ironic that the image of a “pussy” was used to stand in for womanhood, considering the many modern definitions and usages of the term (i.e.: pussy is used to refer to a woman’s vagina, the sexual conquering of a woman, typically by a male (as in “I am going to get some pussy tonight”), or in the derogatory feminization of males (as in, “You wimp- you’re such a pussy”). There is, however, some disagreement about the etymology and usage of the term. According to Richter, ‘pussy’ came into common use as a reference for a woman’s vagina in the 17th century (1993:179). Green, in contrast argues that the term, a derivative of the 17th century French term puss (cat), was used regularly to refer to a woman and her vagina only in the twentieth century (1993:50). However, in a 1912 dictionary of slang and colloquial English, while pussy is absent, the term puss is defined as “a woman suspected of loose morals,” although it was commonly used as a term of endearment.
With this statement, the *Advertiser* publicly recognized the central consequence of market society: while men dominated the means and processes of production, it was women who dominated the consumption side of the market equation. Thus, since the rise of modern capitalism, women have been consistently recognized as the dominant group within consumption (Bowlby 2001; Klaffke 2003). As Joy Parr explains,

> We are accustomed to thinking of women as shoppers and shoppers as women. 'Born to shop' bumper stickers are affixed...to cars driven by women rather than men. Described for a decade as something women do by nature, that they are born to do, shopping has lately been proclaimed by talk-show hosts and writers of mass-market paperbacks a women’s addiction, a disease of which women particularly are prone (1999:199).

This connection of woman to shopping, argues Ann Oakley, is connected to her economic position in society:

> ...the housewife does not produce commodities of direct value to the economy. Her primary economic function is vicarious: by servicing others, she enables them to engage in productive economic activity...Instead of a productive role, the housewife acts as the main consumer in the family. The tools of her trade are mostly bought by her outside the home- the food with which meals are made, the furniture with which the home is filled, the clothes with which the family are dressed, the appliances with which housework is done. 'Shopping' is one of the housewife’s main work activities (1974:3).

Although shopping has been constructed as an ailment of womanhood, some writers have challenged the popular conception of “shopping” as problematic. For bell hooks, for example, the dominance of women in consumption is truly a position of power:

> One form of power women exercise in the economic sphere is that of consumption. Boycotts have been used often as a strategy, successful in educational if not economic terms. If women all around the United States turned off their television sets for an extended period of time and purchased no products other than very basic necessities to protest the exploitation of women, these actions would have significant political and economic consequences (2000:94).

(Farmer and Henley 1912:359). Thus, it is unclear whether or not the image of the cat was intended as a derogatory reference.
Interestingly, considering the importance of consumption in the Western capitalist economy, there are few historical analyses focusing specifically on women as consumers (Scanlon 1995; Kowaleski-Wallace 1997; Hill 2002), and only two Canadian (Parr 1999; Strong-Boag 1988).

For the white women of Armstrong, the roles of “wife” and “mother” were upheld in advertising as the appropriate feminine roles. Many advertisements targeted their messages directly at wives and mothers. Bovril, for example, aimed their “meal in a moment” campaign at the “housewife” (Armstrong Advertiser January 14, 1904:3). Flourfax (Armstrong Advertiser February 2, 1905:4), Harvey Brown Plumbing and Tinsmithing (Armstrong Advertiser March 6, 1924:4), the Armstrong Hardware store MacPhail-Smith (Armstrong Advertiser July 11, 1912:7), Wisdom’s Wonderful Aerated Waters (another local company) (Armstrong Advertiser June 5, 1912:4) wrote ads directed at wives. In fact, aside from fashion and beauty ads, the majority of advertising in the community newspapers focused on women in their roles as wife, mother, or both. By addressing women almost exclusively as wives and mothers, the advertisements eliminated alternative social roles for women. As such, the roles of ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ were reaffirmed as social ideals for white heterosexual women.

