"EAST" AS "WEST:" PLACE, STATE AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MYTH IN VANCOUVER'S CHINATOWN, 1880-1980

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the century 1880-1980, settlers of Chinese origin in Vancouver, British Columbia have been perceived primarily through the nexus of a racial category that defines them as preeminently "Chinese" or "Oriental." Similarly, their place in the urban landscape, "Chinatown," has in one sense been a product of host-society categories and institutional practices that have acted to single Chinatown out, and to render it continuously a place apart.

The point of departure for this thesis is the view that "race" is not an objectively given biological trait, but an idea, defined by the significance people attach to it. It is an idiom around which have been erected epistemological distinctions of insider and outsider, "we" and "they." In view of the problematic nature of race, it is argued that one of the tasks of the social science of race relations is to uncover the socio-historical process by which racial categories are themselves constructed and institutionalized over time and in certain contexts. In developing this argument, the thesis demonstrates the role played by place and the state in the continuous making of a racial category, the "Chinese."

The significance of place is identified for its role as the historically evolving nexus through which the racial category is structured. It is argued that "Chinatown" - like race - is an idea, a representation that belongs to the white European cultural tradition and the intention of the thesis is to trace the career of its social definition over the course of a century. In so doing, the claim is made that Chinatown reveals as much of the "West" as it does of the "East."

Ideas of place and identity would not be so enduring or
effective, however, but for the fact that they have been repeatedly inscribed in the practices of those with the power of definition. It is argued that the three levels of the Canadian state, as the legislative arms of a hegemonic "white" European historical bloc, have granted legitimacy to, and reproduced the race definition process through their national, provincial and neighbourhood practices. This process continues through the long period when "Chinatown" was reviled as a public nuisance, promoted as a "Little Corner of the Far East," reconstructed as a "slum" and finally under the aegis of multiculturalism, courted in the 1970s by the Canadian state precisely for its perceived "Chineseness." Underlying these changing definitions of Chinatown, it is argued, is a deeper racial frame of reference that has been continuously re-created through discriminatory and more subtle ways as part of the exercise of white European cultural domination.

Lying behind the career of the racial category, therefore, is the history of the relationship between place, racial discourse, power and institutional practice in a British settler society. The study is undertaken with a view to uncovering those relationships and by way of a contribution to the recent rediscovery of place in human geography.
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Chapter One

On February 9, 1985, the Toronto Globe and Mail, reporting on South Africa, stated that almost 800 people had their racial classifications changed in 1984 under apartheid policies. South African Home Affairs Minister Frederick De Clerk said in Parliament that:

"518 coloureds became whites, 14 whites became coloureds and 17 Indians became Malay. There were also 89 blacks who became coloured and five coloureds who became black, three blacks who became Indian, one who became an Asian and a Malay who became a Chinese."

While it is true that few countries have traded quite so transparently in the currency of race as has South Africa, there are many parallels outside South Africa to the process by which powerful institutions, such as the state, confer arbitrary racial identities. Classifications of identity - whether of "West Indians" in Britain, "Vietnamese" in Australia, "Maoris" in New Zealand or "Blacks" in America - differ from the South African experience in the degree of force with which they have been wielded, but in kind, they bear the same stamp of a majority society conferring identity. The definition of the "Chinese" in Canada as a racial group is a comparable cultural abstraction that belongs to the dominant white society and Chinatowns stand to this day in Canada and the United States as physical manifestations of that abstraction.

Neighbourhoods of Chinese-origin settlement in Western societies have attracted a considerable amount of scholarship throughout the 20th century. These neighbourhoods have inspired a body of literature whose volume is distinguished by a corresponding dearth of attention given to the ethnic expressions of "host" society members. The neighbourhoods of the latter, by comparison, have escaped attention as objects of study - unless, of course, some aspect of their class status has been under
investigation. The cultural identity and life of British-origin
neighbourhoods overseas has been considered less worthy in itself of
research attention. We read surprisingly little in social science
literature about the internal dynamics of the social and associational
life of British-origin communities in Western societies, about the
assimilation of "new world" to "old world" cultural values in immigrant
lives.\(^1\) There is a sense in which to study such matters would be to
reproduce the familiar, the mundane. We know (or we think we know) what
is "ours" - our thoughts, our subjective reality, our culture. But in
the case of Chinatowns, their peculiarity has stood as the point of
departure for a tradition of scholarship. As an "ethnic" neighbourhood,
its "difference" from "mainstream" society seems to have been accepted
as a key to new knowledge about the lives of "others," the experiences
of others, "their" existential reality. In part, by virtue of its
assumed departure from the norm, Chinatown has been an object of study
in its own right.

There are good reasons why Chinatowns in Western societies should
be examined. For one reason, subjected, as most Chinese-origin
communities have been, to hostile host populations, they serve as
commentaries upon the problems of minority status and the adaptations
and strategies that victimization has required of minority communities.\(^2\)
They have also been an entry point to many important research questions
about cultural transfer overseas and the dynamics of social organization
and community stratification in new environments.\(^3\) In social geography,
Chinatown has prompted questions about the demographic, social and
economic structure of inner-city neighbourhoods as ecological forms and
as cultural hearths. Chinatown has been conceptualized as a launching
point in the assimilation of Chinese immigrants; as a cultural
stronghold, an urban village pitted against encroaching land uses; as the product of segregation on the basis of race; and as a Chinese architectural form. One geographer summarizes the common social science conceptualization of Chinatown in his words: "Chinatown in North America is characterized by a concentration of Chinese people and economic activities in one or more city blocks which forms a unique component of the urban fabric. It is basically an idiosyncratic oriental community amidst an occidental urban environment."

But it is possible to adopt a different point of departure to the study of Chinatown which does not accept or rely upon its "Chineseness" - its "difference" - as an implicit explanatory principle or as a basis for research questions. Only from the a priori acceptance of a discrete "Chineseness" are recent studies intelligible as research projects, such as Thompson's on Toronto's Chinatown which examines the transformation from "the homogeneous population of the traditional period" to "the diverse heterogeneous Chinese population today." One only has to imagine the same vocabulary applied to say, the British-origin communities of Toronto, to see that point.

Indeed "Chinatown" is not "Chinatown" only because the "Chinese," whether by choice or constraint, live there. Rather, it can be argued, as this study undertakes to do, that Chinatown is a social product - one which has a cultural history and a tradition of thought, image and practice that have given it a reality and presence in, and for, white European society. "Chinatown," like "race," is an idea that belongs not to the Chinese, but it will be argued, to white European society. It is, as Ley describes the elements of human apprehension, an object for a subject. For if we do not assume that the term "Chinese" expresses an
unproblematic relationship to biological or cultural constants, but is in one sense a social classification, it becomes apparent that the study of the Chinese and their turf - Chinatown - is also a study of our ideas, our cultural thought, our practices, our interests. Specifically, my concern is for "white" European myths of difference and the manner in which they have been wielded and structured through the nexus of place. Before this argument can be elaborated further, however, it is necessary to indicate the grounds on which my interpretation of the Chinese and Chinatown is freed from recourse to what might be considered underlying constants. This can be done briefly by recalling what is commonplace to contemporary population genetics. This discussion provides the preliminary context for an introduction to the substance of this study which concerns the role of the Canadian state in the socio-historical production of Vancouver's "Chinatown" and the racial category, "Chinese."

Race as a Biological Notion

For many decades, the meaningfulness of the concept of race within the biological sciences has been questioned. Given the open and continuous nature of the human gene system, biologists have agreed that classifications of human units will be relative, imperfect and arbitrary. The developments in genetics in the 1930s discredited the attempts of nineteenth century British, American and western European biologists to divide the world's population into discrete "races" using visible characteristics. Not that there had been agreement among those specialists on the basis for classification or on the number of races that exist; indeed as Miles points out, it was already clear from the hopelessly large number of typologies that existed by the late
nineteenth century that features such as skin colour, facial angle, cranial shape or hair texture did not co-vary in any systematic or consistent way.\textsuperscript{9} The more detailed the classifications, the more difficult the task of classifying became. Still, there had been a general acceptance that the defined "types" were immutable, that they had distinct origins, and that they had distinct biological, cultural, behavioural, spiritual and moral characteristics.

By the 1940s, the idea that human populations were not independent of evolutionary processes had led to a change in emphasis in race science from the anatomy of immutable types to the underlying genotypic variation of populations of individuals. Genetic analysis demonstrated that there is considerable genetic variation between individuals, and that different local geographic populations did not differ from each other absolutely, but only in the relative frequency of different genes.\textsuperscript{10} This finding led to the concept of "geographical race," still used in biology today, to refer to "inbreeding" populations of varying individuals, who differ from other local, inbreeding populations in the proportions of various genes.

The implications of this discovery have been considerable for scientific thinking about race. Physical differences among people obviously exist, and, as mentioned, these differences are statistically clear among groups. The well known Negroid ("black"), Caucasoid ("white") and Mongoloid ("yellow") divisions, identified in almost every race typology since first proposed by J. Blumenbach in the eighteenth century,\textsuperscript{11} have some statistical validity.\textsuperscript{12} Some physical anthropologists confidently continue to use the term "race" on the grounds that clusters of populations, that are genetically defined, can
be identified. So too may some contemporary population geneticists, who are less interested in terminology (whether the clusters are "races," "sub-species," "varieties" or "populations") than what the frequency of given characters says about the processes of natural selection and the dynamics of human evolution.

It is important, however, that human geographers be aware of the difficulties of this more recent use of the term "race" for their own disciplinary concerns. Some biologists argue that the difficulties are sufficient to warrant dispensing with the term altogether, especially given the emotive baggage attached to it. That human populations differ in the distribution of their genes is, as mentioned, a biological fact. But no agreement exists among biologists, geneticists, physical anthropologists and physiologists over whether that fact provides a biological basis for the classification of human "races." Apart from the superficial visible characteristics of skin, hair and bone by which we have been socialized to "see" racial difference, there are, as Appiah notes, "few genetic characteristics to be found in the population of England that are not found in similar proportions in Zaire or China." A major difficulty for classification is that overall genetic profiles vary considerably more within individuals of a given "race" than between individuals of different "races." Most contemporary biologists agree that human genetic variability between the populations of Asia, Europe and Africa is considerably less than that within those populations.

Nor is there a known gene that is 100 per cent of one form in one "race" and 100 per cent of a different form in another "race." In the case of the gene that determines blood type, for example, every population is characterized by some particular mixture of the three forms (A, B and O) of the gene. How large the difference in the
frequency of blood groups or other genetic traits needs to be to warrant a difference of "race" is clearly a matter of judgement. The Kikuya of East Africa, Lewontin et al argue, differ from the Japanese in gene frequencies, but they also differ from their neighbours, the Masai - and although the differences might be less in one case than in the other, it is only a matter of degree. "This means," the authors argue, "that the social and historical definitions of race that put the two East African tribes in the same "race" but put the Japanese in a different "race" were biologically arbitrary."^18

The point by now is clear. "Racial" differences cannot be conceptualized as absolute; genetic variation is continuous. Statistical groupings cannot be mistaken, as Marger notes, "for actual human groupings founded on unmistakable hereditary traits. Racial categories form a continuum of gradual change, not a set of sharply demarcated types. ... The popular division of the human population into three major racial groupings is thus imprecise and largely arbitrary."^19 The short-range differences that exist and by which society and scientists have identified a difference of "race" have been formed and maintained by geographic and other factors obstructing intermarriage, not by biological factors. There are no natural or intrinsic isolating mechanisms and, given our record of continent-hopping, it is doubtful if there were ever "pure" human "stocks."^20 By all accounts, differences between sets of interbreeding people will be minute as compared with the genetic variability among individuals. It is this which prompts Lewontin et al to argue: "Any use of 'racial' categories must take its justification from some other source than biology."^21

Race as a Social Construction
Reflection on the ontological status of race may not seem a valuable exercise for social geographers. After all, W. I. Thomas pointed out many decades ago that if things are defined as real - as race has surely been for years - it is real in its consequences and it is these perceptions and their implications that concern us as social scientists. Robert Park was one of the first social scientists to try to recover human ideas and subjectivity from beneath impersonal evolutionary forces in American sociology in the 1920s with his argument that regardless of the biological significance of race, perceived interpretations of identity were instrumental in defining social distance gradients between populations in the city.22

However, the issue of the ontological status of race is important insofar as it has affected the framing of research questions in the social geography of race and ethnicity. (The term ethnicity has been increasingly used in the place of its more disquieting forerunner, race often being subsumed to ethnicity as in Peach's definition of it as "the linkage of a particular cultural mode with a particular genetic stock."23) In the ecological tradition, there has been a longstanding interest in measuring and analysing patterns of what is said to be "residential segregation by race." Many questions have turned on the relative significance of the independent variables of socio-economic status and what is said to be "race," in the determination of a "racially differentiated" urban space.24 Others have been interested in the dynamics of urban housing markets and how they have become "split" along the lines of race - how the "dual" market has been reinforced by financial and other institutions, and by such gatekeepers as real estate agents.25 There has also been a widespread concern, particularly in the
United States, over the "neighbourhood transition" that is said to occur when blacks "invade" white neighbourhoods.\(^26\) (The process of white invasion of [inner city] black neighbourhoods is commonly termed "neighbourhood revitalization" or "gentrification.") Others have investigated exclusionary strategies involving agencies of the state, such as zoning, school segregation and fiscal measures.\(^27\) Consistent with the predominant liberal perspective on race relations in the social sciences, social geographers have been generally concerned with the effects for urban form of white prejudice toward "racially distinct minorities," to use a common phrase.

Now, as Thomas suggested and Park first demonstrated, as long as people believe in the existence of distinct races, geographers and other social scientists have an important role to play in studying the consequences of this belief. The issue, however, is how research questions with regard to the race issue are to be framed, given that for the purposes of social science, if not for society, race must be located strictly in the realm of ideology. The ecological perspective on race relations in human geography takes what are presumed to be society's definitions of identities in order to make measurements and claims about the patterns and correlates of racial segregation in cities. But the issue is this: is it segregation by distinct and discrete races that exists, or is it social segregation that has been forged around the arbitrary criterion of skin colour? The question is not simply a semantic (or pedantic) one. Whereas the suggestion that segregation by race exists gives implicit causal power to race difference itself - it is something constant that ipso facto inspires prejudice and discrimination - my contention that segregation has been forged
culturally around a socially defined criterion does not invest race with a concreteness of its own. In short, it recognizes that race must also be explained.

The problem of the reification of race is pronounced in survey research based on census data where it is a system of arbitrary social classifications, not self-definitions, that is used as the record of identity. Geographers in the ecological tradition uncritically accept these classifications as a basis for establishing research samples; they make measurements and conduct statistical tests using categories that are implicitly held to imply something constant, in order to reach what is thought to be an objective conclusion about the significance of racial differences for urban conflict and form. As Marshall argues more generally, "what is often unrecognized or ignored is the fact that the 'races' about which many scientists speak and write are those perceived and delineated by particular groups of people who interact in given socio-political contexts."28

History is replete with examples that reveal the entirely arbitrary, and contextual nature of racial classifications. Few geographers interested in the "racial" transition of neighbourhoods in the United States today would study the movement of Americans who came from Germany into Anglo-neighbourhoods. Most would agree that both these groups comprise the "white" race. But this has not always been the case. In New England between the 1850s and 1920s, Solomon demonstrates that those now regarded as members of a "white" race - Anglo-Saxons, Celts, Teutons, etc - were perceived as separate "races."29 Each was considered immutable on the basis of behavioural and physical endowments. Over time, however, New Englanders adapted their evaluation of the "races" of Europe. In Alberta, Canada, in the early decades of the twentieth
century, Germans and East Europeans were not considered "white" but rather, "non-white." In the United States today, an apparently "white" child of a "mixed" marriage may be affiliated with the lower-ranking "black" social category. Similarly indicative of the arbitrary nature of "racial" classifications has been the notion of the "Jewish" race. Only after the 1870s, when the ideology of anti-Semitism took root in Germany, were Jewish people classified as a distinct (and inferior) "race" in Canada. Previously, the outsider definition of Jewish people had corresponded closely to that people's national self-identity based in religious distinctiveness. Likewise, the classification "Indian" cannot be thought of as a term pertaining to some constant biological referent. In pre-contact times, members of the Cree, Ojibway and Iroquois categorized themselves and were categorized by other indigenous groupings as Cree, Ojibway and Iroquois. Only to Europeans did "they" all look and behave alike and as a consequence, the racially defined category "Indian" was coined.

The capriciousness of racial categorizing can also be seen when one shifts from one society to another. Worsley notes that Kashmiri Brahmins, who think of themselves as "white" in contrast to dark-skinned South Indians, are shocked to find themselves classified as "black" or "coloured" in Britain. The same surprise exists, Worsely claims, on the part of Nigerian aristocrats and Muslim hadjis. Further, it is likely that an individual classified as "black" in the United States would be classified as "white" in Brazil because the systems of classification and criteria used are not consistent from one society to another. In New Guinea what passes in our experience for a "white" person is considered "red" by some "tribes." For that matter, one may
ask, who ever saw a white white person, not to mention a yellow one?

A growing literature on the conceptualization of ethnicity and ancestral culture would also suggest these social categorizations are problematic as well. There is by now a convincing critique of a tradition of uncritical cultural relativism in North American ethnic studies where ethnicity was largely accepted as an innate property of culture-bearing groups. According to the more recent argument (advanced in anthropology nearly twenty years ago), ethnic groups are not conceptualized as carriers of a homogeneous culture but are defined organizationally and subjectively by internal rules of exclusion and inclusion around symbols of actual or perceived common descent such as language, cultural practices, religion. Cultural differences have an indisputable subjective and objective reality in this social view of ethnicity – they may even take on a primordial significance for some people in some social conditions – but ancestral culture is not mystified as an inventory of elements to which people are unambiguously bound. It is not fixed, atavistic or "superorganic," as if an external system of "Chineseness," for example, is imbibed across generation and context by a person of Chinese origin in Hong Kong, a third generation Chinese-origin resident of Malaysia, a Chinese in mainland China, a Chinese-origin immigrant to South Africa, and a fourth generation Chinese-origin citizen of Vancouver. It may be the case that for some such residents in Canada, a Chinese heritage is a cardinal idiom of self-identity, but equally for others, it may not.

It may also be the case that for some residents of Chinese origin in Canada, their self-definitions of ethnic identity may correspond to the identity ascribed by others, but again, this is not necessarily so and cannot be assumed. Self (emic) and other (etic) definitions must be
analytically distinguished because both tend to shift with changing social conditions and each is based on a different process. As Banton argues, the classification from without is predicated on exclusive processes, whereas the identity defined from within is based subjectively on inclusive processes.\textsuperscript{41}

The point is that for the purposes of social science, ethnic group affiliation cannot be assumed a priori from ethnic or racial categories as is often the case in folk life, where taken for granted racial and cultural differences are often conflated in the national type or essence - "Chinese" or "Asian" or "Oriental." For Cohen, this presents an epistemological dilemma for anthropologists, a "unit problem" where "the named ethnic entities we accept, often unthinkingly, as basic givens in the literature are often arbitrarily or, even worse, inaccurately imposed."\textsuperscript{42} In geography, Jackson states a similar dilemma in his comment (after Padillo) that, "it is only from the standpoint of American society that Puerto Ricans form a group, defined as either a racial group, an ethnic group, or a cultural group."\textsuperscript{43}

If "race," ethnicity and ancestral culture are conceptualized as problematic, some research questions on the "Chinese" in British Columbia are suggested that engage the study of folk definitions with the more transcendent domain of public ideology. For one, it becomes important to uncover the social and political process by which racial categories are themselves constructed, institutionalized and transmitted over time. The interest turns to the broader socially constructed racial frame of reference out of which the categories are defined and public attitudes shaped. As suggested above, "racial" categories in themselves possess no analytical utility, having no more reality than eye or hair
colour. Following from this, one of the tasks of the social science of race relations is to trace the social process by which the idiom of race is employed and re-employed in certain cultural and historical contexts to designate arbitrary categories of insiders and outsiders. Banton suggests as much in his statement: "Though much has been said about the evils associated with racial classification, there has been little systematic study of the process." It is the intention of this thesis to invoke that mandate and to trace the evolution of the race definition process in one setting with reference to the "racial" category "Chinese."