Importantly, while upholding patriarchal conceptions of womanhood, the advertisements produced an intimate connection between white womanhood and consumption. Many of the ads made clear that a woman could successfully perform her roles as wife and mother by purchasing the goods featured in their ads. “To be a successful wife, to retain the love and admiration of her husband should be a woman’s constant study,” argued

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7 It is important to note that newspapers were not the only source of ‘pro-consumer’ messages directed at women. Indeed, producers employed a variety of means to induce female consumption – radio broadcast, store catalogues, hand-bills, sandwich boards around town, and women’s magazines. See Hill 2002; Scanlon 1995.
an advertisement for Lydia E. Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound, a goal which can be achieved, it is promised, if one purchased the Vegetable Compound (Armstrong Advertiser March 23, 1905:3). In a Christmas advertisement for Armitage & Paul’s, it is argued that “the white man’s burden can be materially lightened by his wife if she buys his and her sons furnishings here” (Armstrong Advertiser December 22, 1905:1). Finally, an advertisement for Eddy’s “Golden Tip” Matches contended, “Keep the men in good humour...When Hubby “Lights Up” after his dinner, be sure he has a match which will give him a steady light first stroke” (Armstrong Advertiser September 23, 1915:6).

Particularly useful in understanding this connection between white womanhood and consumption is the work of Robert Merton [1949]. In “Social Structure and Anomie” (1949), Robert Merton contends with the issue of normative society. While attempting to understand the phenomenon of non-conformity, that is “how some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in non-conforming rather than conforming conduct” (Merton 1949:132), he illustrates how social structures establish goals, and in conjunction, acceptable means to achieving these goals. The goals, which are culturally defined, are held out as legitimate objectives for all or for diversely located members of the society:

The goals are more or less integrated...and roughly ordered in some hierarchy of value. Involving various degrees of sentiment and significance, the prevailing goals comprise a frame of aspirational reference. They are the things “worth striving for” (Merton 1949:132).

However, the social structure not only defines what these goals are, but also defines the appropriate means to achieving them:

(a) second element of the cultural structure defines, regulates and controls the acceptable modes of reaching out for those goals. Every social group invariably couples its cultural objectives with regulations, rooted in the mores or institutions of allowable procedures for moving towards these objectives (Merton 1949:133).
As Merton makes clear, “no society lacks norms governing conduct” (1949:134).

To make explicit his views on social norms and values, Merton dissected discursive constructions of the American Dream – that is, the social ideal that male members of American society can achieve wealth and success if they are willing to work for it. Focusing on magazine articles, Merton demonstrated how public discourse contributed to the establishment of the American Dream as a social norm. The same can be done with the advertisements featured in the newspapers of Armstrong. The advertisements commence by establishing the ideal roles for white women in Armstrong – namely, wife and mother. These advertisements make clear that it is a woman’s role to keep the men in her life (her husband and sons) happy. As such, a patriarchal ideal of white femininity – wife/mother/caregiver – is reaffirmed throughout the advertisements. The advertisements, in turn, present the acceptable means of reaching this ideal – consumption. They suggest that the ideal of white femininity can be obtained through purchasing their goods or services. In this manner, as Veronica Strong-Boag argues, “ideal femininity was...transformed into a purchasable commodity” (1988:86).

From 1890 to 1930 in Armstrong, B.C., this connection between white women and consumption, like the public emphasis on weddings, created divides within whiteness itself. This emphasis on consumption, for example, centered ideal white femininity on middle- and upper-class women. To be able to consume, one had to have financial resources. While middle- and upper-class women may have been able to afford many of the goods marketed;

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8 While Merton’s argument implied that the American Dream was constructed as a social norm for American society, this dream was explicitly raced, gendered, classed, and sexualized. Indeed, the American Dream was solely a reality for upper- and middle-class, white, heterosexual men. This is not to imply that there have not been other social norms established for Western society. For example, in my own work on Merton (2003), I have used his theories on social structure and anomie, as well as his discourse analysis methodology, to demonstrate the construction of the Beauty Myth as an ideal for white women.
working-class women, with limited resources, would be restricted in the purchasing of commercial commodities. Thus, by emphasizing consumption, the advertisements constructed an ideal of white femininity that is explicitly classed. In fact, I would argue that the consumption-based white womanhood of the middle- and upper-classes served as an ideal, in and of itself, for working-class women to strive for.