The study of the social construction of racial categories would not in itself be so important but for the fact that it represents at once the story of the relationship between power, discourse and the collective representations of dominant historical groups. Racial categories have been systematically used in the service of exclusion and domination since the rise to power of a superordinate European category from the end of the sixteenth and certainly by the nineteenth century. In that sense racial classification has been no "innocent" cultural process but also a historical and a political operation in the broad sense of being divisive and exclusive. Its study must therefore have as a point of departure the context of "we" and "they" distinctions that were based in the consolidation and legitimation of power by a hegemonic white European "we" category over various categories of racially defined others. In this act of arbitrary category legislation, governments have had a critical bearing it will be argued, not least because of their considerable "power of definition," to use the valuable phrase of Western.
But not only is it important to investigate how particular signs have been wielded by powerful institutions to construct a system of racial classification, it is also important to give attention to the physical manifestation of this process. Racial ideology does not operate simply in the minds of historical actors but is made "real" or concrete through practices that have material effects at the local level. It is in space that racial ideology becomes cemented and it is through place, as I will show in the example of "Chinatown," that it is given a local referent, granted a body of meaning, structured, justified, and reproduced. As symbolic interactionists would insist, a place is not given in the material objects of the external world but is, in part constructed socially, out of the meaning that is conferred upon some arbitrarily defined locality. It can be argued, then, that space and place do not play an incidental part in the process of racial categorization but are integrally part of its making and unfolding. This is not because of any intrinsic properties of space and place; their structuring role cannot be asserted on logical grounds, but rather must be demonstrated through diachronic analysis. As Abrams has argued, the analysis of the structuring of social life must be "situated in process, in time," but it must also be located, as many human geographers have asserted, in the medium of space and place. Before this argument is developed however, some indication of the literature in social and cultural geography that has guided my concern with "Chinatown" will be provided.

Conceptualizations of Landscape in Cultural and Social Geography

The insight that our human landscapes hold clues to the values and activities of their authors, has provided the substance for a long
tradition of landscape interpretation in human geography. Since Carl Sauer's dictum in 1925 that the land be seen "with the eyes of its former occupants, from the standpoint of their needs and capacities," geographers have taken up the challenge of interpreting a variety of landscapes, both those produced through the unconscious daily processes of everyday life and those formed through more calculated design. At the time, Sauer's work constituted a major breakthrough in North American geographic thought by challenging the deterministic view of the environment as "the scene on which the activity of man unfolds itself" and suggesting the virtue of an alternative notion called the "cultural landscape" which is "fashioned from the natural landscape by a culture group." In this transformation "at the hands of man," Sauer wrote, "Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium." Accordingly, it was incumbent upon "culture-historical geography" as the "study of area," to reconstruct the "organic quality of land and life in terms of each other," much as had the géographie humaine of Vidal de la Blache.47

In Canadian human geography, this interpretive, historical approach to the man/land relationship was exemplified in the regional studies of the Maritime provinces by Andrew Clark in the mid-1940s, 1950s and 1960s,48 while in Britain, the notion of the landscape as a rich historical record of man's activities was illustrated in the pioneer landscape history of W.G. Hoskins.49 It has been noted elsewhere, however, that in practice, the possibilities of a fully dialectical approach to the landscape and its cultural milieu, were in time eclipsed by more technical inventories of indicators in the landscape - the mapping of settlement types, house forms, barns, crop associations - and by classifications of material objects that comprised "inscriptions" in a "habitat" of a "genre de vie."50

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It is not necessary to detail here the changes in geographic thought that preempted the idiographic approach to landscape character and history. It is sufficient to recall that the formalism of deductive science seduced a large part of the discipline of human geography into a positivistic science of spatial relations during the late 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. In this tradition, the human (built) landscape became an inert object, while meaning was subsumed to either the dictates of an abstract spatial logic or the behavioural mechanisms of stimulus and response. The built environment became simply an unproblematic point of departure for the measurement of observable regularities and the testing of hypotheses and spatial models. As an objectively given reality, the landscape was simply detachable from subjective and intersubjective or, as they were deemed, "metaphysical" realms.

The limits that the suspension of non-observable domains presented to explanation of spatial form prompted some important epistemological challenges in the 1970s. Again, these developments are by now well known, but central to them was the attempt to retrieve the subject from the anonymity of spatial science. Inspired by the philosophies of meaning, in particular phenomenology, the rediscovery of the reflective subject entailed a significant break with the positivist dualisms of subject and object, fact and value. In particular a neo-Kantian school of landscape interpretation ventured into the workings of the mind's forms of intuition and its categories of understanding which process, filter, re-form and de-form the objective world by, and for, the subject. From this epistemological vantage point, the landscape was no longer an external inert entity but relationally bound to its subject. Place and landscape began to achieve a meaning and in
part, even their configuration, through the intentionality of the subject towards them. "Mere space" became, in the words of Tuan "an intensely human place." The phenomenology of the life world could, of course, only be uncovered and understood through an interpretive methodology that as Entrikin argued, used the terms and concepts of the actor within that world.

While some humanistic geographers observed that the landscape is the biography of its creator - individuals (often elites), or "authors" - who, over time, create both the imagery and objectivity of landscape, others, after Schutz's constitutive phenomenology and Berger and Luckmann's synthesis of Weber and Durkheim in sociology, developed the idea that the subjective representation of the external world is not idiosyncratic but social. Images and experiences of place are collectively shared and constructed it was argued. For example, in a rebuffal of positivist geography's conceptualization of space in the early 1970s, Ley demonstrated that it was shared interpretations of the social contours of an insular inner city environment that structured action and behaviour. Such work heralded a radical shift, although by no means complete, from the positivistic interest in the spatial organization of society to the humanistic concern for the social organization and construction of the landscape and place. Both became negotiated realities that revealed the activities and values of a purposeful set of actors. "Every landscape is a code and its study may be undertaken as a deciphering of meaning," said Meinig. As a social product, the landscape became our "unwitting autobiography."

The interactionist perspective on place and landscape was invigorated from another direction in the early 1980s by a critique that demanded a more ambitious practice of landscape interpretation. This
critique has been directed specifically at the Berkeley tradition of cultural/historical geography after Carl Sauer, but to the extent that the humanistic geography of the 1970s did not, curiously, articulate a clear conception of culture, the critique has wider relevance. According to Duncan, it has been the tendency to view culture as, in the words of Zelinsky, "an autonomous virtually super-organic system that functions and evolves according to its own internal logic and presumed set of rules," that has stilted the interpretation of landscape in cultural geography. Bestowed with "ways of life," whose material and non-material artifacts are inscribed in the environment, the landscape was for the Berkeley tradition a reflection of the causal power of culture. But if culture is conceptualized, as Duncan and others have suggested, following Clifford Geertz, as a web of symbolic codes that provide a context for social action and cannot be abstracted in an a priori manner as an independent entity, new possibilities for landscape interpretation are possible. For one, this conceptualization of culture demands a more active notion of the landscape or built environment as a negotiated, symbolic product itself - one that is a part, not simply a medium or a "record," as Sauer described it, of the larger socio-cultural and political milieu. This is a focus engaged with, but which clearly reaches beyond, the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of landscape as a self-contained area of enquiry.

In social and cultural geography, such possibilities are currently being explored through a hermeneutic methodology where the landscape is conceptualized as a text that can be read and translated as a means of illuminating the shared ideas, practices and contexts of, as Ley puts it, "the broader world view instrumental in its creation."
Landscape interpretation in this approach consists of a description of the particular symbolic forms of social life, a description "thickened" by locating such forms, including specific landscapes, within the whole matrix of meaning of which they are a part and in terms of which they get their definition. In this double hermeneutic, the ethnography of landscape meaning becomes also the study of the interaction between landscape, social identity, interests and context, and cultural and social geography are united in a common, theoretically informed research agenda.

The social construction of landscape is not always the self-conscious contrivance of a social or political group. Our everyday landscapes, for example, are for the most part, an unwitting cultural product of routinized social processes that leave a record of indelible and revealing traces. However the hermeneutic approach does lend itself most readily to interpretation of ritualized landscapes where there has been a deliberate effort on the part of certain agents to impart a social, religious and/or political message in built form. In this vein there have been studies, for example, of the form of monuments to different sects of the Buddhist tradition in the temples of the Kyoto-Nara region of Japan; the symbolic transformation of the pre-British landscape of Kandy, Sri Lanka, through myth; and the reshaping of the urban landscape of post-colonial Madras. In the latter, the built forms of the southern-Indian city are shown by Lewandowski to point beyond themselves to the legitimizing strategies adopted by the state government of Tamil Nadu, which rebuilt the environment in the image of the pre-colonial Hindu tradition. Similarly, the contemporary anglophile elite neighbourhoods of Shaughnessy in Vancouver and Westchester in New York state are manicured signifying landscapes that are themselves cultural
expressions of a social identity. The comparative technique has also brought into relief the role of political ideology in shaping the landscape in its image in False Creek in Vancouver. Ley has demonstrated that the two shores of the creek are purposeful commentaries of, on the one (south) side, the liberal reform ideology of the 1970s and on the other (north) side, the rational, corporate world view in the 1980s. These studies distinguish a "new cultural geography" which, in the words of Ley, "marries the commitment to detailed local investigation with an orientation to broader contexts, thereby strengthening the explanatory power of landscape interpretation and which regards both culture and the landscape as active and not simply passive elements, implicated in the vying of interest groups and in the production and reproduction of the social order." Out of this insight, that the local provides an entrée into the overarching, has come what Jackson calls a "rediscovery of place" in cultural and social geography.

Situating Place in Process in Time

Within the social geography of the post-positivist era, there has been a tendency to treat history as past time, as a backdrop to the present, as if the present were almost an autonomous creation. Despite the recent appeals of some social geographers, there has been an unwillingness to venture into the recesses of history and interpret the social realities and experiences of the past with the benefit of our own analytical distance. Yet contemporary social theory is replete with appeals of the kind, articulated by C. Wright Mills in the late 1950s, for a synthesis of the agendas of history and other human sciences. In sociology, Abrams' problematic of structuring and Giddens' theory of
structuration (which entertains in a limited way the importance of space for the workings of social process), are programmatic responses to precisely that appeal.

There seems much to commend social geographers to engage the spirit of that challenge for, as noted earlier, the structuring of social life does not operate independently of space and place but is continuously forged, objectified, transformed and interpreted through them. As many human geographers would agree, space and place are not incidental to the reproduction of social life because they provide the medium of its material embeddedness. However, if we are to demonstrate the structuring role of place in the "production and reproduction of the social order," it seems helpful to go beyond the hermeneutic circle as it is currently operationalized, where the landscape is read, as opposed to itself reconstructed as a historically evolving social and material reality. One promising strategy is to conceptualize the landscape and place as objects being "made" (rather than as ones that are "seen"), and thereby to demonstrate through diachronic analysis, the sense in which place is a cultural production under continuous creation and transformation. Place is itself a "historically contingent process," as Pred has written\textsuperscript{68}, one that is produced out of, and does itself emergently inform, the set of social relations and ideologies of which it is a part. In this agenda, the study of landscape meaning is incorporated into a more critical hermeneutic examination of the making and remaking of a social and symbolic order - an ongoing process that is reciprocally and recursively engaged with the production and reproduction of place. Fabian argues for a similar project in his critique of the epistemological bias of symbolic (and taxonomic perspectives in) anthropology. "Sign theories of culture," he argues,
"are theories of representation not of production; of exchange or 'traffic,' not of creation; of meaning not of praxis."

Clearly this is a broad research agenda to which a single study can only make a small contribution. There are, of course, a number of dimensions and categories, including "race," around which social life is organized and other types of landscapes whose change over time could be reconstructed with a view to uncovering the relationship between place and social process. Some studies might emphasize the changing symbolism and definition of place from the vantage point of residents' perceptions and actions, whereas others, such as this study, will concern the role of external agents in the social definition and production of place. Indeed the application of a diachronic approach to "Chinatown" as a landscape type might be particularly revealing, for what is regularly taken-for-granted in social-scientific treatments of this territory as an implicit or explicit explanatory principle - its "Chineseness" - may become of secondary significance from a different epistemological vantage point. When operationalized over time, such a perspective points to a new interpretation, even explanation of "Chinatown." We now return more directly to the concern of this study which is the social production of Vancouver's Chinatown and the way in which, through the course of its long career, it has been implicated in the making of a racial classification, "Chinese," in one British settler society. As part of this argument, it is helpful to make some general comments about the conceptualization of Chinatown I wish to develop in this study.

"Chinatown" as a Western Representation

In a simple physical sense, the settlements of Chinese-origin
residents in North America have been, to a large extent, the product of their receiving societies. As many scholars of overseas Chinese settlements have already noted and as the Vancouver example will attest, spatial segregation grew out of a hostile social environment. The idiom of race became objectified during the nineteenth century in the societies of North America (and Australia) through a spatial distancing of those deemed outsiders by virtue of their perceived inherent difference from what was equally arbitrarily deemed as the "white" European norm. Rich and poor Chinese-origin settlers were confined, through informal suasion and defensive reaction, to nucleated and marginal settlements.

Much less consideration, however, has been given to the term "Chinatown," and the sense in which that too, as a title and as an idea, belongs to the outside society. Yet the implications of this for the conceptualization of Chinatown are not unimportant, as this study aims to demonstrate.

It is apparent that, regardless of how each of the residents of North America's Chinese-origin settlements have defined themselves and each other - whether it be by class, occupation, ethnicity, region of origin in China, surname, generation, gender, place of birth, physical appearance, or other self ascriptions - the settlements have been apprehended and classified by their "host" societies, as their very name suggests, on the basis of one arbitrary idiom. That is, the preeminent "racial" classification of this district in many white European societies has not been one that has required the acknowledgement or acceptance of the residents. It has been sufficient for non-residents to construct a demarcation between "their" territory and "our" territory in their own minds. "Their" territory has thereby become "theirs."
Edward Said has made this point in his important discussion of the regionalization of the world into such "imaginative geographies" as the "Orient" and he describes the process as one that "helps the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close and what is far away." From this vantage point we can argue that "Chinatown," for all that it has often been a deliberately isolated territory, is also an arbitrary classification conferred relationally by and for "white" Europeans. This is evident in the set of suppositions, associations and fictions with which, as we shall see in the Vancouver case, the term "Chinatown" has been imbued. In short, "Chinatown" is a social space or an evaluative classification that is embedded in the language and ethos of its representers and conferred upon the concrete reality of respective "Chinese" settlements. Needless to say, the settlements of British-origin pioneers were not being called "Anglotowns," nor their residents "Occidentals."

It should be stated at the outset that this argument does not overlook the role of Chinese residents in their own "place-making." That Chinese immigrants, like all people abroad, have brought with them a cultural baggage that shapes their behaviour in new settings, can hardly be disputed. Much important scholarship has been devoted to outlining and explaining precisely the significance of these shared traditions for the internal dynamics of North America's Chinatowns as overseas Chinese colonies. Lyman, for example, has argued that "Although sinophobic pressure might explain the existence of a segregated residential quarter for people racially visible and culturally distinct, it does not account for the long maintenance of autonomous political and legal institutions.
within the isolated community." Lyman is surely correct to identify the role of in-group ties in Chinatown's development, just as ethnic affiliations have likely been important in the career of Vancouver's British-origin Shaughnessy. But for the purposes of this study, it is assumed that a community of settlers from China eeked out an existence in their adopted countries which, as with all immigrant communities, combined elements of new- and old-world values and activities. The decision not to give primary attention to the residents' sense of place is not to strip the residents of any consciousness they may have had as Chinese or deny them, as said, an active role in building their neighbourhood. Perhaps some elite Chinese-origin residents were even eager to limit contact with non-Chinese, just as China had obviated contact with western "barbarians" over the centuries since the first medieval visitors. Likely they were as convinced of the clarity of their own classifications of their newly adopted society, as were "white" Europeans of theirs.

But the multiple reality of place invites another equally important but neglected viewpoint. Contrary to conventional social-scientific conceptualizations of Chinatown as an "ethnic neighbourhood" with its own principles of internal coherence - "a distinct ethnic entity," that is "a system of statuses and roles based on Chinese descent, Chinese culture and Chinese language," as Thompson puts it - Chinatown from the vantage point I am suggesting belongs less to the "Chinese" than to the cultural tradition and interests of its representers. It illuminates not simply "white" European attitudes, indeed prejudices, of the kind that, according to Ward and others in the liberal tradition, accounted for the white reaction to "John Chinaman" in British Columbia. More precisely and inclusively, "Chinatown"
reveals white European categories, white European myths of difference inherited from the whole lexicon of race that it will be shown in Chapter Two, gained currency in North American and European culture from the mid-nineteenth century.

The prejudice and discrimination framework has been the most prominent approach to the study of the Chinese in British Columbia and in the more general field of race relations. The Chinese were stigmatized and penalized, it has been argued, because "white British Columbians yearned for a racially homogeneous society." It was "that psychological tension which inhered in the racially plural condition," Ward argues, that was the decisive "imperative" behind the pattern of social relations, a tension backed by irrational fears and a belief in white superiority. From this social psychological perspective the Chinese were victims, hapless targets of an oppressive nativism, and Chinatown (if we are to extend the liberal thesis), an ostracized colony of the East.

But it is difficult to locate the analytical power of Ward's prejudice framework. In itself prejudice is a rather none-too-revealing phenomenon that relies upon a narrow definition of racism as, in the words of Ward "invidious discrimination among differing racial groups." In such a definition, race is reified as something external or prior to the situation under study with a causal power of its own. Sinophobia was a product of the fears that followed from the "racially plural condition." But unless the argument is advanced that the fears followed somehow "naturally" from presumed racial differences (which Ward would not probably want), the psychologistic explanation begs the question. Why were there such fears? It is apparent that the white
The emphasis of the liberal perspective on the transition from "intolerant" to "tolerant" white attitudes in the study of the Chinese in British Columbia has limited the conceptualization of Chinatown - just as it has the definition of a "race relations situation" in the wider literature on the subject. Emphasis has been placed upon situations of negative ascription and conflict. John Rex for example argues that one of the necessary elements of such race relation situations is "abnormally harsh exploitation, coercion and competition," while for van den Berghe they obtain where phenotypical differences are made the basis for invidious distinctions. As mentioned earlier, Chinatown's career has been conceptualized around the theme of shifts in white attitudes. As the home of the disliked Chinese, Chinatown was a target of oppression until the immediate post-World War Two era (when most studies end), from which time the ghetto enjoyed a more liberal climate of attitudes.

There can be no disputing the accuracy of this transition but the emphasis on the passage from intolerance to tolerance (i.e. attitudes) has foreclosed the ability to see connections between "Chinatown" and broader ideological patterns. Indeed the underlying racial frame of reference has endured in North American culture long after the excesses of prejudice and intolerance have been curtailed. The focus on the level of attitudes has obscured this deeper continuity and thus it is the endurance, in changing guises, of collective cultural
conceptions of the "Chinese" and "Chinatown" up to the present, that accounts for my decision to study the etiology of the racial classification not only during the years of negative stereotyping, but through to the recent era when a new form of official targeting, does I believe, carry the categorization forward.

In itself, the idea of "Chinatown" might not be so important or enduring but for the fact that it has been continuously produced and mobilized by powerful agents with the authority to translate selected ideas into practice. Foremost among these agents have been the levels of government which, as the legislative props of "white" European cultural domination, have legitimized and reinforced the distilled white European vision of identity and place. Indeed as mentioned earlier, it is impossible to study anything so benign as a simple idea of Chinatown because the process of racial classification cannot be divorced from the long rise to cultural hegemony of a white European "we." "Race" has been a symbol that has been consistently manipulated since the late eighteenth century - less out of some immanent prejudice than out of cultural conformity to an order that has legitimized, ideologically, the social and economic power of those who have inherited and given fresh effect to myths of "difference." The state has had a critical role to play in the making of the social and spatial categories of interest to this study. Without the backing of legislative power that dignifies, transmits, cements and carries forward those categories through a public channel, each would simply be another social construction. The state, then, it will be argued, has been a key agent in the institutionalization of "race" as a central organizing principle in British-settler societies, such as British Columbia.
Not only does the state sanction the historical idea of "Chinatown" through practices that support or create its social definition, but state practices have also continuously reproduced the material, physical reality of a place apart. Once the locus of Chinese-origin settlement accrued to it a certain field of cultural meanings, these will be seen to have consequences for institutional practices that in turn reproduce the idea of "Chinatown" and its physical referent. The symbolic and concrete realities have consistently propped each other up and together they will be seen to provide the ongoing context and justification for recurring rounds of state practice in the continuous making and remaking of "Chinatown." This process can be documented over the course of a century - from the time of neighbourhood harassment and negative stereotyping, through a period of official classification as a tourist amenity in the 1930s and a "slum" in the 1950s and 1960s, to the recent era when "Chinatown," in many Western urban settings, has been courted by the state precisely for its perceived "Chineseness." Across this century, the classification "Chinese" has remained the public signature of a people and a place.

The social definition of "Chinatown" is not a simple linear process, where one image is borne to be replaced by another which is in turn transformed by a third. The value of a diachronic study of place "situated in process in time" is its capacity to demonstrate the emergent sense in which the present continuously contains, and is impregnated by, the past. Over the course of the century, "Chinatown" becomes, like the classification "Chinese," a store of competing collective representations, to use Durkheim's expression, where residues of past conceptions of identity and place continue to inform later formulations. 78
From these comments, we can see that the significance of place in the history of the social process of racial classification is considerable: it is the nexus through which a racial category is locally cemented and structured. It is also the locus around which received and domestically adapted ideas about race and certain categories like "Chinese" and "Oriental" cohere, are justified and invigorated. Place, as an idea and a concrete form, is continuously inheriting prior perceptions, interests and practices – and providing the context for new ones. It is a cultural and historical product that contains, in the example of Chinatown, the biography of a "white" European point of view and the institutional practices that have drawn upon and perpetually charged an ideology of racial difference. In short, "Chinatown" as a Western landscape type is implicated in the institutionalization of symbolic orders organized around the idiom of race. As Said has argued with reference to the arbitrary European notion of the "Orient," Chinatown reveals as much of the "West" as it does of the "East."

The State and Racial Ideology

The exploitation of the race idea in many Western countries has long been a strategy for securing and maintaining a dominant "white" social fabric. To use the language of Antonio Gramsci, racial ideology has been a "critical unifying principle" in consolidating the power of a hegemonic white European "historical bloc" from the late eighteenth century.79 In using the term "hegemonic" "one goes beyond 'culture,' in its insistence on relating the 'whole social process,'" to, as Raymond Williams has argued, "specific distributions of power and influence."80
A hegemonic culture then, is not simply a configuration of manifestly cultural values, be they European or Islamic but, following Williams and Gramsci, is a system of ideas, practices and social relations that are diffused and realized through a society in most of its institutional and private manifestations.

In the bid to achieve that broadly-based European cultural domination, the symbol of race has been put to simple, yet effective service. In many British settler-societies, it has served to unify social groups from all classes into a "higher" white cultural "unity" and justified a distancing from, and subordination of, a metaphorical racial Other. Only 100 years ago, the colony of British Columbia was over 50 per cent "Indian." But through a process of both dictatorial and unconscious manipulation - from initial strategies of force to those of immigration restriction (of various categories of "them") and recruitment (of "us"), and a strict cultural control over the division of labour - British Columbia imperceptibly but surely became the society of white "institutional completeness" that it is today.

As the legal guardian of white European cultural domination in Western society, the state has occupied a critical nexus in the legitimization and dissemination of the discourse of race. By "discourse" is meant a body of ideas, vocabulary and premises. Foucault has used the term in his critical examination of the oblique functioning of power in Western societies. By grounding discourses (scientific and pseudo-scientific) in the concrete institutional practices that historically surrounded them, Foucault has unmasked the historical and cultural constitution of outsiders like the mental patient and the prisoner. The discourses of mental illness and criminality justified "dividing practices" by which agencies of the state maintained social control over
mentally ill and criminal subjects, Foucault has argued. In geography, Sibley has also attempted to invest the study of minorities with wider significance by critically examining "the ideological aspect of the outsider problem" in Western urban society. For Sibley, outsider status cannot be adequately explained by "differentiating characteristics" because it is the dominant society that in large part creates those characteristics by specifying them - a process in which, Sibley argues, the agencies of the state are widely implicated to the extent that they maintain the boundaries of the larger society and its "beliefs about the proper constitution of social life."85

One of the objectives of this thesis is to demonstrate that "race," as a form of discourse through which the category of outsiders - "Chinese" - was constituted in one setting, has received part of its remarkable effectiveness and endurance from the various practices and rhetoric of government. It is not, however, the intention of this study to present a case for a theory of the state. My interest in the state is no more ambitious than to demonstrate its part, historically, in the institutionalization of the race definition process through place. I see this empirical record of the role of state institutions in the construction and legitimation of the symbolic order as a useful counter to the economism that has characterized recent writing on the state in social geography.86 As Breton has argued in a related paper on the restructuring of the symbolic order by the Canadian state, the state is "not only involved in the economy's management, the pursuit of growth, and the initiation or support of changes found necessary in that sphere. It is also engaged in managing the symbolic system, the protection of its integrity and its adaptation to new circumstances."87
However it will be clear from the examples cited above that the role of the state in the history of outsider status must be conceptualized as much more than mere government. Although for practical purposes, I will operationalize the state as the levels of government, the state's role must be seen in relation to other spheres, such as the economic, and in the case of this study, the cultural realm. As will be apparent from earlier comments, this study defines racial ideology (following Prager), to be a more or less culturally universal scheme of relatively stable thought comprising myths about essential difference that "interpret reality by denying individuality."

It is a frame of reference containing shared representations of the beliefs, sentiments and interests of Western society and one which has its own emergent and determinate effects.

States in British settler societies have participated actively in the legitimation and dissemination of this ideology. State officials and politicians have inherited and sanctioned racial ideology as part of the historical exercise of a broadly-based white European cultural domination over the social, economic and political order. In so doing, they have helped "nationalize" (in Gramsci's words), the unifying racial ideology and to institutionalize the power relations behind the racial frame of reference. As stated earlier, racial categories are historical products which have accompanied and served to justify the rise to power of a dominant white European "historical bloc." To the extent that the state has given legislative backing to the racial world view of a historically dominant sector, the political sphere has been organically linked with the cultural realm. Gramsci recognized the complex interaction of these spheres, and his non-reductionist and non-economistic social and political theory is careful, as Lears argues, not
to reduce questions of political practice and cultural processes to the
relations of production, a point to which we shall return in the
Conclusion. For the purposes of this Introduction, it is important to
note the state's links to the cultural realm. Having examined the
empirical evidence for that relationship, the study concludes with a
more detailed discussion of the relevance of the concept of hegemony for
future research in the field of race relations.

This conceptualization of the state's intervention in the Chinese
question departs from "idealist" treatments of the state in the British
Columbia context (discussed earlier) in the sense that race is
conceptualized as problematic. Accordingly, the state is viewed more
actively, implicated as it is in the construction of an epistemological
order of insider and outsider. It also departs from positions that view
the relationship between racial ideology and the state from a structural
Marxist problematic. It has been argued that the production and
reproduction of racial ideology can be explained in terms of the
contribution which an ethnically segregated division of labour makes to
the maintenance of a system of class exploitation. From that
perspective, the state is conceptualized as a guardian of the capitalist
economic order, securing the conditions for the maintenance of
accumulation such as are provided by cheap labour without settler or
citizenship status. To cite an example from the literature on the
Chinese in British Columbia, Warburton has argued that racial hostility
is ultimately a product of the structural "contradiction between the
demands of higher wages on the part of workers ... and the demands for
cheap labour on the part of employers," a class on whose behalf the
state operated by recruiting and helping to subordinate the necessary
labour. In a different setting Greenberg has attempted to explain the genesis and perpetuation of racial ideology in South Africa and Alabama in class terms, as a derivative of a system of production that required a cheap and dispensable labour force, and a racially divided working class. In meeting both of these structurally ordained needs, the state, Greenberg contends, fulfilled a vital and necessary role. "Class actors," he claims, "breathe life into racial categories bringing the elaboration of a state machinery to control and limit the proletarianization of the subordinate population." In view of the difficulties of reading causes from functions in Greenberg's argument that racial ideology is a reflection of production needs and interests, I do not share his related point that the state's role in sponsoring racial ideology can be explained in terms of prior structural principles. There are also difficulties with the argument that racial ideology is a product of the intentionality of a capitalist class, on whose behalf the state is said to operate by legislating status divisions among the workers. This can be the case, but as Worsely argues, the possibility of such a strategy obviously depends in the first place upon the prior existence of a shared repertoire of assumptions about "race" and the social ranking of "races." To understand why Chinese were considered cheap labour in the first place requires an acknowledgement of the power of cultural conceptions about the "Chinese" (indulged equally by Chinese labour contractors). To explain the cheapness of Chinese labour in terms, for example, of the uneven development of capitalism which created low subsistence levels in China, is only a more sophisticated version of the nineteenth century view held by employers and workers that overseas Chinese had an inherently "Chinese" standard of living.
Racial ideology has undeniably been exploited by a propertied class and also, as will be seen in the Canadian example, by a Dominion government intent on building a trans-railroad as cheaply as possible. Another study might also demonstrate that colour-based occupational segregation has reinforced the economic control of the white hegemonic category. Moreover, we know that the discourse of "race" was systematized during the period of imperialist expansion. However as Fredrickson has written: "Industrial capitalism may be a major cause of social and economic inequality in the modern world, but it makes little historical sense to view it as a source of ideologies directly sanctioning racial discrimination." Racial ideology of the nineteenth century inherited and derived its strength from preexisting cultural systems of reference by which the world, certainly since Aristotle, has identified the civilized and uncivilized, master/slave, Christian/heathen, "white"/"black" and West/East - dualisms that hardened around the modern race idea of the nineteenth century. As Fredrickson's statement suggests, colour-based inequality cannot by any means be explained solely in terms of racial ideology. But collective cultural conceptions about "racial" categories, when allowed to have material effects through the sanction of such authorities as the state, have made their own powerful and distinct contribution to such structures of inequality.

This discussion has taken us far from "Chinatown" but it has been presented in order to make the claim that cultural understandings about "race" should be further studied and assessed on their own terms. I do not claim that the operation of white European cultural hegemony can be understood without reference to broader changes in the development of
a capitalist economy but I do suggest that insufficient attention has been paid in the race relations literature to the larger cultural and ideational matrix out of which racial categories were built and attitudes shaped. Neither the prejudice framework nor the structuralist position give sufficient recognition to the efficacy of the cultural realm and it is the intention of this thesis to present a case for its explanatory power in a study that situates the cultural conceptions of one racial category and one racially defined place within their constitutive historical context.

"East" as "West:" Place and State and the Institutionalization of Myth in Vancouver, Canada

This thesis attempts to make intelligible the links between racial ideology and institutional practice in a study of the relationship between Vancouver's Chinatown and the three levels of the Canadian government from 1880 to 1980. The study will trace the making of Vancouver's "Chinatown" as a historically evolving social product of "white" European image and practice and how it has continuously reflected and informed the racial classification "Chinese." This argument can be illustrated diagrammatically in order to convey the dynamic of place in process over time (see over). In so reconstructing Vancouver's "Chinatown," from a period of harassment to a period of public acceptance, the study will uncover the social process that lies beneath what is often uncritically taken to be the objective, theoretical category of "race."

The conceptualization of "Chinatown" that I will be developing through the empirical details of the Vancouver case study has general application, but it is sensitive to the range of contingencies that are
"EAST" AS "WEST": PLACE, STATE AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MYTH

PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF A CATEGORY → 1980

State practices

"Chinese" as a category

we/they distinctions

West/East

Christian/heathen

civilized/uncivilized

Master/slave

Social Darwinism/Orientalism

Chinatown on the ground

"Chinese as a category

"Chinese" as an idea

"China town" as an idea

"Chinatown on the ground

"Chinatown" as an idea

Chinese" as a category

we/they distinctions

West/East

Canadian/Chinese

mainstream society/ethnic groups

Multiculturalism

PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF PLACE → 1980
introduced by the local setting. They can not be dismissed as incidental, because it is through the contours of a specific local context that the race definition process is materially embedded and transformed. Clearly there is a whole order of levels of different events that will vary in their amplitude, chronological breadth and capacity to produce effects in the making of that social process. I do not pretend to cover all of the forces, events, and idiosyncracies of the Canadian context that might be relevant to the theme of this study. Obviously there has to be some selectivity in a study of 100 years between the general and the particular, and it must be stated at the outset that I will be using historical materials with a view to making a sociological argument, as opposed to a conventionally conceived study of the history of the Chinese in British Columbia.

Little academic research has been conducted on the relationship of Vancouver's Chinese community to the white European society. The majority of empirical research has been conducted at the provincial and national scales (and will be referred to in the course of this study). The decision was made to use selected primary material at all three levels of government in the absence of sufficient secondary material at the local level and in view of the fact that the conceptual emphasis of the study departed from other studies conducted at the provincial and national levels. The most important primary sources consulted for different periods during the 100 year time-span have been the Vancouver City Council minutes, the Journals of the Legislature of British Columbia, the Debates of the House of Commons, relevant newspapers including English translations of the Chinese Times and the Chinatown News, and the Chinatown files of the City of Vancouver Planning Department.
The Canadian context is an interesting setting in which to locate this study not simply because of the gap that exists between, on the one hand, the popular rhetoric of a "tolerant" past and a harmonious "multicultural" present and, on the other hand, the reality of a cultural history in which "race" has been an enduring motif. For one thing, the management strategies adopted by the Canadian state toward socially defined outgroups have been relatively veiled by comparison to other British dominions such as the Australian colonies before Federation and of course to the United States and South Africa. The pattern of race relations in Canada displays little of the rigidity that has characterized the American and of course the South African situation. In Canada, we will see that the division of the state into three relatively autonomous jurisdictions has set considerable judicial limits upon the exercise of white European cultural domination. To that extent, "white" hegemony has been no absolute or ordained totality. Its legal strategies have been constrained by constitutional limitations that challenge conceptualizations of the state of the kind depicted by Greenberg, where the state is a monolithic and mechanical whole. Particularly during the early decades of state management, it will be seen that Ottawa routinely invoked constitutional limits on the power of the Province of British Columbia to prohibit Chinese immigration and to curtail the life chances of those resident in the province. The power of disallowance served to contain the worst excesses of a nativistic legislature, just as at other times, the state will be seen to afford some merchants of Chinese-origin the means to contest successfully encroachments on their livelihoods.

In short, the myth of "difference" has not been institutionalized
through some inexorable realization of the race idea in Canada. The race
definition process has followed a contingently structured course in
which the Canadian state structures and sanctions racial ideology, not
out of any abstract system needs, but within the context of an inherited
judicial framework and with a view to its own expedient and national
interests.

Organization of the Thesis

In Chapter Two, I will examine the manner in which a racial
category, "Chinese," was constituted by the Legislative Assembly of the
province of British Columbia in Victoria, and by the Dominion Parliament
in Ottawa. The ideological context for these measures will be identified
and particular attention will be given to the "race" idea and to the
social philosophy called Social Darwinism, according to which the
"races" were ranked on a hierarchy of "fitness." Nation building in its
symbolic-cultural dimension will be seen to be oriented toward the
construction of a "white" European (British-type) society. It will be
argued that this race definition process provides part of the cultural
context for the emergence of a nucleated settlement of Chinese-origin
pioneers at Dupont Street in Vancouver.

Having examined the spatial manifestation of the racial category
"Chinese," the study moves in Chapter Three to the idea of "China town,"
which was the term by which local "white" Vancouver society and its
municipal officials came to know the area of Dupont Street. The chapter
will investigate the field of social meaning that this idea of place
accrued and how, as the home of the "racial" Other, "Chinatown" was
recurringly defined in contrasting images to "white" European society.
Attention will be given to activities of the local state that both fed
into, and took their justification from the idea of "Chinatown" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The efforts of some Chinese-origin merchants to counter the conferred idea of place will be noted in order to further reveal the sense in which "Chinatown" was a notion that belonged to the "West."

The public nuisance definition of Vancouver's Chinatown continued well into the 1920s, as did its capacity to produce effects through government policy, as Chapter Four will demonstrate. In fact the 1920s saw the most feverish exploitation of the "race" idea in British Columbia and it will be shown to culminate in the decision of the House of Commons in 1923 to prohibit Chinese immigration to Canada. The strategies attempted by the Provincial Legislature and the Vancouver City Council to maintain the Darwinist hierarchy in the face of the first efforts by "Chinese" to challenge its spatial and economic limits will be discussed. Although often hampered by judicial constraints, it will be argued that the activities and expressed values of officials of the state, including Ottawa's decision in 1923, re-affirmed the racial category and also the material and social separation of "Chinatown."

The years of Depression brought Chinatown its first allies, and the first signs of change in the tenor of attitudes, if not the racial frame of reference. The ideological challenge to a stratified society, however, produced some equally die-hard anti-Chinese advocates as Chapter Five will show. This chapter will highlight that tension in the 1930s by discussing events that captured the ongoing stigma of outsider status at the same time that a more benign view of "Chinatown" as a "Little Corner of the Far East" was being first articulated. The presence of the state in both definitions will be demonstrated and it
will be argued that underpinning both images - the older vice definition and the emerging tourist one - there was the deeper continuity of the racial classification.

Not all of the state policies that have produced "Chinatown" as an idea and a concrete spatial form have had an explicitly "racial" content. By the post-war years, when the lexicon of race was being dismantled as an explicit basis for state policy and a new cultural relativism was emerging in the House of Commons, Chinatown's official definition as a "slum" will be seen in Chapter Six to carry considerable consequences for that place. It will be argued that the choice of Chinatown for some major public projects revealed forcefully the power relation that had underpinned the race definition process to that time. The efforts of the "Chinese" to use the tourist definition of Chinatown as leverage to secure their own interests from the dominant ideology of difference will be described to point out one way in which the Chinese have themselves participated in the reproduction of racial ideology in Canada.

Chapter Seven will complete our reconstruction of "Chinatown's" cultural production around the theme of the classification of identity and place. Attention will be given in this chapter to the reciprocal relationship between neighbourhood image and state practice during the 1970s, when the newly salvaged "Chinatown" is defined as an "ethnic neighbourhood." Viewed as a civic asset, it is courted by the levels of government for its perceived contribution to the uniquely Canadian mosaic ideology. It will be argued that through all of the rhetoric of Ottawa's new policy of "Multiculturalism" and the beautification scheme at the local level, the classification "Chinese" remains a resilient collective conception. And, as long as the racial frame of reference
persists, it will be argued that our links with the past are more apparent than the harmonious imagery of Multiculturalism would have it. This is suggested by some current events that reveal the sense in which the uncritical cultural relativism of the 1970s gave way to more classical ascriptions of outsider status.
NOTES


2. For a review of American and Canadian studies spanning a century, see R. Thompson, The state and the ethnic community: the changing social organization of Toronto's Chinatown. Ph.D., University of Michigan, 1979, chap.1.


8. The following discussion has been guided by a reading of *The idea of race in science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* by N. Stepan (London: Macmillan Press, 1982).


14. Farish claims that reproductively isolated groupings are generally not called 'races' by biologists because of - "inefficient terminology," "insufficient consensus" (as to how many "races" there might be), "insufficient geographic separation" (to accurately delimit "races"), "increase of genetic mixture" (as zones of mixture broaden) and "insufficient biological criteria" (for separating all members of one grouping from another). D. Farish, *Biology: the human perspective* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p.361.


16. R. Lewontin, S. Rose, and L. Kamin, *Not in our genes: biology, ideology and human nature* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p.124. Today, specialists tend to emphasize invisible characteristics to distinguish human groups, such as genes that code for specific enzymes and other proteins. Polymorphic proteins can take alternative forms and are coded by alternative forms of a gene. According to Lewontin et. al, 75 per cent of the different kinds of proteins have been found to be identical across the world's population - they are monomorphic - while the other proteins are polymorphic. Polymorphic genes have been studied to assess how much difference exists between populations, as compared with the difference between individuals (within populations). The authors conclude from a study of the form and proportions of a random sample of polymorphic genes in a group of Europeans and Africans that "the genetic difference between blacks and whites is negligible compared with the polymorphism within each group." The complex details of this research need not concern the social
scientist but can be found in Lewontin, pp.119-27.