This link between white women and consumption is equally heterosexist. Through emphasizing patriarchal ideals of femininity, which positioned white women within the male-led nuclear family, as well as the explicit emphasis placed on pleasing men, the advertisements contributed to a construction of ideal white womanhood as heterosexual. Furthermore, implicit in the construction of the female consumer was an emphasis on the wife/mother transforming the cash income of the male breadwinner into goods and services to maintain the family (Strong-Boag 1988:93). Not only does this marginalize same-sex relations, but also female wage earners/bread winners, single women, and single-parent families.

For white women in Armstrong, it was difficult to escape patriarchal conceptions of ideal womanhood. From their youth, white women were groomed to become wives and mothers. However, assisting them in achieving these ideals was capitalist producers. Through advertisements, producers reaffirmed women’s roles as wives and mothers and offered their products to assist in the successful performance in these roles. The commodification of ideal womanhood provided the illusion that women could purchase their way to success as wives and mothers. In the end, however, it was the capitalist who benefited most from this construction. With white woman consuming in pursuit of an elusive ideal, “turning when

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9 Although it is unknown how many women may have been breadwinners in Armstrong during the time of my study, 1890-1913, Joy Parr’s (1990) study of female breadwinners in Paris, Ontario from 1880-1950 gives me hope that female breadwinners did exist in Armstrong.
they could to the opportunities promised by enhanced consumption,” (Strong Boag 1988:120), capitalists secured themselves a ‘cash cow’, one that continues to maintain capitalist companies to this day.

Conclusion

The institutionalization of marriage was problematic for many members of Armstrong’s white community. While all white women were subject to subordination within the patriarchal framework of the male-dominated family, working class women were marginalized from their upper class counterparts, as the discourse emphasized middle- and upper-class weddings as ideal. White working-class women were further marginalized with the development of the female/consumer relationship. Finally, though not mentioned in the public discourse, a variety of “alternate realities” were most likely present in the community, including prostitutes/sex workers, single wage-earning women, never-married women, women who loved each other and lived together secretly, women who lost their husbands or were abandoned, and those who may have been divorced. Their erasure from the discursive landscape of white Armstrong implies their marginalization to the iconic, mythic figure of the white middle-class wife and mother. Through this same discourse, same-sex relations were erased as alternatives of heterosexual marriage. Homosexuality, as such, was marginalized within white Armstrong society. White working-class masculinity was problematized based on implications of homosexuality, thus establishing the white, middle-class gentleman as the dominant members of white society.

Through problematizing marriage, however, this chapter has been able to further demonstrate the fractured and uneven reality of whiteness. Indeed, the emphasis on marriage
produced divisions between those racialized as white along the lines of class, gender, and sexuality. This analysis has demonstrated divisions between white women and men, white working-class men and white gentlemen, white working-class women and middle-/upper-class women, and between white heterosexuals and homosexuals. Thus, while whiteness may confer privilege in relation to non-white others, in the case of Armstrong, it is clear that not all whites were created equal.
Chapter VI
Conclusion

My sifting through the residue of history had permitted us a glimpse into the small, rural white settler community of Armstrong, British Columbia, during the time period of 1890 to 1930. Though perhaps I realized it during my time in the archives, I am now acutely aware that it is not a coincidence that the 'residue' of Armstrong's history that remains, protected in archives and vaults, is the documentary artefacts of white Armstrong citizens. Neither is it a coincidence that, until my tenure at the Armstrong-Spallumcheen Museum in 2002, there was an extremely poor display on the local First Nations people (with no written documentation to support the few reconstructed artefacts on display), and that this display and that depicting local Chinese history occupied a tiny spot within the museum's celebration of white settler society. It is not a coincidence that my classmates and I were well-versed in the tale of the Overlander expedition by grade three, but I had little to no knowledge of the history of the local First Nations or Chinese peoples until my summer at the museum. Finally, it is not a coincidence that the sole surviving building of Armstrong's small Chinatown sits vacant, a derelict in the bustling downtown core of the community, while the homes and businesses of Armstrong's historic white settlers are declared heritage sites by the Armstrong City Council.