17. Furthermore populations that belong to what are thought of as the major "rasces" by laypeople do not cluster together for similar frequencies of ABO blood groups. See Lewontin, op. cit., p.123. One zoologist cites the example that the blood types of two caste communities in Bombay are at least as different as American whites and blacks and goes onto argue "there would be a good deal of hesitation in referring to the two Indian caste communities as belonging to different races." L. Dunn, Race and biology. In Race and Science. Unesco, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p.291.

18. R. Lewontin, Not in our genes, op. cit., p.120.


22. On Park's contribution see, M. Banton, The idea of race. (London: Tavistock), 1977, 101-6. Of course, the ecological school that developed from Park's work relied heavily upon Social Darwinist concepts.


27. See for example, R. Johnston, Residential segregation, the state and constitutional conflict in American urban areas. (London:


33. ibid., p.87-88.


40. On the reification of a Chinese culture see A. Chan, Neither French nor British: the rise of the Asianadian culture. Canadian Ethnic Studies, 10, 2, 1978, 114-17. In Singapore, "Chinese" culture is, in the words of Clammer, "an amalgam of many bits of tradition, many of them utterly transformed by their transplantation to
Southeast Asia, some more Malayan than Chinese, and very few any longer practised in China. J. Clammer, The institutionalization of ethnicity: the culture of ethnicity in Singapore. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 5, 2, 1982, p.133. As it turns out, in Singapore, where there is a high degree of spontaneous ethnic consciousness among the Chinese-origin majority, "Chinese" is a strongly felt self-concept to the point where that majority has insisted upon its own "four-race-model" of social classification for that society.


51. This epistemological shift was anticipated in 1961 by D. Lowenthal when location theory was gaining favour. See his Geography, experience and imagination: towards a geographical epistemology. Annals, Association of American Geographers, 51, 1961, 241-60. For a more recent discussion, see D. Livingstone, and R. Harrison, Immanuel Kant, subjectivism, and human geography: a preliminary investigation. Transactions, Institute of British Geographers N.S., 6, 1981, 359-74; D. Ley, Social geography and the taken-for-granted world, op. cit., 1977.


57. J. Duncan, The superorganic in American cultural geography, op. cit.


62. J. Duncan, N. Duncan, A cultural analysis of urban residential landscapes in North America, op. cit.

63. D. Ley, Styles of the times, op.cit.


76. See Figueroa's critique of narrow definitions of racism in social science. He prefers a broader definition which would include such assumptions as the following: that there actually exist objectively different 'races;' these share by nature, or genetically or inherently certain common physical and cultural characteristics; the different races are mutually exclusive if not hierarchically ordered; each person belongs to one and only one such race. P. Figueroa, *Race relations and cultural differences.* In *Race relations and cultural difference,* eds., G. Verma and C. Bagley, (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 15-28.


81. On the racial Other - that metaphorical negation of the European in western language use - see the essays in the volume called "Race, writing and difference," Critical Inquiry, 12, 1, 1985.

82. In 1881, 51.9% of the population of B.C. was "Indian," "British" comprised 29.6%, "Asiatic" 8.8%, and there were minorities of others. Census of Canada, 1880-81, Vol. 1, p.299.

83. The term "institutional completeness" is borrowed from R. Breton, Institutional completeness of ethnic communities and the personal relations of immigrants. American Journal of Sociology, 70, 1964, 193-205.

84. See excerpts of Foucault's Madness and civilization and Discipline and punish and other major works, in Rabinow, P. ed. The Foucault reader. (New York: Pantheon books, 1984).


89. It is true that Gramsci gave causal priority to the economic sphere under most conditions. However, he distanced himself from the base-superstructure model as a framework for explanation and emphasized the complex and contextual interaction of the political, cultural and economic spheres. See the reading of T. J. Lears, The concept of cultural hegemony: problems and possibilities. American Historical Review, 90, 3, 1985, 567-93.


91. S. Greenberg, Race and state in capitalist development: comparative


Chapter Two

THE "CHINESE RACE" AND THE CANADIAN STATE: THE MAKING OF A CATEGORY OF OUTSIDERS, 1875-1902

I. Pioneers from China in British Columbia

At the time of its creation as a British colony in 1849, Vancouver Island was little more than a fur trade preserve scattered with settlements of indigenous people and some trading forts. By 1854, just 450 settlers had made their home in the colony and no more than 500 acres had been developed. But by the end of the decade, the discovery of placer gold on the Fraser, Thompson and Columbia rivers attracted thousands of prospectors, miners and adventurers, many of whom were from below the 49th parallel, and in 1858, a mainland colony of British Columbia was proclaimed by the Imperial authorities to govern the new influx and to promote growth. Many residents were no more permanent than the placer camps, however, and by 1867, the year after the island and mainland colonies merged, the combined "white" population was only 9,100. Most lived in the towns of Victoria, New Westminster and Nanaimo and were occupied in the province's early staple industries of mining, agriculture, manufacturing and fishing.

Including the small and relatively brief settlement at Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island of some 30 artisans from China in the late 1780s, the presence of settlers from China in British Columbia was associated with all the main pioneering industries of the province. For example, approximately 2,000 Chinese came to the goldfields in the middle course of the Fraser river from the Pacific coast in 1858-59. The majority ventured north from California in search
of a quick fortune, but a significant number established businesses to serve the new population in Victoria and the small mining towns in the lower course of the Fraser Valley. Their numbers increased considerably after 1859, when an organized system of shipping labourers and merchants from Hong Kong via San Francisco to Victoria began, and when further gold discoveries were made in the Cariboo region and the Cassiar district. The majority were men, who, like many other immigrant workers, ventured alone to the new environment in order to send money to their families or to prepare an economic footing in the expectation their families would follow. By 1867, the 1,995 residents of Chinese-origin on mainland British Columbia included just 52 women — an imbalance also found among non-Chinese. The year earlier, for example, there were only 443 women among 3,072 "whites" on the mainland.

While a base of Chinese commercial activity was being built in Victoria during the 1860s and 1870s around Fisguard Street, many Chinese labourers went to the mainland in search of wage labour or gold along the advancing mining frontier. A good number left the province after the boom in gold subsided, but still, by 1867, they represented almost 40 per cent of the non-indigenous mainland population (compared with 8% on Vancouver Island), although the proportion fluctuated widely from year to year. Many found semi-skilled jobs in the saw mills on Burrard Inlet and the canneries on the Fraser and Skeena rivers and Puget Sound, while others worked on farms, in coal mining at Nanaimo and Wellington, on road construction — such as the Cariboo highway contract of 1863–65 — in land clearing, bank, ditch and dike building, telegraph line construction, domestic service, laundry operations and vegetable gardening. Labourers also worked in the towns for Chinese merchants and syndicates in various commercial enterprises, from restaurants for
Chinese-origin clientele, to import and export houses. Others were employed by companies in Victoria to transport provisions by mule and wagons to subsidiary businesses in the small towns.

Most of the work in canneries, mining and later on, in railway construction, was organized on a contract basis, where "gangs" of labourers were recruited by Chinese bosses who in turn contracted with industrial managers for the workers' services. In other industries, Chinese sold their labour as part of the normal market for work. Either way, the labour of immigrants from China was critical to the establishment of British Columbia's staple economic base at the stage of technological development when most production work was labour intensive. They were paid one half to two thirds the wage rates of other workers from the time they entered the provincial workforce, and they accepted long hours and seasonal and short-term work, often distant from their places of residence. Not surprisingly then, Chinese settlers received considerable praise from some quarters of society in the early years of the colony's development for their part in opening up an inhospitable frontier. "It may safely be said," claimed Commissioner Dr. J. Gray, a Supreme Court judge, after hearing the evidence of a number of the province's entrepreneurs on the "Chinese Question" in 1885, "that there are several industries that would not have succeeded - perhaps it might be said undertaken - if it had not been for the opportunity of obtaining their labour." Just as Gray had discovered in his preliminary inquiry in California, "the Chinese in British Columbia, as affecting the rapid development of the country, are living machines." "There is preponderating testimony as to the sobriety, industry and frugality of the Chinese as manual labourers . . . and up to this time their presence
in the province has been most useful if not indispensable."¹⁰

But the praise heaped upon residents from China in early British Columbia must have afforded them little comfort. Justice Gray put it this way:

"It is fortunate that, in a young and sparsely settled Province, this cheap labour can be obtained for it enables those whose minds are capable of higher development and whose ambition looks to more enobling industry - to follow pursuits in which they will rise rather than toil and slave in grovelling work, which wears out the body without elevating the mind."¹¹

Others, such as Vancouver entrepreneur, Henry Bell-Irving of the Anglo-British Packing Company, held an equally paternalistic view of the immigrants from China. "It is the destiny of whitemen to be worked for by the inferior races," he said in 1901,¹² a view shared by the proprietor of the Wellington Coal Mines, Mr. R. Dunsmuir, who stated in 1885 that in his mines "the Chinese are put to the work that suits them best - ordinary manual labour."¹³ A sorted order of occupational and social relations was built around precisely those beliefs from the time the colony of British Columbia was founded. In the canning industry, Chinese employees were in their place - can making, soldering and filling. In the homes of the provincial elite, young Chinese men, in the absence of sufficiently numerous young white women, helped with the menial activities of domestic life. "All of the respectable people in Victoria employ Chinese servants," said Mr. Dewdney, Member of Parliament from British Columbia in 1885.¹⁴ Only in those industries where Chinese secured an early monopoly, such as laundering and vegetable gardening, did they escape almost uniform relegation to the lowest occupational tasks. It was a natural outcome, Gray argued, "of the dispensations of Providence by which the highest good can be obtained for mankind."¹⁵
The alien status of settlers from China was more bluntly apparent perhaps in the conduct of white European labourers. The first signs of antagonism, albeit sporadic and non-violent, between settlers from China and non-Chinese, surfaced in the mining fields of the Cariboo in the 1860s. Many "whites," direct from California, transmitted anti-Chinese feelings and excluded Chinese from their digging companies and the most lucrative goldfields.¹⁶ No serious punitive action was levelled against Chinese settlers at that time but Chinese workers were always seen as a thorn in the white working class struggle to establish a comfortable existence in what was to be a company province. "The labouring population was always strongly averse to the introduction of Chinese labour," said Mr. S. Robins of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company in 1885.¹⁷ The miners of Nanaimo threatened violence as early as 1867 when the local coal company announced it would hire Chinese labour.¹⁸ In fact many British Columbian labourers, like their Californian counterparts, came to see the Chinese and less their employers, as their most formidable enemy. Anti-Chinese sentiment soon furnished a productive channel for the political protest of labour. Without regard for the demonstrated willingness of Chinese workers in British Columbia to strike, white workers believed the Chinese were endowed with a natural capability to sleep twelve to a room and to undersell more deserving labour.¹⁹ They felt strongly that Chinese could be used (as indeed they were) to break the strikes mounted by white workers for higher pay and better working conditions.²⁰ It was a case of "unfair" competition, claimed a representative of the Knights of Labour from Nanaimo in 1885: "The degraded Asiatics ... live generally in wretched hovels, dark, ill-ventilated and unwholesome, and crowded together in such numbers as must utterly preclude all ideas of comfort,
morality and even decency," he protested in what was to be a most familiar charge over the following decades.  

For the white workers of British Columbia then, just as for the colony's entrepreneurs, Chinese pioneers were somehow irremediably beyond the body of eligible citizenry to Canada from the time they entered the province. The different classes possessed different economic reasons for embracing the notion of an essential "John Chinaman" but nonetheless the belief in him and his status in the new community overrode particular class interests. In Victoria, the first colonial newspaper did not mince words. "They are, with few exceptions, not desirable as permanent settlers in a country peopled by the Caucasian race and governed by civilized enactments," the Gazette claimed in March, 1859. "No greater obstacle to the coming of the class of immigrants needed in British Columbia could be devised, than the presence of Chinamen in large numbers." It seems that, according to some complex ideological formation built around an epistemology of separating, the Chinese in this New World society were unalterable outsiders, fundamentally and constitutively different; and as such, potential candidates for subordination.

Before exploring the part played by the levels of the Canadian government in the construction of this category of "non-settlers," it is important to give some attention to the ideological context out of which a morality of insider and outsider emerged in British Columbia. It is important to emphasize that we speak here of a broader campus than "white" prejudices which for Ward, derive from the "psychological tensions . . . continually stimulated by the racially plural situation." What is significant is the separation of "white" and
"Chinese" because that in itself has been arbitrary. It must be taken as problematic and situated, as this study attempts to do, within the ethos and practices of a hegemonic European cultural order. Specifically we are interested in the "cultural ideas-system," to use the words of Clifford Geertz, through which prospective Canadian citizens from China were socially interpreted in early British Columbia. Only by emphasizing this system can we avoid flattening past European subjectivities in the none-too-explanatory psychologism of the prejudice framework. The cultural context of ideas is also more important, as we noted in Chapter One, than has been acknowledged by the equally reductionist structural interpretation of the views of early British Columbians we have just described. According to that argument, the separation and antagonism between whites and Chinese has been an ultimate expression of the deeper structural contradiction set up by the capitalists' drive for profit (through the use of cheap labour) and the workers' struggle for higher wages. The conflict between whites and Chinese is thus a secondary reflection of class cleavages. As was argued in Chapter One, both of these positions are impoverished by their silence on the contemporary cultural context which ensured from the outset that the claim of these immigrants to a new life in British Columbia would be evaluated quite differently, by all classes, from those of other pioneers. It is to one important element of that nineteenth century cultural and intellectual realm that this chapter now turns.

II. The Age of the Race Idea

Immigrants from China arrived in British Columbia at a time when modern race theory was beginning to earn the respect of the scientific
community of North America and Britain and to captivate the continent's popular imagination. Curiously, just as the debate over slavery in the United States was being won by the early nineteenth century abolitionists, new currents of thought were emerging in the mainstream of ideas in America and Britain that ensured the "Negro" and his colonial counterparts would remain as slaves, mentally, morally and physically. A new biological determinism began to seduce Western culture and science from the mid-nineteenth century undermining all optimistic Enlightenment beliefs in the unity and adaptability of man's universal nature. The deterministic turn was not born into an intellectual vacuum, however, but rather tapped a cultural tradition long diposed to viewing the world's population in terms of essences or created types.

The idea of the racial type cannot be traced to a single source or era and it is not the intention here to give a comprehensive account of so complex a topic. It is helpful, however, to provide some historical context for the process of racial categorization, albeit necessarily a rather general one.

Many centuries before human variation was interpreted by European societies in biological or racial terms, the rest of the world was measured against a romanticized, idealized version of Europe itself. From ancient times through to the Middle Ages, Europeans thought of the world as composed of three formal parts - "Asia," "Africa" and "Europe" - despite early uncertainty surrounding the configuration of bounding continental shelves. Overlapping this threefold division from antiquity was another more nebulous and less areally specific division between "Orientis" and "Occidentis," "East" and "West." March argues that these regionalizations were in large part social and literary constructs, concepts by which Europeans established a framework for
group identification in a universe of known and unknown civilizations. Accordingly, Asia and Africa took their earliest definition against Europe, their essential defining characteristics became all those things that were non-European; they were social spaces whose difference or departure from the European norm lent precision to the emerging idea of Europe itself. Greek writers, such as Hippocrates and Aristotle, established the important European and Asian themes. Europe was modern, rational, progressive, free, civilized, diverse and later on, Christian. In contrast, the Orient was old, excessive, slavish, despotic, opulent, uniform and non-Christian. It was armed with this "geographic-conceptual schema," as March describes it, that - just as other cultural traditions wielded their own ethnocentric schemes - Europeans slowly came to decipher their special destiny.

In the context of such beliefs notions of race crept slowly and without coherent or consistent meaning into the European vocabulary. Aristotle spoke of his own "Hellenic" race around 300 B.C. as "high-spirited and intelligent. Hence it continues free, and is the best-governed of any nation, and, if it could be formed into one state, would be able to rule the world." Against this race were pitted the "barbarians," or all the rest of the world's people. These included the "Ethiopians," as "blacks" were called by Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and early Christians and the "Asiatics," who were "inventive" but "wanting in spirit." But Aristotle's "barbarians" were not ranked on a hierarchy according to a Greek standard of cultural and physical worth; it was ethnocentrism and not racism, Snowden argues, that was the basis for judgements made of non-Greeks. Montagu has also noted that Hellenism was more "a thing of the spirit rather than of 'race.'"
Banton, another authority on the race idea, does not return as far as the classical era for the origins of the term. He claims that the "racializing of the West" preceded the elaboration of a system of categorization which assigned the rest of the world to racial categories. By the seventeenth century, Banton finds that the "Norman" conquest of "Saxon" England between 1066 and 1215 was being described as a struggle of "races" where "race" connoted a sense of lineage. From that time, an ancestral myth emerged that had it that some essential English virtues derived from their Anglo-Saxon forebears. But Banton would agree that in the early usages of the term "race," the distinctions called "racial" were made on cultural and institutional not biological grounds. Although compatible with notions of natural distinctiveness, the early prejudices did not have biological connotations. In fact for many centuries after the classical era, explanations for the existence of physical and cultural types were based on institutional factors, diet and in particular, climatic forces. There was a colour symbolism associated with Christianity that drew upon the sensitivities of the classical era to the antinomies of black and white, but the earliest "racial" thought was essentially non-racialist.

With the growth in contact between Europeans and non-Europeans between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, a stronger interpretation of difference can be discerned that sowed the seeds of the modern race doctrine. In 1455, Pope Nicholas V approved the subjugation of "infidels" to Christians on the grounds that, although mankind was one, the Negroes, American Indians and other "heathens" would have much to gain from Christian ways of life. Soon after, the Portuguese trade in slaves, particularly in Africa, began in earnest,
drawing from and cementing the old Arabic mythology of blacks as a brutish and Satanic type. The connection between the non-Christian status of "Negroes" and the institutionalization of slavery in America from 1660 is also made by Montagu who states that the choice of "blacks" and the severity of the special system of economic subordination was "based virtually entirely on the view that the Negro was a benighted heathen, unable to read or write, and belonging to a class and caste clearly inferior to those of his masters." As Jordan points out in his important examination of the content of colonial images of blacks in the United States, "to be Christian in mid-seventeenth century America was to be civilized rather than barbarous, English rather than African and [by 1680], white rather than black."

The eighteenth century saw European expeditions straddling the globe and in the wake of these journeys, other populations, such as the "yellow" races of the "East," were added to the list of inferior populations. Carl von Linne's famous correlation of custom and race called Systema naturae in 1735, for example, had it that "Asians" were "severe, haughty and miserly," Europeans were "light, active and ingenious" while Africans were "lazy, negligent and governed by whim." Hume wrote an essay in 1748 called "Of National Characters" that posited with all the authority of Enlightenment philosophy the naturally rooted relationship between complexion, character and intellectual capacity. Within 20 years Kant drew upon the essay to make one of the earliest conflations of colour and intelligence in European philosophy. But still, the explanation for these variations was largely environmental, the non-white races being "perfectible." Johann Blumenbach even wrote in his book published in 1775, On the Natural
Variety of Mankind, that "one variety of mankind does so sensibly pass into the other, that you cannot mark out the limits between them. Very arbitrary indeed in both number and definition have been the varieties of mankind accepted by eminent men."39

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the monogenist view that the races of mankind owed their origin to a single common ancestor was the basis for an optimistic sense of man's ultimate psychic unity. Savages and "negroes," although members of a semi-permanent stock, could become Englishmen in the American "melting pot." But by the mid-1800s, doubts had begun to be cast upon the old monogenist belief. A new argument was made by polygenists, such as Alabama physician Josiah Nott, that human races were separated by immutable and deep mental, moral and physical differences owing to their distinct origins. For Nott, each "race" represented a separately created species.40 It was a dramatic shift, Stepan argues, "from a sense of man as primarily a social being, governed by social laws and standing apart from nature, to a sense of man as primarily a biological being, embedded in nature and governed by biological laws."41

Marvin Harris argues that one of the keys to this new pessimistic and chauvinistic interpretation was the early nineteenth century discovery of the vast dimension of geologic time, which gave a new perspective to the transformation of the races. Furthermore, the fossil record lent fresh credibility to the ancient idea of gradation, that life had a progressive history from simplicity to complexity. A new found naturalness was seen in Aristotle's "great chain of being," where it was imagined that nature produced living things in a continuous ladder from God through the angels to man, and with decreasing complexity to vegetables and inanimate objects. Applied to man himself,
the chain offered a ready-made social hierarchy onto which the separately created "racial" types were grafted with the sanction of Nature. The units of the chain as applied to man were not imperceptibly separated in this new polygenist view, however, but were discretely demarcated. The mandate of scientists was thus to calibrate and measure man's finite forms of biological organization. And so it was that, in conformity with the goal of extracting regularities from variation in nature and discovering laws behind the variation, a generation of nineteenth century specialists took the beliefs of previous centuries and turned them into a radical biological determinism.42

Indeed, as imperialism and industrialization were confirming and vindicating the old antinomies of East and West, Master and slave, civilized and uncivilized, Christian and heathen, Western science underwent a period of intense racialism. Increasingly, environmental explanations for human variation were abandoned. After all, Africans did not whiten in the United States. One of the new typological sciences was comparative anatomy which emerged in Britain between 1800 and 1830 and for which the abstraction of the racial type was a sine qua non. This science documented the grades of complexity in the nervous system of the world's human types, while a science of the mind called phrenology, measured the shape, weight and volume of human skulls throughout the world.43 It was assumed that the skull was an outward sign of innate biological organization and that it held the key not only to mental ability but also, significantly, to cultural behaviour - traits such as benevolence and temperance. Needless to say, "the races of men," as Knox called them in his book of that name in 1850, were measured on a scale where the "Saxon" race was the standard for comparison. An editorial in
the *Anthropological Review* used that benchmark in 1866: "As the type of the Negro is foetal, that of the Mongol is infantile. And in strict accordance with this we find their government, literature and art are infantile also."44

One of the most intriguing developments in the history of the race idea is the interpretation that race scientists (and in turn other intellectuals and laypeople) put upon the work of Charles Darwin. The complexities of this theme have been explored elsewhere, but some brief comments are helpful here.45 Darwin's *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) offered a conceptual apparatus that had the capacity to discredit the concept of the permanent racial type and silence the polygenist argument. Darwin believed that just as the animal world was a continuously changing species, so the human population was not fixed but part of the same evolutionary process of natural change by variation, struggle and a selection of traits conducive to survival. Accordingly, his work made a strong case for the unity of the species and its subjection to ongoing change - sufficient, one might expect, to challenge the science of static types. In the *Descent of Man*, Darwin insisted that evolutionists "will feel no doubt that all the races of man are descended from a single primitive stock."46 But in fact, the work of the first evolutionists did precisely the opposite. Not only did it inspire new extremes of cranial measurement in the natural sciences in the second half of the nineteenth century, but *The Descent of Man* fostered a whole realm of popular and social scientific ideas that wedded the notion of the permanent type to a new ideology of Social Darwinism. So seductive was this combination that it pervaded the popular consciousness of North America, Britain, and New World societies for decades, indeed long after
it was discredited by a new science of genetics that integrated Darwin's argument into a new theory of heredity.

Despite being novel for its anti-creationism, Darwin's work was in fact compatible with former racial discourse, if not the strict polygenist view. For one thing, he fully revived the graduated chain of being by integrating man's ancestry with that of the animal world. It was possible for lay and academic interpreters of Darwin to graft upon his views of evolution in nature the prior notions of inherent difference between, and "fitness" of, the races. For Stepan, this application by Social Darwinists of the competitive struggle in nature to the races of man was less a "perversion" of Darwin than a product of the internal logic of Darwin's own evolutionary argument. She argues:

"At the heart of Darwin's argument for evolution was a reliance on the traditional chain of races... His use of the scale of human races was a function... of the type of argument he was making. That argument was one of continuity - continuity seemed essential if he were to prove that man's mental, moral, as well as physical features had arisen naturally by slow evolution from animal forms. But the argument for continuity led almost inevitably to the use of the lower races to fill the gap between man and the animals."

Jones also argues that in asserting his main hypothesis of natural selection as the motor of evolutionary change throughout the species, Darwin passed seemingly unconsciously from the individual to the group or racial type as the unit upon which natural selection operated. In so doing his "belief in the human equality of origin to which other areas of Darwin's work testifies, was sacrificed," Jones claims.

As many read it at the time, Darwin's work reinforced a hierarchical view of human development and the assumption that history was a progression from barbarism to civilization. Liberals, socialists and conservatives alike saw something in this idea for their
philosophies and views of class, the state and social reform. As for ideas about race, many post-Darwinian scientists and social scientists, including the evolutionary theorist Herbert Spencer, adopted the view that although primitive peoples were in theory capable of evolving to civilization, in practice they would require an infinite time to do so, perhaps as long as the geological time scale itself. For all contemporary purposes the races were immutable. Commissioner Dr. J. Chapleau felt as much in 1885 after his investigation of the "Chinese question" in British Columbia: "Races change slowly, but the stationariness of the Chinese race seems phenomenal." Furthermore, the finite stocks would deteriorate through "hybridization," Spencer and other naturalists such as Nathaniel Shaler argued, especially where the biological chasm was as vast as existed between "Orientals" and "Caucasians." Relying on blood blending theories of heredity, Shaler predicted bio-social dilution of the "Aryan" race from such "miscegenation." It is apparent that, as Harris argues, "although post-Darwinian biologists tended to reaffirm the monogenist view of a unitary origin for all mankind, they drew none of the egalitarian conclusions that had characterized their eighteenth century predecessors." Vague, evolutionary metaphors offered an almost irresistible intellectual and popular idiom for old prejudices. Anthropologists began to argue that national institutions were peculiarly racial products. For example, it was argued that American democracy was an outgrowth of Teutonic "seeds" that had been brought from north western Europe and which controlled the nation's cultural evolution. Some took the argument for the racial basis of institutions as security that the superior races had nothing to fear from their inferiors, while others warned that this rendered
institutions vulnerable to pollution by the alien "germs" of unfit immigrants. Race was also taken to be the key to the rise and fall of nations. Nations were species engaged in inexorable struggle. If struggle and selection were the rule in nature, racial conflict was also natural and inevitable. Bannister argues it was this reading of Darwin by American intellectuals that prompted a new violent extremism in the American South during the 1880s and 1890s, one that dismantled the earlier paternalistic relations and faith in the strategy of educating of blacks.\textsuperscript{55} After the turn of the century, a new group of "reform Darwinists" opposed physical violence and interpreted Darwin's great struggle as a moral one, in which the likes of the Jim Crow laws were simply the inevitable by-products of some higher unfolding utopia, "the scaffolding of progress," as Baker put it in his book in 1908.\textsuperscript{56}

So long as Darwin and the other early evolutionary theorists could not explain the source of variation in organisms, they found it difficult, as did their contemporary interpreters, to resist the notion of the racial type. As mentioned earlier, Darwin invited this thinking in a sense because he implied that the process of natural selection operated on the old races as biological units (rather than on populations of individuals). Indeed Stepan notes the irony that by the late 1800s, a quasi-polygenist theory of racial stability had become successfully integrated into evolutionary science and in turn, popular opinion in Britain. This she attributes to faith in the racial type, which was far deeper than any commitment to a conceptualization of biological change.\textsuperscript{57} For Jones, it was an extension of the ancient idea of design and order in nature and the tireless effort of successive generations of Europeans to identify a natural underpinning to the
social order. Whatever their origins, the twin ideas that first, every human belonged to an essence or type whose physical expression was an index of innate biological and cultural organization, and second, that the types were ranked by nature in a struggle for survival, were axioms of late nineteenth century science and culture. "The result," Stepan claims, "was to give a mental abstraction an independent reality, to make real or reify the idea of racial type when in fact the type was a social construct."  

III. Granting "Race" a Legal and a Moral Force: British Columbia's Charter Ideology, 1871-1900

After the colony of British Columbia joined the Confederation of Canada in 1871 and its Legislative Assembly became a provincial parliament, the architects of the province's nascent political culture assumed quick responsibility for defining a society in the image of their own white European profile. As the table of birthplace information for British Columbia's elected officials from 1871-1900 indicates, in the majority of elections, those invested with the power to shape the social fabric of the new political unit were predominantly British-born. Indeed from the time the officials were first elected to preside over what had hitherto been a loose collectivity of workers and entrepreneurs under colonial administration, there was never any doubt that one of the key mandates of the elected body was, among other things, to build a British British Columbia. One member of the Legislature who was elected in 1882, Mr. C. Wilson of Cariboo, used these words to argue a case for Chinese immigration restriction: "We must not overlook the fact that we are establishing a British colony. It is true that we may have less capital, but it would be more beneficial
Table I. Birthplace of British Columbia's elected officials, 1871-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>British-born</th>
<th>Canadian-born</th>
<th>Born elsewhere</th>
<th>Not listed</th>
</tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


in the end having loyal subjects of the Queen."61

The first Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration of 1885 is replete with evidence that the idea of race enjoyed widespread popular and intellectual support in British Columbia during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Almost every one of the 48 British Columbian witnesses invited to give testimony on the Chinese presence in the province, although less impassioned than the witnesses before the second commission of 1901, traded freely in the language of racial types, racial instincts and racial antipathy, whether they believed Chinese to be valuable or injurious to the province. Echoing the Californian witnesses to the same commission, they dwelt on the impossibility of assimilation between "two kinds of civilization, the one modern and West and the other ancient and East;"62 the amorality of the "Chinese" style of living;63 their idolatrous religious practices;64 their objectionable living quarters;65 their capacity to undercut "white" labour;66 their docile labour;67 their disregard for truth;68 their predisposition for crime;69 their inhumanity70 and so on. For Mr. G. Sproat of
Victoria, British Columbia's former agent-general in London, "the Chinese character is of a fixed, persistent type, alien, beyond any control or chance of change, to everything that concerns Western civilization." Their characteristics were part of an essential Chineseness, it was believed, that rendered "the Chinaman" alien in blood and spirit and inspired conflict between the "white" and "Mongolian" races. "There seems to be an instinctive feeling of preference for whites, independent of any reasoned opinion respecting their merits or demerits as compared with Chinamen," Commissioner Dr. J. Chapleau noted. "Race antipathy seems to be at the bottom of this," he concluded, "and though to the philosopher such antipathy may appear narrow, a profounder insight may find in it a natural - perhaps divinely implanted - safeguard against great evils." Sir Matthew Begbie, Chief Justice of British Columbia had a similar view of the inevitability of conflict and the station of the two "races:" "There seems to be an impulsive force which brings into action the ever-present dislike between the Indo-Caucasian and this branch of Mongolians. . . . The Chinaman is in every respect the reverse of a European except that he is a man."

In the hands of British Columbia's early politicians, the race idea was a persuasive symbol around which to build a new regional consciousness. As Voegelin argues, race has been an exceedingly influential symbolic language in unifying group life, in part by concentrating into a "counter-idea" everything that is thought to be in conflict with the building of a political community. British Columbia was no exception to that tendency and indeed many witnesses in 1885 singled out politicians as chief among the instigators of an anti-Chinese movement in the province. Begbie, for example, remarked: "I do
not recollect anything that can be called 'agitation' against them until Confederation."76 Mr. J. Robson, Provincial Secretary agreed the agitation "commenced as a political question in 1872."77 Surveyor-general Mr. B. Pearse, claimed that the movement against Chinese "was begun and carried forward, chiefly by politicians,"78 while for the manager of the Bank of British Columbia, Mr. W. Ward: "The agitation has been chiefly political with a view to the labouring class vote . . . I think it is mainly led by politicians (following the Californian experience) though there is a general feeling that the immigration should now be restricted, if not entirely stopped."79 So influential was the race idea in late nineteenth century North America, that it lent itself easily to political manipulation for electoral purposes. Furthermore, it provided officials of all political persuasions with a simple and convincing ethic around which a category of insiders could be rallied. One of their missions was, after all, a perfectly proper and worthy one: to ensure the extension of white European, or more precisely, British civilization on the Pacific Coast.

Notwithstanding widespread beliefs that fundamental biological differences guaranteed a natural separation of the races, governing elites in British Columbia showed little hesitation in intervening in and fomenting the "race" question in their province. Successive members of British Columbia's Legislative Assembly self-consciously built a morality of insider and outsider in their rhetoric and practices from the first session of the Legislature in 1872. They participated actively in the construction of a social reality wherein residents from China were apprehended as preeminently "Chinese," "Oriental," "Mongolian" or "Celestial," regardless of how the new
settlers defined themselves and each other. This chapter now turns to practices the Provincial Government instituted or attempted to institute as part of the social construction of the "racial" category "Chinese" during the period when British-origin immigrants to the province were building or indulging their own mythology - a "charter ideology" as John Porter has called it - of themselves as "founding people" (in flat defiance of the fact that British Columbia was almost 75 per cent "Indian" in 1870), and the others as "immigrants."80

One scholar of British Columbia's history notes that: "In 1871, the Chinese, not yet defined as the yellow peril, enjoyed the right to vote and exercised it fully in the Lillooett district."81 But by the first session of the Provincial Legislature, an Act to Amend the Qualification and Registration of Voters Act was passed which precluded Chinese (and native Indians), even if they were British subjects, from voting.82 The implications of this Act for Chinese-origin residents were significant, not least because it would later restrict them from certain occupational choices, such as pharmacy, law and political office. Also, in 1883, only registered voters were deemed eligible to serve as jurors in all courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction.83 Perhaps more critical were the symbolic implications of this legal targeting. The disenfranchisement Act officially sealed the alien or non-settler status of the category "Chinese," enabling and justifying further social and (as another study might demonstrate), economic closure. This is apparent in Mr. R. Dunsmuir's argument that the ascription of non-settler status by the state was an independent source of anti-Chinese sentiment in the province. One of the largest employers of Chinese labour, Dunsmuir even suggested to the commissioners of 1885 that "If it were possible for
Parliament to bring in a bill speedily to give the Chinaman the franchise, there would be less anti-Chinese agitation." It is true that from the time Chinese were disenfranchised, politicians could give vent, without fear of alienating voters, to any inflammatory opinions regarding the Chinese presence.

The first session of the Legislative Assembly thus quickly asserted the marginal political status of "Chinese." Resolutions to tax them $50 per annum and to prohibit them from employment on provincial and federal works were also presented, but both were defeated. In a free society, the labour market should also be free, some members protested while others expressed doubt regarding the legal competence of the Province to enact such measures. Another Act of little practical, but some degree of symbolic significance was passed that prevented Chinese from registering their vital statistics.

During the 1870s the House became increasingly concerned at the prospect of "the province being over-run with a Chinese population, to the injury of the settled population of the country." A motion to devise steps to prevent that prospect was carried unanimously by the government of the Hon. A. Elliott in May, 1876. By 1878, with Chinese immigration from the United States and Hong Kong increasing rapidly relative to earlier years, the Provincial Legislature voted to insert a clause in the contracts for public works prohibiting the employment of Chinese labour. The Province also decided to test its legal power and to appease anti-Chinese sentiment without alienating the employers of Chinese labour. In August 1878, Premier G. Walkem introduced and won approval for the Chinese Tax Act, drafted ostensibly "for the better collection of provincial taxes from Chinese." This statute imposed a quarterly licence in the form of a $10 levy for every Chinese employee.
over 12 years of age and stipulated that employers of Chinese retain the licences for routine inspection. Just months after the Act had been passed, however, a Mr. Tai Sing appealed the seizure of some of his goods in default of his tax payment. 250 Chinese-origin residents of Victoria went on a five-day strike to protest the measure and a number of cannery operators protested the bill to the Governor-General in Council on the grounds that it threatened to ruin their businesses.91

Given the critical nature of the precedent, it must have been of considerable concern to the Walkem government when Justice Gray declared the Chinese Tax Act ultra vires the provincial jurisdiction, breaching as it did the authority vested exclusively with the Dominion Parliament for establishing the privileges and disabilities of aliens in Canada.92 (This division of powers was conferred by the British North America Act of 1867). And, just in case the "spoilt child of Confederation" did not yet know its legal place, the Minister of Justice in Ottawa decided to confirm the fate of the bill by recommending to the Governor-General the following year that the Tax Act be disallowed.93 The limits to the political will of those who would impose European cultural domination in the new colony were solidly confirmed in this first provincial encounter with Ottawa. The province's Lieutenant-Governor exhorted members of the Legislature to try other means of achieving their goal94 but the dictates from above silenced provincial politicians for the time, and the Chinese question, as with many provincial issues, became infused with a strong anti-federal invective. British Columbia would certainly come to regret its surrender of power over the matters of immigration and aliens to the Dominion Parliament when it joined Confederation in 1871. Indeed the Walkem government for one, looked enviously to the separately
governed colonies of Australia, which had only a generally sympathetic Home government to convince of the virtue of anti-Chinese measures.

In response to the Tax Act decision and the concern over Chinese immigration, Walkem appointed a Select Committee in 1879 to report on the best means "to deal with the Chinese population, and to prevent further immigration of Chinese into the province."\textsuperscript{95} His government also decided to appeal to the Dominion government in an address that would "set forth the baneful effect of the presence of the Chinese in our midst."\textsuperscript{96} Walkem's report on the "Chinese question" demonstrated the moral force that the Provincial Government could give the idea of a "Chinese" race in the absence of sufficient legal competence to enact desired anti-Chinese strategies. "Their [the 6,000 Chinese] moral and social condition is degraded in the extreme," the Committee wrote. "A large majority of the men are in a state of semi-bondage, while all the women are prostitutes. . . . A state of marriage is unknown among them; hence the influence exerted upon society by such wholesale vice cannot be otherwise than highly pernicious, as no attempt is made at concealment." Their "slave labour has a degrading effect," the report continued, "as it causes an conquerable and not unreasonable prejudice on the part of the free members of a community." It also attributed the "strong and growing antipathy to their presence in the community" to the fact that "they are undesirable settlers . . . wholly opposed to any amalgamation of races or to becoming a portion of the permanent population of the country." (The sojourning charge was a dubious one as Commissioner Chapleau noted in 1885: "It is hard to deal seriously with those who complain they will not stay, for the very same person will grow querulous over the fact that he is here."\textsuperscript{97}) Indeed the entire point of the Committee's report was to convince the Federal Government
to "add its powerful influence with a view of securing the . . . restriction of further Chinese immigration to British Columbia."

In a context of government deference toward the private companies of the province, where politicians were unmistakable partners in economic growth, the Legislature of British Columbia was unreservedly opposed to the inflow of cheap labour from China. There was division in the House from year to year over whether Chinese labour within the province should be regulated by government intervention, but there was unanimity that further immigration of that labour should be restricted, if not excluded. In that conviction, the legislative body ran uncharacteristically but resolutely, against the frontier-acquisitive mentality. Only one form of labour was to develop the province of British Columbia, it was urged, and in 1883, a unanimously carried resolution by the Smithe government requested the Dominion government to inaugurate a "liberal scheme of white immigration to British Columbia." With a "white population alone, we can hope to build up our country and render it fit for the Anglo-Saxon race," an address on the Chinese Question wrote in 1883. The Walkem, Beaven and Smithe governments certainly went to considerable lengths in the late 1870s and early 1880s to try to avert the threat that had been pending since British Columbia joined Confederation - the employment of Chinese labour on the trans-national rail link. Walkem actually visited Ottawa in 1880 to request that Chinese labour be prohibited from the railway construction. However by 1882, when a resolution was passed by the Beaven government "to induce the contractors on the Canadian Pacific Railway to import and employ white labour on their works, instead of Chinese," contractor A. Onderdonk, had already secured the
cooperation of Chinese labour recruitment companies in San Francisco.