As this thesis has demonstrated, whiteness is intimately tied to power and power relations. In the contested terrain of white settler society, discursive constructions of whiteness emerged as a deployment of power. Whiteness became a means through which the white settler society of Armstrong was enabled, and through which this society could be
maintained in the face of perceived ‘opposition’ from non-white populations (such as the Chinese and the First Nations). By attaching positive meaning to whiteness, labelling it as ‘civilized’ and ‘moral’ and ‘progressive’, within a societal framework which recognized these terms as positive traits, Armstrong’s white settler society was able to legitimate its dominance in the Spallumcheen Valley and subjugate those populations which posed a threat to this dominance. As Foucault makes clear, discourse is the site where knowledge and power are joined together (1990:100). The public discourse of the community of Armstrong was the site where knowledge of racial identities met with white settler dominance to inscribe whiteness as superior — to produce a community discourse where whiteness was a privileged and dominant racial identity. As this thesis has demonstrated, the social construction of whiteness in Armstrong during the period of this study (1890-1930) was inextricably linked to power. However, as my introduction to this conclusion makes clear, it seems that the dominance of white settler society continues to pervade contemporary Armstrong society.

Connected to the issue of power is the construction of boundaries. The construction of whiteness in Armstrong served to establish boundaries between white and non-white. By attaching meaning to whiteness and non-whiteness, Armstrong’s white settler society was able to establish and maintain its dominance in the community. White Armstrong constructed binaries of white and non-white which conveyed the superiority of whiteness and the inferiority of non-whiteness. Thus, white land use (agriculture and resource extraction) was labelled as ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’, while Indian land use was labelled ‘backward’ and ‘lazy’, and Chinese land use ‘aggressive’ and ‘harmful’. Similarly, Christianity became proof of white Armstrong’s moral superiority over the heathen First Nations and Chinese. Such constructions, in turn, were employed as a means of effectively ‘removing’ non-white
populations, and the threat posed by them, from white society. Thus, the alleged inferiority of the First Nations justified dispossessing them of their lands and relegating them to reserves. Furthermore, the alleged inferiority of the Chinese legitimated action, such as the resolutions against leasing lands to the Chinese, that ensured white dominance in the community.

While constructions of whiteness emphasized boundaries between white and non-white, these constructions also produced divisions amongst those racialized as white. The dominant white individual was clearly the middle-class, heterosexual male. All other white individuals were marginal to this white, heterosexual gentleman. White women were marginalized by the patriarchal construction of wife and mother as white feminine ideals, which reaffirmed their subordinate position within the male-led nuclear family. Homosexuality was marginalized in white Armstrong, subverted by an emphasis on marriage and the erasure of same-sex relations from the public discourse, and thus, as an alternative to heterosexuality. Class was an important distinguishing element amongst white Armstrong. White working-class women were marginalized from their middle- and upper-class sisters by constructions of womanhood that emphasized a middle- and upper-class ideal, particularly in regards to weddings and consumption. White masculinity was similarly fractured, with the queering of white working-class men serving to separate them from the middle- and upper-class white gentleman. Clearly, the intersectional nature of social identities/positions contributed to fracturing and hierarchy formation within whiteness itself.

Though I have emphasized the contributions of this study to the field of critical whiteness studies, it is equally important to acknowledge its contribution to feminist/gender and queer theory and scholarship. Indeed, by exploring the ways in which gender and sexual identity intersect with the construction of white racial identities, this thesis has produced new
information about the historic realities of gender and sexuality. By demonstrating the role of public discourse I constructing specific gendered and sexualized norms, not only has this thesis contributed to the understanding of social positions/identities as socially constructed, it has also shed some light on how such social norms are discursively constructed and awarded a position of dominance in society. Indeed, not only has this thesis challenged the perceived dominance of whiteness, it has also challenged the dominance of masculinity and heterosexuality in [white] Armstrong society.

There are, of course, important limitations to my study. Emphasizing social constructions of whiteness in the public discourse of the community does not preclude the possibility that the realities of whiteness in early Armstrong did not coincide with these constructions published in the newspapers and council documents. Indeed, the public discourse was produced by white, middle-class, heterosexual men for the purpose of maintaining their dominance in Armstrong. Thus, these constructions of whiteness are their versions of societal ‘ideals’, and as such, they cannot be regarded as anything other than dominant versions of Armstrong’s history. As versions, these documents may not accurately reflect Armstrong society, specifically the realities of whiteness in this settler community. Nonetheless, this study is important as it permits an in-depth analysis of the hegemonic constructions of whiteness that served to legitimate very real social actions against non-white and ‘problematic’ white populations within the community.