So it was that approximately 15,000 Chinese entered British Columbia between 1881 and 1884 to build the mountainous section of the trans-national connection. The proportion of the province that was Chinese-origin thus increased to nine per cent by the mid 1880s. This so perturbed the Smithe government that in 1884, it decided to take matters completely into its own hands. Submitting to Prime Minister J. MacDonald that "the hordes of Chinese ... surge in upon the country and carry with them the elements of disease, pestilence and degradation over the face of the fair land," Smithe moved an Act to Prevent the Immigration of Chinese, carried in February, 1884. According to this bill, entry to British Columbia was denied to "any native of China or its dependencies not born of British parents, or any person born of Chinese parents." Another bill, the Act to Regulate the Chinese Population of British Columbia insisted that "any person of Chinese race" over 14 years of age pay an annual tax of $10 for a licence to work. The tax was warranted, according to Act's preamble because:

"The incoming of Chinese to British Columbia largely exceeds that of any other class of immigrant, and the population so introduced are fast becoming superior in number to our own race; [they] are not disposed to be governed by our laws; are dissimilar in habits and occupation from our people; evade the payment of taxes justly due to the Government; are governed by pestilential habits; are useless in instances of emergency; habitually desecrate grave yards by the removal of bodies therein; and generally ... Chinese are inclined to habits subversive of the comfort and well-being of the community."

Within six weeks the Act to Prevent Chinese Immigration had been disallowed by the Governor-General in Council, possibly as much in the interests of completing the railway as conforming to the letter of the British North America Act, while the Regulation Act was eventually declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

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But a third Act passed in the 1884 session was allowed to stand. According to Clause 122 of the Land Act, it was deemed unlawful "for a Commissioner to issue a pre-emption record of any Crown land, or sell any portion thereof, to any Chinese, nor grant authority to any Chinese to record or divert any water from any natural channel of any stream, lake or river of the province."\(^7\)

Such a measure scarcely placated the animosity that swelled in British Columbia when thousands of relatively underpaid labourers were discharged onto the regular labour market on completion of the rail track in 1885. As theorists of the "split labour market" in British Columbia have argued, the secondary market of cheap, racially defined labour bred an independent economic grievance that compounded conflict.\(^8\) Ottawa's failure to "abate the evil" therefore grew increasingly provocative and in 1885 a stronger appeal was made by the Smithe government to the Federal Government to act on behalf of the Province. A resolution drafted for transmission to the Dominion government in 1885 said:

"The Chinese are alien in sentiment and habits. They do not become settlers in any sense of that word. . . . The Chinese population chiefly consists of male adults, and thus they come into unfair competition with white labour. . . . Their presence exerts a baneful influence in restricting the immigration of white labour, especially house-servants, who will not be brought into contact with this race. They have a system of secret societies which encourages crime amongst themselves . . . The use of opium has extended throughout the Province to the demoralization of the native races. . . This House urgently demands that some restrictive legislation be passed to prevent our Province from becoming completely overrun by Chinese."\(^9\)

And in case Ottawa did not register the seriousness of the plea, the Smithe government re-enacted the disallowed act of 1884 by levying a $50 tax on all Chinese immigrants to Canada, only to have it overruled again.\(^10\)
Entirely hampered in its attempts to control the entry of immigrants from China, the attention of the Smithe administration turned again to the resident aliens. In 1890, the Legislature forbade the employment of Chinese in the underground work at coal mines. Perhaps more significantly, a standard anti-Chinese clause was prepared by a Select Committee in 1886 for inclusion in private bills. However, the relentless member for Victoria, Mr. R. Beaven, found it difficult to garner the necessary support for his clause when decisions over incorporation bills for private companies were presented to the assembly. As mentioned earlier, the Legislature was split on the issue of restricting so "docile, sober and industrious" a workforce as Chinese were perceived to be and especially at a time when rail networks were opening up the seemingly infinite resources of the provinces. Some members did not want Chinese at any price, others felt the inherently cheap nature of their "alien" labour sufficient justification to use it. Both groups shared the view that Chinese pioneers were outsiders whose interests should be subordinated to those of more deserving settlers. Beaven's day of glory did arrive in 1891, however, when the House set a precedent by carrying his motion to include a Chinese exclusion clause in the Act to Incorporate the British Columbia Dyking and Improvement Company.

By 1897, a year of recession and labour unrest, a more decisive stand on the question of Chinese employment was adopted by the Legislature when the government of Hon. J. Turner passed an ambitious Act to Regulate the Employment of Chinese (and Japanese) Persons on Works Carried on under Franchises granted by Private Acts. However the Lieutenant Governor reserved assent of the Bill and, when the Act was renamed and recarried in 1898 as the Labour Regulation Act, it was
dealt the same fate by the federal Minister of Justice as other measures involving the rights of aliens. One significant, unanimously carried anti-Chinese clause that did remain on the statute books (through insertion in contracts rather than blanket legislation), determined that "if any Provincial aid be granted in the way of contributions of public funds of the province, or a grant of Crown lands in aid of public works undertaken, be conditional upon a contract being entered into . . . that no Chinese or Japanese be employed upon any such undertaking." In this way the Legislature chose to set an example of a discriminatory course it could not enforce across the private sector by law, but which it could render legitimate by the spirit of its own employment practices.

The Legislative Assembly was an important vehicle in transmitting local definitions of the "Chinese" to distant officials who at the time did not have first hand experience of "them." Successive administrations carried resolutions in 1893, 1894, 1897 and 1899 calling for more stringent restrictions on Chinese immigration than had eventually been introduced by the House of Commons in 1885. That measure had proved effective in limiting Chinese immigration to less than 300 for several years but by 1892, over 3,000 Chinese entered Canada. According to the resolution of 1899, without more effective measures, "the destructive incursion of Asiatics" would drive "workingmen of British race and blood out of many of the fields of labour" and threatened "to leave very little occupation remaining for the white labourer." By 1900, a new Act to Regulate Chinese Immigration was carried by another government attempting to cater to an anti-Chinese electorate, only to have it promptly disallowed.
In the meantime, provincial administrations of the late 1890s did what they could to curtail the public health risk which was assumed to accompany increasing numbers of "Chinamen" in the province. A motion was unanimously carried by the Semlin government in 1899 "that the attention of the government be directed to the urgency of enforcing the sanitary regulations laid down in the provincial Health Act where ever Chinese congregate," while in 1894 and 1897, motions were carried asking the Dominion Government for more strict quarantine inspections of incoming Chinese or "Mongolians." Another request to the Dominion government revealed the strength of the Provincial Government's belief in some essential Chineseness, independent of citizenship, birthplace and adopted country of residence. In 1900, the Legislative Assembly unanimously carried a motion "that this House views with alarm the admission of Mongolians to the rights of citizenship, and that the Dominion Government be requested so to change the naturalization laws that it will be impossible for any Mongolian, or person belonging to the native races of Asia, to become British subjects." To that end, the Turner Government had made some progress in 1895, when the Provincial Elections Act was passed denying the franchise to naturalized and Canadian-born subjects of Chinese (and Japanese origin). Clearly, once "Chinese" had been labelled as alien, this became the justification to further deny them access to insider status. Commissioner Gray put it this way: "By provincial legislation in British Columbia and the general hostility towards them, the Chinese are practically prohibited from becoming attached to the country. They are made so far as provincial legislation can go, perpetual aliens."

In this section, we have seen the strategies used by the different administrations of the province of British Columbia to effect
a moral order of separation between insider and outsider ("white" and "non-white") around the arbitrary idiom of "race." I have argued earlier that "Chinese" is a category that must be studied as part of the social, and not the natural or divine world and in this section I have attempted to demonstrate that, within important judicial limits, the early administrations of the Provincial Government of British Columbia played a pivotal role in producing that category through practice, rhetoric and a manipulation of the "race" idea. With the backing of legislative power, the social definition of identity penetrated the social, economic and political spheres of nineteenth century British Columbian life.

Like the race idea itself, the classification "Chinese" or "Oriental" was predicated upon an appeal to origins that sanctioned a cultural-political order created by Europeans. The words of Surveyor-General Pearse revealed the agenda behind that racial ascription. "We want here," he said in 1885, "a white man's community, with civilized habits and religious aspirations, and not a community of 'Heathen Chinee' who can never assimilate with us, or do ought to elevate us, and who can be of no possible value to a state in any capacity other than that of drawers of water and hewers of wood." 122 It was the Dominion Parliament of Canada, however, that had ultimate control over the definition of these settlers in Canada and we now turn to that most senior level of government to examine its part in the making of the "racial" category.

IV. The View From Ottawa: Legislating Separate Statutory Provisions for "Chinese"

Consistent with contemporary theory, many members of Canada's House of Commons appeared uncomfortable with the requests of the members
from British Columbia for Dominion intervention in the free flow of goods, labour and capital. To Mr. A. Bunster's motion in 1878 that an anti-Chinese clause be inserted in Canadian Pacific Railway contracts, Mr. A. MacKenzie, Leader of the Opposition, protested: "It [the motion] is one unprecedented in its character and spirit, and at variance with those tolerant laws which afford asylum to all who come into our country, irrespective of colour, hair or anything else." The following year, Mr. MacKenzie informed the restless members for British Columbia "that the principle that some classes of the human family were not fit to be residents of this Dominion, would be dangerous and contrary to the Law of Nations . . . however unpleasant the neighbourhood of the Chinese might be." At this time, racial discourse was only just beginning to penetrate the House of Commons.

Of course ideological support for open immigration came easily to a government which had the construction of a trans-national railway as a primary mandate. Prime Minister J. MacDonald, much more explicit than most, made a blunt statement to British Columbia member Mr. A. de Cosmos in 1882 to indicate his solidarity with the west, while at the same time pointing out the utility of "alien labour." Like many entrepreneurs and labourers, MacDonald assumed there was an intrinsic quality to "Chinese" labour that made it automatically cheaper than other labour and eminently suited it to the menial and onerous tasks of an expanding economy, such as railway construction. He saw the issue this way:

"I share very much the feeling of the people of the United States and the Australian colonies against a Mongolian or Chinese population in our country as permanent settlers. I believe that it is an alien race in every sense, that would not and could not be expected to assimilate with our Aryan population. [But] . . . it is simply a question of alternatives - either you must have this labour or you cannot have the railway." Two years later, MacDonald deflected another appeal from British
"I am sufficient of a physiologist to believe that the two races cannot combine, and that no great middle race can arise from the mixture of the Mongolian and the Aryan. I believe it would tend to the degradation of the people of the Pacific; and that no permanent immigration of the Chinese people into Canada is to be encouraged, but under the present system there is no fear of that. . . . they are not permanent settlers . . . and therefore there is no fear of a permanent degradation of the country by a mongrel race."\textsuperscript{126}

Clearly, the race idea lent itself to all manner of logical twists. It was used to argue against immigration restriction at the same time as it could be used to argue in favour of it. For Canadian and foreign entrepreneurs and the Federal Government in the early 1880s, it was precisely the inherent nature of Chinese labour - docile, industrious and alien - that entitled the country to use it and dismiss it, while for others, the competition created by their inherently low living standard was sufficient reason to reject Chinese labour altogether. Linking these two arguments, as we noted in the previous section, was the force of the race idea in Canadian culture, the cross-class belief in the inherently foreign and cheap quality of "Chinese."

The class divisions of industrial society ensured that owners had their own reasons for using Chinese labour - reasons that when translated into employment practices entrenched occupational segregation - but it was the prevailing racial frame of reference that justified the recruitment and exploitation of Chinese railway labour during a labour intensive stage of Canadian economic development. The cooperation between the Federal Government of Canada and the Canadian Pacific Railway company for the use of Chinese labour is less adequately explained by "the class relations, which [as] the essential mechanism of the system of production, required these workers," as Warburton and others have argued.\textsuperscript{127} Aside from its silence on the question of why "these workers"
were chosen or why they were "cheap," that view overlooks the fact that the Federal Government had its own agenda for contracting Chinese in the early 1880s, which was to promote colonization of its vast territories and unite a nation.

As long as the mutually beneficial arrangement with the railway company existed, the protests of the British Columbia members against the "worse than worthless element,"128 "the greatest pagans on earth,"129 and "this blighting influence and incubus on our province,"130 were simply deflected.

But the voices of the west were not forgotten, and with the end of the railway in sight in 1884, MacDonald offered a Royal Commission into the "Chinese Question" in British Columbia (some of whose testimony has been related in earlier parts of this chapter). The objective of the commission was "to obtain proof that the principle of restricting Chinese immigration is proper and in the interest of the Province and the Dominion."131 Its Commissioners, Justice Gray of the Supreme Court of British Columbia and Dr. J. Chapleau, Secretary of State, entered the investigation with relatively open minds (compared to their counterparts six years later); indeed if anything, their commitment to a laissez-faire political philosophy predisposed them against government intervention in the issue.

But as Herbert Spencer, the spokesman of American individualism, was demonstrating at the time, laissez-faire thinking lent itself easily to Darwinist arguments,132 and both Commissioners were well versed, as was noted earlier, with the philosophy and lexicon of prevailing evolutionary theory. "Two free races separated by marked characteristics and above all by colour, cannot live side by side without conflict,"
Chapleau accepted.\textsuperscript{133} That being said, Gray argued, "it is something strange to hear the strong, broad-shouldered superior race, superior physically and mentally, sprung from the highest types of the old and the new world, expressing a fear of competition with a small, inferior and comparatively speaking, feminine race."\textsuperscript{134} Trading heavily in the language of the "great chain of being" we described earlier, Gray believed that society, like nature, was properly and naturally a harmonious hierarchical structure with each element set in its appointed place. "How derogatory to the French, English and Americans in Canada" he said,

"to assert that the presence of a few labouring ignorant Chinese will cause the Canadian people to abandon the religion of their fathers, the morals, education and higher Christian civilization of their institutions, to adopt the idol worship and debasing morals and habits of the heathen.... In moral and social habits, beyond a very limited circle, the influence of the foreigner in a debasing direction will be extremely small, and upon the great masses of the people absolutely imperceptible when the country into which they come is of a higher organization in morals and civilization."\textsuperscript{135}

Using this logic, Gray and Chapleau decided to recommend a cautious policy of "limited restraint" that respected both a laissez-

faire philosophy and the "objection that there is no homogeneity of race between them and ourselves, nor can they comprehend or assimilate themselves to our institutions."\textsuperscript{136} Specifically, they advised that a $10 duty be imposed on each entrant from China. This would be "judicious," Gray argued because: "Sound policy will regulate the coming of the Chinese, not stop it, any more than a clear-headed farmer would dry up a river because it may sometimes overflow its banks and perchance create temporary derangement in the lands through which it flows, but which when properly restrained, its waters irrigate and enrich."\textsuperscript{137}

Soon after the commission, Chapleau took up discussion of the testimony from British Columbia in the House of Commons and introduced a
Bill to Restrict and Regulate Chinese Immigration into the Dominion of Canada. The bill called for a $50 head tax. It was no insignificant precedent, as Chapleau himself recognized in the speech he gave to the House in 1885 to defend his resolution. "Is it not a natural and well-founded desire of British subjects, of the white population of the Dominion, who come from either British or other European states and settle in this country, that their country should be inhabited by a vigorous, energetic and white race of people?" Chapleau's pitch must have been convincing because on July 2, 1885, the Federal Government of Canada voted to take the unprecedented step of intervening in the free flow of labour to the country's shores.

With the decision to carry Chapleau's poll tax resolution, the Parliament of Canada had decided to mediate the composition and the idea of Canadian society. The Act divided potential immigrants to Canada into two classes. One was composed of people of Chinese origin and the other of people not of Chinese origin who thereby fell under the terms of the general Immigration Act. It also led to the appointment of officials who had as their mandate the execution of the spirit and the letter of a law strictly for "Chinese." A Chief Controller of Chinese Immigration and his staff at the ports of Victoria and Vancouver were entrusted to enforce the provisions of the Act and special records of "Chinese" entry, exit, occupation and other statistics were henceforth compiled. The Act officially authorized the classification "Chinese," giving it an administrative existence quite independent of the criteria immigrants from China used to define or classify themselves and each other. In itself this would not be so important but for the consequences we can see the system of "racial" classification was precipitating for those so
officially defined.

The 1885 Chinese Immigration Act was a cumbersome law compared to the simpler American Exclusion Act of 1882. It demanded $50 from "any person of Chinese origin entering Canada" not entitled to the privilege of exemption. Those exempt from the tax were diplomatic and consular representatives, tourists, merchants and students. The Act provided an additional check on the number of entries by establishing a ratio of one immigrant for every 50 tons of ship's weight. Section 14 of the Act recognized the right of an immigrant to visit China and return to Canada without repaying the tax by showing a certificate of entry. Although theoretically simple, this provision proved to be exceedingly troublesome to the port officials because certificates were routinely sold in China and by 1887 the Act was amended to make the registration of all Chinese in Canada compulsory. This did not stop fraudulent practices surrounding return certificates, however, a problem that only encouraged accusations about the untrustworthiness of the "Chinese" character. The amended Act of 1887 also legislated that "Chinese" was "a person born of a Chinese father irrespective of the nationality of the mother" and extended exemption from the tax to women of Chinese origin married to "British and Christian subjects." This amendment followed the controversy surrounding the entry of a Mr. Moore, "an Englishman of standing" who arrived in Canada to find he was required to pay a tax for his wife and children. According to the amended Act then, such women were no longer officially "Chinese."

The Moore incident gave an opportunity for those in the House who considered the tax on women from China a menace to "the morals of the community" to vent their case. The member for Bothwell, seeing the double standard of the amendment, requested that all women of Chinese origin be
relieved of the burden of the tax so as to encourage family settlement. However Prime Minister MacDonald saw his own opportunity in Bothwell's suggestion:

"The whole point of this measure is to restrict the immigration of the Chinese into British Columbia and into Canada. . . . If wives are allowed, not a single immigrant would come over without a wife, and the immorality existing to a very great extent along the Pacific coast would be greatly aggravated. . . . I do not think that it would be to the advantage of Canada or any other country occupied by Aryans for members of the Mongolian race to become permanent inhabitants of the country."143

Chapleau similarly subscribed to the logic that "if we allow Chinese wives to come in, instead of morality we would have greater immorality."144 As he had noted in the Royal Commission of 1885: "If they came with their women they would come to settle and what with immigration and their extraordinary fecundity, would soon overrun the country."145 The discouragement of family settlement in Canada was an important implication of the official recognition of the "racial" classification "Chinese." Like the head tax itself, it further institutionalized, in its material effect, the alien and non-settler status of residents of Chinese-origin in Canada.

Once an Act discriminating against "Chinese" was introduced by the Parliament of Canada, many members of the House of Commons began to affirm it and justify it. Sir Richard Cartwright, Minister of Trade and Commerce, excused the Act in the following way in 1891: "It appears to me, although it may be said that this practice of taxing Chinamen is opposed to British practice {that} . . . to a very considerable extent the instinctive feeling which prevails in British Columbia has its origin in a wholesome feeling of self-preservation."146 Soon, justification was heard for increasing the tax. Mr. E. Prior, member for Victoria told the House in 1899:
"I believe that the Chinese are a malignant cancer eating in the very vitals of the workingman of Canada but with this difference: that while up to the present time, no cure is known for cancer... there is a cure for this Chinese cancer, and that is by the Government providing a sufficient poll tax to keep them out... The aim should be to people Canada with those who have the courage and the wish to build up the British Empire and perpetuate British institutions." 147

Notwithstanding Wilfrid Laurier's assurance upon the eve of the Liberal election victory in 1896 that while "Chinese immigration restriction is not a question in the East, the views of Liberals in the West must prevail," 148 the new Laurier administration was also cautious in its management of the "Oriental question" (as it came to be called by the late 1890s when increasing numbers of settlers from Japan were coming to Canada.) 149 In part, there was a concern to protect trade links between China and Canada and during the 1890s, the Department of Trade and Commerce advised against increasing the head tax on those grounds. 150 The Dominion authorities were also at pains not to offend Japan, a major trading partner in the British Empire and a nation perceived to hold a conception of progress and civilization more assimilable to the European cultural tradition than her more mysterious "Oriental" neighbour. 151 Whereas appeals by the Chinese Legation in London to the Colonial Office to end the stigma of the head tax in the 1890s did not move the Imperial authorities to action, 152 Colonial Secretary J. Chamberlain was sensitive to measures adopted against immigrants from Japan in Canada and at no point did Ottawa consider erecting separate statutory provisions for Japanese-origin immigrants (until the second World War). The eagerness of Ottawa to disallow legislation that affected "Orientals," or both Japanese and Chinese settlers, seems to have cushioned slightly, in a legal sense, the discriminatory posture toward specifically "Chinese." In fact after the
disallowance of the Labour Regulation Act in 1898, Laurier himself advised the British Columbia Legislature not to "restrain Chinese and Japanese labour together" in view of the cherished relations between the Home country and Japan.153

With these broader international limitations at play, and other considerations such as the steamship service across the Pacific ocean which had much to lose from government restriction of immigration from China, the House of Commons did nonetheless eventually capitulate to the requests of the British Columbia Legislature for tighter immigration restriction. To neglect so forceful a lobby might impair electoral possibilities in the west, Laurier realized.154 Not only that, but the increase in the population of Chinese immigrants in Canada from 4,350 in 1881 to 8,910 a decade later gave the lie to the argument that the Chinese were a sojourning race. (In 1897, 2,447 Chinese paid the tax at British Columbia's ports compared with 211 in 1886, the year after the tax had been introduced.) For Laurier, the time had arrived to surrender to the self-solacing thought that prejudice was inevitable, innate and right, as he conceded to the House in July, 1899:

"It is a fact for which there must be a strong ethical reason that the Anglo-Saxon race, which has proved itself to be one of the most tolerant of all races . . . shows an invincible repugnance to the people of Mongolian races . . . Wherever the Mongolian race presents itself, the English race immediately shows a strong repugnance. That is the fact, and though perhaps it is a sentiment to be deplored, still it exists, and we have to reckon with it. I say at once that it will not do for this Government, or for any Government to ignore it; on the contrary the Government is quite prepared to recognize it and to deal with it accordingly."155

By the following year, the House of Commons agreed to an amendment to the Chinese Immigration Act which demanded members of the "Chinese race" to pay a $100 entry tax.156 And in September of that year (1900), three commissioners, including two residents of British Columbia, were
appointed to investigate the question of "Oriental" immigration to Canada and assess whether prohibitive measures were in order.