Furthermore, this study is specific to Armstrong, and specific to constructions within the newspapers and council minutes of the community. While this study may suggest potential patterns of constructing whiteness that may have been replicated in comparable settler communities, the specific findings of this study are applicable solely to Armstrong
during the period 1890 to 1930. Furthermore, the specific findings are applicable solely to the newspapers and council documents of Armstrong-Spallumcheen. In fact, I am eager to expand this same study to include other documents, such as school textbooks, personal diaries, court records, and police files to further engage historic constructions of whiteness in the community.

It is important that we continue to critically study whiteness. As Deborah Brock argues, "When we focus on that which has been marginalized while not interrogating the centre, we unknowingly reproduce a set of normative relations, which defines the margins as the location of the problem" (2003:xiii). We need to continue to problematize whiteness and its role in establishing and maintaining racial hierarchies which privilege whiteness. We cannot ignore whiteness and hope to thwart racism in society. Critically interrogating whiteness, like producing the careful reclamation projects of minority peoples, is an essential element of anti-racism work.

In Canada, there has been some incredible research on historic constructions of white racial identities, including Mackey (2002), Razack (2002), Perry (2001), and Furniss (1999). However, very little work has been done on contemporary constructions of whiteness (Razack (1998) and sections of Mackey (2002) are important exceptions to this). In the age of multiculturalism and the reaffirmation/reclamation of a Canadian national identity (as seen, for example, in the “I am Canadian” ads for Molson Beer), it is important that we continue to critically assess and examine contemporary Canadian whiteness. Furthermore, we need to examine contemporary social structures and examine the ways in which they contribute to replicating constructions of superior whiteness in Canadian society. We need to ask such questions as: How do schools, community newspapers, and other public institutions
contribute to contemporary constructions of whiteness? How do schools, for example, teach whiteness? How does our contemporary legal system construct whiteness? What role does the mass media play in our contemporary understandings of whiteness? How do contemporary constructions of whiteness shape race relations in Canada? How do they shape our relations with white and non-white populations on the world stage?

Furthermore, as anti-racist scholars, we need to address the contemporary 'crisis of whiteness'. In response to affirmative action and other anti-racist measures, some whites, particularly white men, have cried reverse discrimination (see, for example, Hill 2004). More often than not, when I mentioned to a white individual that I was studying the meaning of whiteness, I was told that it was an important subject to study as “whites are blamed for everything” and that “whites are now a dying breed discriminated against by racial minorities.” We need to examine such perceptions surrounding the crisis of whiteness and to continue challenging the white supremacist discourse being used by those whites decrying affirmative action and other anti-racist policy.

Finally, inspired by the work of Ruth Frankenberg in the United States on white women (1993), critical whiteness scholars need to sit down with individual Canadians and ask them what it means to be white in Canada. While it is important to examine the social institutions that construct meanings of whiteness, it is equally important to assess the salience of such constructions within the lives of social actors. We need to have conversations with individual Canadians and explore their understandings of whiteness and the meanings they attach to it. Furthermore, it is important to assess the role that whiteness is perceived to play in the life of the individual, and to examine disparities between individual perceptions and social realities. Ruth Frankenberg’s study of white women was a groundbreaking work on
American whiteness, and Canada is in desperate need of a similar analysis of contemporary white individuals.

It was the complexity of my own whiteness that attracted me to this study, and while I initially held grand illusions of somehow dissipating these complexities through my research, I am left only with more complexities. There is clearly nothing simple or clear about being white, or about being any other colour for that matter. Indeed, if I were asked to articulate the most important consequence of the research for me, it would be the further development of an understanding of the immense complexities involved in constructing whiteness. Whiteness is not simply a division between those racialized as white and non-white, but a complex process of social classification which involves intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. In addition to the complexities posed by the intersectional nature of social identities/positions, the sheer magnitude of discursive constructions produced to delimit whiteness is mind-blowing. With so much discursive construction of whiteness, not only am I aware of the complexity involved in constructing whiteness, but I am equally aware of the complexity involved in unpacking the vast number and array of discursive constructions pertaining to whiteness.