The nineteenth century closed with the idea of race well entrenched in North American public opinion and science. Despite the elusiveness of the concept and the nagging difficulties scientists and anthropologists encountered in racial classification, few questioned the belief that the mental, moral and physical differences between the "races" were profound. Certainly the Canadian Royal Commission of 1901 had no difficulty in reconciling the more than 300 representations from British Columbia. By that time, there was almost no opposition to the complete prohibition of immigration from China despite the fact that with Chinese numbering 16,000 in British Columbia in 1900, they were solidly outnumbered by the 129,000 "whites." 157

Although "Chinese" labour was still regarded favourably by employers in British Columbia by 1900 for "their sobriety, machine-like regularity, economy, and their disposition to remain with one employer," 158 the majority of large entrepreneurs interviewed by commissioners Mr. R. Chute, Mr. D. Munn and Mr. C. Foley, claimed that Chinese immigrants had outgrown their usefulness to the province. Sufficient "white" labour had been available since the rail link was completed, it was held, and the major economic concerns of the province (with the exception of the canneries) would not be inconvenienced or injured by restriction. Mr. S. Robins, of the New Vancouver Coal Company and a witness to the 1885 commission, had certainly undergone a change of heart by 1901 when he referred to Chinese immigration as an "evil" that "should be stopped before it grows to unmanageable dimensions." 159

By the turn of the century, with greater participation by Chinese
immigrants in urban trades, white self-employed small businessmen had also joined the cry against Chinese labour. The "under consumption" of the Chinese and their predisposition to "live under conditions insufferable to a white man," made them "unfair competition," the commissioners reported. The "white" working class had never dropped this charge while the commissioners agreed the competition was no less than "deadly ... because it strikes at home life."160

On the basis of this heightened and more convergent feeling in British Columbia, commissioners Chute, Munn and Foley concluded that further immigration from China would be "injurious" to the interests of Canada. They found themselves to be in complete agreement with a strongly supported petition from the residents of British Columbia to the Governor-General in Council in May 1900, that protested:

"The province is flooded with an undesirable class of people non-assimilative and most detrimental to the wage-earning classes of the people of the province, and that this extensive immigration is also a menace to the health of the community.... Also ... it is in the interest of the Empire that the Pacific Province of the Dominion should be occupied by a large and thoroughly British population rather than by one in which the number of aliens form a large proportion."161

The report of the Royal Commission concluded with the unanimous recommendation that the head tax on Chinese immigrants be raised to $500.

Faced with a report so lacking in equivocation, the Laurier government did not procrastinate any further. The 1903 session of Parliament amended the Chinese Immigration Act and raised the entry tax to $500 with the dissent of only a few "free traders," as the member for Russel called himself.162 It was a hefty penalty that indicated the influence of Darwinist morality in Canadian cultural and political life by the turn of the century. The federal endorsement of the race idea was not an uncomplicated or inevitable response to that influence,
as we have seen. But clearly the idea had grown in acceptance among politicians in the years leading up to the twentieth century to the point that by 1903 it had convinced many members - including the large majority who were yet to have local experience with "Chinese" - to overcome whatever moral and economic reservations remained about legally imposed immigration restrictions. After all, "the difference between the two races" bred an "antagonism" that even the state needed to respect, the Prime Minister defended in 1903. "It seems impossible to reconcile them [the differences]," he said,

"and the conclusion of all who have considered the matter seems to be that the amalgamation of the two is neither possible or desirable. There are so many differences of character that it is supposed to be impossible to overcome them. At all events in the province of British Columbia, this feeling is very strong."

Even with immigrants from Japan, Laurier continued, "the ethnical differences are of such a character as to make it very doubtful whether assimilation of the two races could ever take place." The marginality of the "Oriental" in Canada had been divinely ordained, it was believed, and it was the responsibility of government to respect and even further will that fate, through its own actions. And so it was that immigration from China to Canada fell to a trickle after 1903.

The Parliament of Canada was a critical agent in producing "Chinese" as a category of racially defined outsiders. Frank Parkin suggests the importance of the state in such a process of exclusionary social closure. "In all known instances where racial, religious, linguistic, or sex characteristics have been seized upon for closure purposes," he argues, "the group in question has already at some time been defined as legally inferior by the state." Exclusionary possibilities could not be "realized" by the rest of society, Parkin claims, if "the state had not already paved the way by creating the
appropriate legally and politically vulnerable category." We have seen that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Dominion of Canada was instrumental in arbitrarily specifying "Chinese" as such a category through speeches and practices that appropriated and wielded the idiom of race. Such intervention in the issue cannot be explained by the prejudice of successive politicians. Nor did they intervene in the "Chinese question" because of some ultimate structural imperative to maintain "the marginal status of a group whose labour was necessary for economic expansion"166 (although to criticize the structural argument is not to dismiss the importance of economic factors for consolidating the control of a dominant sector, as another study might examine).

The decisive factor influencing state action with regard to the "Chinese question" was the respect of Ottawa's politicians for the race idea and the commitment it generated from them for nation-building in its symbolic-cultural dimension. Federal officials saw it as their duty (and means of political legitimacy) to enforce and propagate white European cultural domination in the British dominion.167 Their role was an active and pivotal one, and it is this story of the making of a socially based hegemony that lies behind the career of the category of outsiders deemed "Chinese" or "Oriental." Of course there was a degree of expediency to the anti-Chinese policies because of the considerable political value of the race idea. But as the debates of the House of Commons attest, the discourse of "race" came to be widely and deeply shared by the political elite of the country by the late nineteenth century. In 1885, separate statutory provisions were erected strictly for "Chinese" and with this action the Federal Government committed
itself to an official course of discrimination that required its own justification and refinement.

The Federal Government gave authority to a system of "racial" classification in Canada according to which immigrants from China were interpreted socially as members of a racial type. It legitimized a morality of separation between "them" and "us" and gave it a force that can be demonstrated at the local level, where territorial boundaries were used to confirm cultural and political ones. Having examined the sanction of a culture of race in Canada by the senior levels of government, then, this chapter now turns to the local level, where we will examine the geographical articulation of the category "Chinese."

IV. The Geographical Objectivation of the Racial Category in Vancouver, Canada, 1886-1900

From the 1860s, white, Chinese and Indian pioneers lived relatively cordially in and around the small town of Granville on Burrard Inlet. Something of a pecking order of occupational tasks had developed which "sorted" the relationship between camps of pioneers; Chinese settlers from California and Victoria for example, were employed in unskilled capacities at the Hastings, Moodyville and Stamps saw mills. A minority had also established stores to supply the mill hands, hand-loggers and their employers with amenities, including laundry service. By 1884, there were five merchants, 60 sawmill hands, 10 store employees, 30 washermen and cooks, five children, three married women and one single woman – a total of 114 settlers of Chinese origin – on Burrard Inlet.168 Well known among the stores was the Wah Chong laundry on Water Street, the Gin Tei Hing wash-house and general store which supported a family of six, and the Dupont Street grocery of Mr. Goon
Ling Dang (who had arrived in Victoria early enough to vote in the Dominion, Provincial and civic elections.) While some of the Chinese settlers in Granville lived in wooden shacks around the shore of False Creek near Hastings Street, others lived to the west in the vicinity of Dupont (now Pender) Street and Carrall Street, or were sparsely scattered throughout the Old Granville Townsite.

The decision of the Federal Government in 1884 to extend the western terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway from Port Moody to Coal Harbour on the inlet transformed Granville from a small, rough village of transients into the prosperous new town of Vancouver. It also brought many discharged Chinese railway labourers, only a minority of whom were equipped to open businesses to serve the rapidly growing population of British Columbians, eastern Canadians, British and American-borns. Amidst the growth and turbulence wrought by the completion of the railway then, the hitherto peaceful and paternalistic group relations grew increasingly competitive. The staking of a new town and citizenry was, like the defining of a new province, a territorial process and by 1886, with anti-Chinese measures in place at the both provincial and federal level, Vancouver's "white" pioneers were showing themselves to be as accepting as other British Columbians of officially sanctioned definitions of outsider and insider status.

Indeed many saw the primary challenge facing the new town to be the prevention of a permanent Chinese settlement. Accordingly, the reported sale of two city lots to "Chinese" in April 1886 in the business section of the town sparked considerable local indignation. For the Vancouver World, it was no less than "a violent wrench to the public sentiment," a danger, the Herald warned, to property values in an emerging commercial section. When a "small horde of unemployed
Chinamen" tried to locate a new business in the business section, the 

Vancouver News said: "Let their efforts, however little we know them, be 

promptly discouraged. . . . The thin edge of the wedge, in this case, 

had better be obstructed."170 In the meantime, new white residents did 

what they could to discourage Chinese settlement.

At the first municipal election of May, 1886, the bounds of the 

new political community were quickly asserted when 60 men of Chinese-

origin were chased from the polls back to the Hastings Mill from which 

they had been brought by manager and mayoralty candidate Mr. R. 

Alexander.171 It had been inscribed in the statute to incorporate the 

City of Vancouver that no "Chinese" or "Indian" was entitled to the 

municipal franchise, and this closure was vigilantly enforced with clubs 

and fists at the first opportunity.172 But driving the Chinese back as 

far as the Hastings Mill was not far enough for many Vancouver citizens. 

Many saw opportunity in the great fire of June 13, 1886, which levelled 

the new city and with it the residences and businesses of Chinese. In 

the week after the fire, three street meetings held with the support of 

the new Mayor, M. Maclean, and Alderman L. Hamilton, passed resolutions 

aimed at preventing Chinese from re-establishing themselves.173 But by 

July, the News lamented "they seem to have recovered from the fire scare 

which drove them out" and a "number are coming into the city taking up 

their locations principally on the outskirts."174 From the outskirts, 

which included a 160-acre tract that "a colony of Mongolians" had been 

leased to clear for cultivation on the road to New Westminster, Chinese 

supplied "private residences, hotels and boarding houses who depend 

almost entirely on the Chinamen for their vegetable products." Hamilton 

found the threat so serious as to take the matter to Council in November
of that year when he pressed for the City to "take some action in trying as far as possible to prevent Chinese from locating within the City limits."\textsuperscript{175}

Eager to "avert the evil effects which are sure to follow wherever those miserly rice eaters locate,"\textsuperscript{176} the local assemblies of the Knights of Labour mounted a vigorous campaign against Chinese settlement in Vancouver. In November 1886, they passed a resolution declaring "that the employment of Chinese not only lowers the dignity of labour but is exceedingly injurious and detrimental to the best interests of the working classes" and for this reason, they resolved "to do [their] utmost to prevent an increase and to lessen the grievance by an active and persistent action against all persons who continue to employ Chinese."\textsuperscript{177} True to their word, the Knights organized a boycott on all Vancouver businessmen who employed, sold food to, or in any way patronized Chinese residents by painting a black cross in front of all stores that violated these self-styled rules of economic and social closure. Hotel keepers agreed to discharge Chinese help. The City also respected the initiative by refusing to hire Chinese and by prohibiting the employment of "any person of Chinese race" on municipal contracts or City-assisted projects, an exclusion the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council scrupulously monitored.\textsuperscript{178}

The fear that Chinese labourers would undercut white workers was not without foundation. As we have seen, employers in British Columbia exploited the "race" idea to their own advantage and paid Chinese workers a wage in proportion to their perceived inherent worth. Not surprisingly then, the recruitment by Mr. J. McDougall of "batches of Mongolians" from Victoria in late 1886 for his 350 acre clearing contract in Vancouver's West End, quickly incurred the wrath of the
local white labouring class. At $1.25 to $1.50 per day, "Chinese" labour would half his costs, the contractor explained. But it was a defense few cared to condone and McDougall's action provoked workers and also community-minded citizens, businessmen and officials who had tried hard "to stop the growing evil while yet it is in its infancy." In early January 1887, a citizen's meeting at City Hall appointed a committee, which included Mayor Maclean and Alderman J. Humphries to establish a fund for defraying the expense of returning Chinese "to the place from whence they came." A second committee, also consisting of the Mayor, was chosen "to wait upon all employers of Chinese labour for the purpose of inducing them to replace it with white help."

Within two days, the committee had convinced 20 or so West End workers to de-camp and sail away to Victoria, to the "hearty cheers" of "fully 600 citizens." Others were escorted to the road to New Westminster, while substitute workers from Victoria quickly sensed the reception they would get and sailed on to Port Moody. The intimidation strategy was soon strengthened by the formation of a joint-stock company which aimed to buy out Chinese-owned laundries in the Old Granville Townsite. A vegetable ranch at False Creek was said to have been vacated, while it was rumoured that some of the more eager citizens raided Alderman Hamilton's house and packed off his two house boys on the steamer to Victoria. However one Chinese "boss," Mr. Lew Shew, refused to be so harassed and in late January he retained a lawyer to bring action against Mayor Maclean, Alderman Humphries and others on the citizens' committees for molestation he allegedly suffered in an attempt to expel him from the city limits. Although the defendants were exonerated, Lew Shew and "McDougall Chinee," as the contractor was
dubbed, successfully appealed to the Supreme Court of British Columbia for an injunction discouraging similar acts of expulsion in the future.\textsuperscript{184}

Determined to carry out his contract to clear the Brighouse Estate, McDougall brought back the necessary labour in February 1887, only to find that an anti-Chinese league had been formed with the specific intention of preventing the Chinese from re-locating within the city limits.\textsuperscript{185} During four well attended January meetings at City Hall, various means of soliciting pledges from the community had been devised to prevent Chinese securing another foot-hold.\textsuperscript{186} When it was rumoured that Chinese were en route from Victoria, some 300 had sped to the wharf, but no Chinese were to be seen.\textsuperscript{187} Citizens had also continued to paint crosses on buildings that dealt with Chinese. The burgeoning popularity of the anti-Chinese movement meant that by February, citizens were aroused to distraction by the return of the Brighouse Estate workers.

Indeed on the night of February 24, 1887 approximately 300 residents of Vancouver - frustrated by preventative measures - decided to escalate their harassment of the unwanted settlers. Unimpeded by the local police, rioters raced from a crammed City Hall meeting for the camps of sleeping workers at Coal Harbour with their own solution to the Chinese presence in mind. Shanties were pulled down, bedding, clothing and provisions thrown into a fire and some 25 workers, it was said by the press, "kicked and knocked about."\textsuperscript{188} Around midnight a smaller mob completed the deed at Carrall Street where the homes of Chinese were burnt or damaged. The following day, 86 Chinese living in the vicinity of Carrall Street were notified to leave the city limits. They agreed to do so peaceably on the condition that one man could be left in charge of each store; with those terms met, the settlers were
carried off to New Westminster. Three rioters (a logger, a milkman and a clerk) were arrested, offered bail by magistrate J. Blake (a member of the original citizens' committee) and later discharged for what was said to be a lack of evidence.

The riot marked the first act of concerted physical violence against the Chinese in Canada. It was not something that officials in Victoria, the capital of the province approved of, despite their obvious sympathy with the cause and despite the difficulty the Province had experienced in translating its own political will into legal action. Anti-Chinese champion John Robson, said: "The civic authorities . . . having ample powers had strangely and persistently refrained from exercising them in upholding the law." Attorney-General Davie went further and introduced a Bill to Preserve the Peace in Vancouver that passed through three readings in one day. It dictated no less than the suspension of the Vancouver City Charter and the annulment of the judicial powers of the City. Much to the resentment of Vancouver's Mayor and Council, some 40 special constables were sent from Victoria to take charge of what the Attorney-General described as Vancouver's decline into "mob rule."

Ironically then, it was with the protection of a reluctant provincial administration that the immigrants from China could return to Vancouver and re-establish residence. Most returned to the vicinity of Carrall and Dupont Streets on District Lot 196 that they had been expelled from. Many of the Brighouse labourers also gravitated there after they finally completed the clearing contract in 1888 and by 1889, settlers of Chinese-origin had become concentrated in the vicinity of Dupont and Carrall Streets. While nine of 14 "Chinese" laundries were
dispersed throughout the Old Granville Townsite and District Lot 196, the Chinese companies and merchant premises were confined almost entirely to Dupont and Carrall Streets. Of the merchants, five were grocers, three owned general stores, one was a shoemaker, one was a labour contractor, one owned a "Chinese store," and the trades of the remaining seven were not specified. A Chinese school was located at 115 Hastings Street in 1889. No mention was made in the directory of the sundry shacks of labourers, but many were located on block 14 with good access to the industrial and commercial wharves, industrial shops, the gas works and the Royal City Planing Mill, built in 1886. By 1892, a growth in population consolidated this earlier spatial pattern and also the relative concentration of Chinese in Vancouver (see map over).

The district of concentrated settlement was a depressed, swampy district, covered at high tide by the waters of False Creek, which flowed closest to Burrard Inlet between Carrall and Columbia Streets. At Hastings and Carrall Street, a "rocky eminence" further enclosed and protected blocks 13 and 14. In its adverse physical character, it paralleled the peripheral legal, political, social and economic status of the pioneers it housed. The spatial referent of the category "Chinese" was not a legislated one, however. Settlers from China did not locate in a concentrated pattern through formal civic suasion or restrictive covenant. (When the City attempted to rid Stanley Park of some Chinese squatters between 1888-90, Attorney-General Davie was quick to query the jurisdictional competence of the City to officially decide residence through such restrictions. In the case of the squatters, Council advised the Board of Health to indict them as a public nuisance so that the City could remove them.)