In the end, however, while I have not dissolved the complexities of whiteness, I have offered a contribution to critical anti-racist scholarship and critical whiteness studies. Through analysing the role of society in constructing and attaching meaning to whiteness and non-whiteness, I have provided another example of society's role in constructing 'races', and as such, have driven another nail in the coffin of biological conceptions of race. Furthermore, by dissecting and unpacking claims to white supremacy, and demonstrating the role that
while individuals played in constructing their own dominance in Armstrong society, I have problematized whiteness and its position of privilege in society.

As I write this conclusion, I feel trepidation about the real social change that may come about as a result of this study. I feel as if this thesis is just a small step in the advancement of social equality. Yet, I remind myself, while it may be a little step, it is a step nonetheless.
Primary Sources

Municipal Documents

Minutes of the Armstrong City Council (Armstrong, B.C.) May 1913-December 1929.

Minutes of the Spallumcheen Municipal Council (Armstrong, B.C.) September 24, 1892-December 1929.

Newspapers


Okanagan Commoner (Armstrong, B.C.) April 4, 1918-June 12, 1919.

Other Primary Documents


Secondary Sources


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1 Microfilmed copies of all municipal documents are available at the Armstrong Spallumcheen Museum and Art Gallery, 3415 Pleasant Valley Road, Armstrong.

2 Copies of all newspaper are available at the Armstrong Spallumcheen Museum and Art Gallery, 3415 Pleasant Valley Road, Armstrong. Copies of the Armstrong Advertiser, the Armstrong Advance and Spallumcheen Advocate, and the Okanagan Commoner are also available at the B.C. Provincial Archives, 655 Belleville Street, Victoria.


Heron, Craig. (2003). *Booze- A Distilled History*. Toronto: Between the Lines.


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3 Serra’s book is one of the only comprehensive histories of Armstrong. It is an amazing collection of notes from the community newspapers, city council minutes, and other artefacts. Unfortunately, very little is known about the publication of this text. There is, for example, no publication information printed in the text. The UBC Rare Books and Special Collections Library has a copy of Serra’s book, but also has no references for publishing (call number: F5849.A75S47 1968).


Appendix A – Anti-Chinese Resolution

Resolution
From the Minutes of the Armstrong City Council
November 19, 1913, pp.1-2

The following resolution was proposed by Alderman Fraser and seconded by Wolfenden, and having been read by His Worship was adopted unanimously:

    Whereas the Dominion Government in placing a large head-tax upon certain Oriental immigrants to this country has recognized unseribality [sic] of having a [sic] large oriental elements in the country, and WHEREAS the wide difference between those Orientals and the rest of our Canadian population in language, tradition and customs of life make difficult, if not impossible, the appreciation by the Oriental of our social, political, and national ideals and the assimilation of the Oriental into our national body, and WHEREAS this impossibility of assimilation makes it undesirable for comparative large and solid communities of Orientals to be permanently located in small Anglo-Saxon communities, and

    WHEREAS the City of Armstrong has within its limits a proportionally large area of vegetable lands, some of which hitherto rented by Chinamen, has no passed into the[ir] possession and more of which may at any time come under their permanent control, and

    WHEREAS the ownership and occupation of these lands by Chinamen would not tend to the social, economic, and moral benefit of the community.
BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

1. That this council desires to see legislation enacted, whether local or provincial in its scope, whereby the area referred to would be prevented from further passing into the permanent possession of the Chinese:

2. That this Council strongly deprecate the further disposals of lands in sale to Chinamen by proprietors within the city:

3. That a copy of the resolution be printed in the local paper and copies sent to Hon. Sir Richard McBride, Premier & the Hon. Price Ellison, member of the legislature and the Hon. Martin Burrell, MP.
Whitewashing history: social constructions of whiteness in Armstrong, B.C., 1890-1930 / by Robyn S. Bourgeois.

[University of British Columbia, 2004]

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Land use British Columbia Armstrong History.
Minorities British Columbia Armstrong History.
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Social classes British Columbia Armstrong History.
Armstrong (B.C.) History.
Armstrong (B.C.) Race relations.
Social conditions.