But what is clear from events in early Vancouver is that the City
DISTRIBUTION OF CHINESE IN VANCOUVER, 1892

Based on William's Directory, 1892

Fig. 2.
was quite willing, even eager to lend a moral authority to the anti-Chinese vendetta. No doubt the force with which the racial category "Chinese" was being wielded in Vancouver, with the support (or in the case of the riot, blind eye) of City Hall, convinced many Chinese of the wisdom of locating together, especially after 1887. Mr. Justice Crease, of the Supreme Court of British Columbia said in 1885 that "their tendency to congregate . . . in British Columbia is directly owing to the fact that as foreigners, held in dangerous disesteem by an active section of whites, they naturally cling together for protection and support." The solicitor for the Chinese Board of Trade also told the commissioners in 1901 that "The Chinese live in aggregation, but this is rather a matter of necessity than choice." A Mr. W.A. Cunyow, of Vancouver agreed. He said, "The Chinese who are here usually congregate in one part of the city. The chief reason for this is companionship. The Chinese know that the white people have had no friendly feeling towards them for a number of years." Concentration was also a product of the host of secondary effects the culture of race implied for Chinese residents in British Columbia from the time they were disenfranchised. Important among the secondary effects was the creation of a pool of single and poorly paid men who were dependent on Chinese bosses for their employment, their lodgings and sometimes their head tax payment. While it is likely some of the immigrants from China were keen to distance themselves from "whites" and share a district with their fellow countrymen, it seems less likely that the majority of merchants chose to live beneath their often substantial means in a waterlogged district. However the emergence of a concrete "Chinese" turf in Vancouver was complex, as we have seen. The protection afforded by the state enabled the formation of the district just as in another sense, state
action constrained Chinese to live together. There were limits to the extent and means by which the race idea could be implemented in Vancouver. The upshot of the provincial intervention in civic affairs in 1887 (and ultimately the federal control over provincial initiatives) was that the City of Vancouver was forced, albeit reluctantly, to accept the Chinese presence. The Dupont Street settlement became a minimum entitlement of a category of outsiders in a parliamentary democracy. As the guardians of a British colony, Canada's senior political officials respected not only the quest for a "white" social fabric, but also the reputedly "Anglo-Saxon" virtues of justice, fair play and law and order. In a sense, the boundaries of the district of the settlers from China signified the legal limits to the popular implementation of the race idea. Within the meagre confines of a few sodden streets, Chinese immigrants would be afforded the minimal right to a livelihood and property - a principle that was affirmed again in 1907 when the Federal Government, upon the advice of the Imperial authorities, stepped in to compensate Vancouver's Chinese residents for property damages inflicted in another, more severe riot. What is clear here is that white European cultural domination was no inevitable structure implanted somehow from above, but forged and negotiated with varying expression at the different levels of state and within the limits of a particular judicial context.

Within these limits, the Vancouver civic authorities would come to ensure (as we shall see in the following chapter), that if a Chinese claim to Vancouver existed, it would be a marginal one. Certainly the tenor of civic attitudes did not change after Victoria's reprimand. That intervention affected the means, but not the end of securing a "white"
social and institutional fabric from outsiders. By the late 1890s, when anti-Chinese agitation peaked again in Vancouver, the City symbolically led the movement with public meetings at City hall.\textsuperscript{200} The anti-Chinese league of 1896 consisted of many politicians, including Vancouver's mayor, five aldermen, some ex-aldermen and a number of members of Parliament. In 1897, for example, Mayor J. Templeton presided over the meetings, including one in February that was convened to lobby Ottawa for an increase in the head tax. Alderman N. Schou circulated a petition calling for a prohibitive Chinese head tax for which he found 3,000 signatures in Vancouver. Indeed through these efforts, Vancouver became the centre of anti-Chinese feeling both in British Columbia and Canada and many political representatives from Victoria, Nanaimo and New Westminster attended the league's meetings. Their speeches were as stirring as the local press in 1902 when a contingent of settlers from England arrived in Vancouver: "They are our own kith and kin," the Province said, "entertaining for British laws and customs and for the British flag the same respect which we ourselves hold, [that] makes them doubly desirable as citizens."\textsuperscript{201}

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the role of the different levels of the Canadian government in shaping the definition of immigrants from China in British Columbia in the late nineteenth century. The intellectual context for the appellation "Chinese" was traced to the modern race idea of the nineteenth century, which, it was argued, assimilated ancient cultural distinctions between "East" and "West," civilized and barbarian, Master and slave, into a doctrine of immutable and discrete human types. The type, of the likes of "John Chinaman," was
made to stand as an image of all people from China and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, we saw that such primitive abstractions were incorporated into a radical science and culture of biological determinism. So powerful was the cultural construct of the type that during the latter part of the nineteenth century, in a context of British colonial expansion, it merged easily with evolutionary theory which supported monogenist arguments about the unity of human existence. We noted that Darwinism lent scientific status to the view that there were lower and higher races, progressive and non-progressive ones (of which "John's was a prime example), and that a natural antipathy separated the races and engendered an inescapable conflict.

It was this transcendent public ideology that informed the culture of white British Columbians from the 1860s when settlers from China began arriving. By the turn of the century, it was solidly entrenched in the ethos and institutions of the province and a whole epistemology of separation had been built between "Chinese" and "whites." The state played a crucial role in solidifying the arbitrary distinction of "race" as a line of division around which both rhetoric and practice were directed. At the provincial level, the social cleavage was drawn dramatically after British Columbia joined Confederation and politicians began to stake out a British British Columbia. As part of the exercise of cultural domination, officials marked the limits of that stake by imposing the disabilities of marginal political status on "Chinese." They did this not out of some irrational prejudice, nor as blind agents of capital but it was argued, as active participants in, and propagators of, a culture of race for which there were important legal limits. In Ottawa, more caution was exercised, but eventually
officials were content to forfeit an open immigration philosophy in the
interests of control over specifically "Chinese" entry. The Vancouver
City Council also lent a moral force to the "racial" category in its
support for strategies, including violent ones, to rid the city of
Chinese. It was an important actor in setting the cultural context for
the emergence of a nucleated, defensive settlement that made concrete
the idea of a "Chinese" race.

It is true that on one level the state merely made manifest the
prevailing view of the time; but it is also true that its institutional
authority carried the stamp of legitimacy that collective prejudice
lacked. In that sense the Canadian state was an important agent in
rendering "race" a social fact of considerable material consequence. By
the late nineteenth century, "John Chinaman's" perceived threat to the
fabric of this British-settler society had achieved a magnitude that
required the intervention of all three levels of government and as will
be seen, the momentum of such state interest was to resound through the
decades to come.
NOTES


2. ibid., p.15.


4. D. Lai, Chinese immigrants into British Columbia and their distribution, 1858-1970. Pacific Viewpoint, 14, 1, 1973, 102-8. By the 1870s, the push factors in China were as powerful as the inducements in the New World. South China experienced a difficult period of reconstruction following the Taiping Rebellion and many were forced by their impoverished circumstances to leave. Chan, A. Gold Mountain. (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983), p.52.


6. ibid., p.146. In absolute terms, the Colony as a whole had a "white" population of 5,635, a "Chinese" population of 2,195 and an "Indian" population of over 35,000 in 1867.

7. In cannery work, Chinese were paid $25-$35 per month while "whites" were paid $40. Road building earned Chinese $15-$20 per month and "whites" $40. Canada. Sessional Papers, 1885, No. 54a. Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration. Hereafter cited as Canada. Report, 1885, p.xxvi, xl.


9. ibid., p.LXX.

10. ibid., p.XLIX.

11. ibid. p.LXIX.


14. ibid., p.XLI. Gray remarked in 1885 the "whole feeling of the province is against it [servitude]. . . . As, however, domestic service is a necessity, if the people of the country are of too high a grade for it, a substitute must be found where best it can." p.LXXIII.

15. ibid. On the distinction between paternalistic and competitive race relations, see P. van den Berghe, Race and racism: a comparative perspective, op. cit.


18. R. Wynne, Reaction to the Chinese, op. cit., p.142.

19. This charge was very common and made not only by workers. For example, Mr. F. Barnard, member of Parliament for British Columbia claimed "they live closer than rats." Canada. Report, 1885, p.XXXV.

20. Mr. S. Robins told the commissioners in 1885 that: "At the time of their [the Chinese] coming here my company had been suffering from a strike of the white labourers, and we accepted the Chinese as a weapon with which to settle the dispute." Canada. Report, 1885 p.118.


23. P. Ward, White Canada forever, op. cit., p.169. Like many conventional liberal treatments of race relations, Ward's explanation is pitched at the folk level. Elsewhere he writes the "pattern of racial awareness was . . . ultimately founded . . on the white community's continuing psychological tendency to cling to the ideal of the homogeneous society." p.54.


25. R. Warburton, Race and class in British Columbia, op. cit., p.84.


34. See C. Boxer, *Race relations in the Portuguese colonial empire*, op. cit.


36. W. Jordan, *White over black: American attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812*. (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), p.94. Jordan notes the change in terminology which English colonists applied to themselves during the seventeenth century. "From the initially common term Christian, at mid-century, there was a marked drift toward English and free. After about 1680, taking the colonies as a whole, a new term appeared - white." p.95. Thereafter colonists turned to the difference in complexion and by the end of the seventeenth century "dark complexion had become an independent rationale for enslavement." p.96.


40. The deficient shape and size of the skulls of "the Mongol, Indian and Negro, and all the dark-skinned races," Nott contended in 1849 were "especially well marked in those parts of the brain which have been assigned to the moral and intellectual faculties." Cited in S. Miller, *The unwelcome immigrant: the American image of the Chinese, 1785-1882*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p.156.


42. See the discussion of the doctrine of racial typology and the polygenists including Nott, G. Gliddon, a lecturer on Egyptian culture and L. Agassiz, a natural historian, in M. Banton, *The idea of race*, op. cit., chap.3.

43. For a comprehensive discussion of these disciplines, see N. Stepan, *The idea of race in science*, op. cit., chap.2.


47. G. Jones, *Social Darwinism and English thought*, op. cit., p.141.


50. R. Bannister, *Social Darwinism*, op. cit., p.188.


54. See D. Livingstone, *Science and society*, op. cit., p.188.


56. Cited in R. Bannister, ibid., pp.196-200. "Jim Crow" was the name given to the physical segregation by "race" in the South that was legislated in order to ensure the social distance under slavery was maintained geographically. See P. van den Berghe, *Race and racism*, op. cit., p.88.


60. Although birthplace information for the parents of Canadian-born officials is not systematically available in the annual *Parliamentary Companion*, those entries which do provide that information indicate a predominant British origin.


62. ibid., p.xcix.

63. See the summary of Gray, pp.XIX-XLIV. Hon. J. Robson, Provincial
Secretary said "their habits are as filthy as their morals, in both eating, drinking and sleeping. I do not think a Chinaman is to be compared at all with the habits of white people. They sleep in beds fit for dogs and live in dirty hovels, so how can they be clean at all?" p.65.

64. Mr. D. Gordon, member of Parliament for Vancouver, told the commissioners: "They practice their pagan rites with a prominence and effrontery repulsive to the strain of modern thought. Their gatherings in our various communities attract many, alas, too many, of our young boys, who from idle curiosity are drawn together to witness them practice the peculiar phases of Asiatic heathenism." p.136.

65. See summary of Gray pp.LX-LXVI and Chapter Three of this thesis for a discussion of that charge.

66. There is abundant testimony on this point. In particular see the statement of the Knights of Labour, pp.155-60.

67. Again there are numerous references. See for example, the testimony of Mr. D. Lord of the British American Packing Company, Mr. A. Onderdonk, contractor for Canadian Pacific Railway, Mr. S. Robins of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, Mr. R. Scott, underground superintendent of the Wellington Colleries.

68. Many witnesses claimed that Chinese gave untrustworthy testimony in court. For example, Hon. Mr. Justice Crease, otherwise favourably disposed to the presence of Chinese in British Columbia said: "In their legal contentions in court among their economies is a remarkable economy of truth." p.146. Attorney-General A. Davie said "generally speaking they are not truthful witnesses... more from a desire on their part not to give the truth than from any difficulty of interpreting." p.51. Hon. M. Drake said "The Chinese are utterly unacquainted with the truth, and it is a universal comment on their evidence that you cannot believe anything they say." p.154.

69. Mr. J. Pawson, ex-Justice of the Peace claimed: "A very large percentage of crimes committed in the province is perpetrated by them, only it is difficult to make arrests owing to the manner in which they live." p.132. Mr. W. Moresby, gaoler at New Westminster said "eighty per cent of Chinese defaulters escape justice through the impossibility of establishing their identity, they are so much alike." p.108. A number of witnesses claimed the Chinese evaded taxes.

70. Commissioner J. Chapleau, who tried to be as fair as possible in his overall adjudication, remarked: "The charge of cruelty is however, established. The Chinaman will contemplate the infliction of torture or death in its most repulsive form and munch his rice unconcerned." p.1lx.

71. ibid., p.166. By the turn of the century, these conceptions of the Chinese were picked up by the fiction writers in British Columbia.

73. ibid., p.xcvi.
74. ibid., p.72.
77. ibid., p.72.
78. ibid., p.95.
79. ibid., p.103. See also the testimony of the general manager for the Wellington Colleries, p.111.
82. British Columbia. *Statutes*, 1872, 35 Vict., chap37, s.13. The Act was reserved by the Lieutenant Governor of the province. It was not until 1875 that the jurisdictional competence of the Provincial Legislature to deny Chinese the franchise was affirmed and Chinese were removed from the voters lists. British Columbia. *Statutes*, 1875, 35 Vict., ch.26, s.22.
85. British Columbia. *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia*, (hereafter *JLABC*) 1, 1872, p.15; ibid., p.16.
86. Unfortunately, no record of the debates of the Legislature is available. Wynne has retrieved the debates in the House surrounding these resolutions from newspapers. See his, Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, op. cit., p.155,161.
88. *JLABC*, 1876, V, p.46.
89. ibid., 1878, VII, p.82.


94. R. Wynne, Reaction to the Chinese, op. cit., p.345.

95. JLABC, 1879, VIII, pp.xxiv-xxv.

96. ibid., p.55.


98. For example in 1881, Helgesen's motion to insert a condition in all bills, leases and grants of gold mining ground that Chinese labour would not be employed, was defeated by twelve votes to eight. JLABC, 1881, X, p.57.

99. ibid., 1883, XII, p.17.

100. ibid., p.83.


102. JLABC, 1882, XI, p.10.


106. G. La Forest, Disallowance and reservation of provincial legislation, op. cit.; Regina v. Wing Chong, [1885] B.C.R. 150 (B.C.S.C.). The regulation act was declared an interference with the rights of aliens, an interference with trade and commerce and a violation of existing treaties with the Imperial Government and China and, therefore on all accounts, "an infraction of Dominion authority."


109. JLABC. 1885, XIV, p.46. See also British Columbia. Sessional Papers, 1886. B.C. Executive Council Committee. Destitute condition of Chinese recently discharged from the CPR works, 1885.


111. British Columbia. Statutes, 1890, 52 Vict., chap.33, s.4. The validity of the act was considered by the Supreme Court of British Columbia and declared constitutional. However an appeal was lodged by the Union Colliery of British Columbia against the Attorney-General and according to the Privy Council, the exclusive authority of the Dominion over matters directly concerning the rights, privileges and disabilities of aliens was affirmed. In the meantime, some coal mine operators seem to have continued employing Chinese, while others chose not to out of either moral preference for "white" labour or because it was thought Chinese working underground imperilled the safety of "white" labourers as the original act contended. By 1902, of the four coal mines in British Columbia, only the Wellington Colliery at Comox employed Chinese underground. JLABC. 1902, XXXI, p.32.

112. JLABC, 1886, XV, p.47.

113. ibid., 1891, XX, p.145. Without access to the debates, it is not possible to establish why that motion was carried and not the numerous others involving what became called "the usual Chinese clause."


115. JLABC, 1900, XXVIII, p.99.

116. ibid., 1893, XXII, p.77; 1894, XXIII, p.15; 1897, XXVI, p.12; 1899, XXVIII, p.10, 99.

117. The Colonist newspaper pointed out the political expediency of anti-Chinese political platforms and anti-Chinese bills on May 6, 1900: "It is a mistake to suppose that the Provincial Legislature has the power to settle it. . . . The Turner government was not responsible for it; the Semlin government did nothing to create it, and the Martin government can do nothing to alter it."

118. JLABC, 1894, XXIII, p. 117; 1897, XXVIII, p.57.


120. British Columbia. Statutes, 1895, 58 Vict., chap.20, s.3.
121. Canada. Report, 1885, p.XI.

122. ibid., p.97.


127. R. Warburton, Race and class in British Columbia, op. cit., p.82. Basran also argues that Canadian immigration practices can be explained by "the general role of the Canadian state" which has been "to help capitalists in the accumulation process and to assist them to increase their profits." G. Basran, Canadian immigration policy and theories of racism. In Racial minorities in multicultural Canada, eds. P. Li and B. Singh Bolaria, (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1983), p.11.


133. ibid., p.xviii.

134. ibid., p.LXIX.

135. ibid., p.XCIV.

136. ibid., p.LXXII.

137. ibid.


139. Canada. Statutes, 1885, 48-49 Vict., chap.71. In the same session, MacDonald introduced an amendment to the Franchise Act that prevented any "person of Mongolian or Chinese race" from the Federal franchise. Canada. Statutes, 1885, 48-49 Vict., chap.40, s.2. MacDonald was one of the most ardent supporters of the amendment. "The Chinaman . . . has no British instincts or British feelings or aspirations, and therefore ought not to have the vote." D.H.C. May 4, 1885, p.1589.

140. By 1892, the system of return certificates was abolished and the
right of returning Chinese to re-enter made contingent upon their proving their identity to the satisfaction of the Controller. This strengthened the system of control and scrutiny at ports.

143. ibid.
144. ibid.
148. The telegram was sent to the Vancouver World. See D.H.C. June 25, 1900, p.8175.
150. See for example, British Columbia. Sessional Papers, 1894, Correspondence re Chinese per capita tax, p.1003-4. See also Department of Trade and Commerce. RG. 20, Vol. 1111, File 2202, February 13, 1895. Chinese-Canadian Project, Box 28, Special Collections, University of British Columbia, Main Library.
151. "For my part," said Prime Minister Laurier in 1903, "I make a distinction between Japan and China. Japan is one of the rising nations of the present day. It has shown itself to be very progressive... among the civilized nations of the world." D.H.C. March 27, 1903, p.599.
156. D.H.C. July 9, 1900, p.8211.
158. ibid., p.274.
159. ibid., p.57. Andracki claims that by 1901 employers in the province had reconciled themselves to the existence of organized labour and collective bargaining for wages. *Immigration of Orientals into Canada*, op. cit., p.74.


162. The amendment passed its third reading on May 5, 1903. See D.H.C. May 5, 1903, p.2399. The amendment was passed despite the protest of the president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Mr. T. Shaughnessy who claimed that "legislation by Canada would deprive us of the revenue from the carriage of Chinamen back and forth between this country and their own and would so seriously affect the revenue of our Pacific steamships that we could not afford to keep them running." Canada. *Report*, 1902, p.201.


164. ibid., p.599. The term "ethnical" was a precursor to the more recent term "ethnic" (as used in popular circles). See Chapter Six.


177. ibid., November 9, 1886.

178. The covenant controlled indentures between contractors and the City of Vancouver within the city limits. An early example prohibited Chinese employment on the grading of Prior Street. See CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 1, August 8, 1887, p.82.

179. See Vancouver News, January 8, 9, 14, 1887 on the local feeling against McDougall.

180. ibid., January 9, 1887.

181. ibid., January 11, 1887.

182. ibid., January 12, 1887.


184. British Columbia Federationist, December 9, 1911.

185. Vancouver News, February 3, 9, 16, 1887.

186. Vancouver News, January 11, 12, 15, 20, 1887.


188. Vancouver News, February 25, 1887.

189. ibid., February 26, 1887.

190. ibid., February 27, 1887.


198. ibid., p.235.


200. On the renewal of anti-Chinese feeling in Vancouver during the late 1890s see World, July 6, 7, 9, 15, 1896; August 12, 1896; January 6, 1897; February 6, 1897.

201. Province, May 26, 1902.
Chapter Three

DUPONT STREET AS "CHINA TOWN:" THE MAKING OF A RACIAL CATEGORY THROUGH PLACE AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

Commissioners Clute, Munn and Foley summarized their findings in British Columbia in 1901 with these words:

"They come from southern China . . . with customs, habits and modes of life fixed and unalterable, resulting from an ancient and effete civilization. They form, on their arrival, a community within a community, separate and apart, a foreign substance within but not of our body politic, with no love for our laws or institutions; a people that cannot assimilate and become an integral part of our race and nation. With their habits of overcrowding, and an utter disregard for all sanitary laws, they are a continual menace to health. From a moral and social point of view, living as they do without home life, schools or churches, and so nearly approaching a servile class, their effect upon the rest of the community is bad . . . Upon this point there was entire unanimity."

In Chapter Two we discussed the ideology behind attitudes such as those the commissioners held towards immigrants from China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specifically, the chapter was concerned with how racial ideology informed government practices that socially produced "Chinese" as a category for the European. In this chapter, we will extend our discussion of racial ideology to the white European idea of "China town," this "community within a community, separate and apart . . ." And we will see that, for all Chinatown's being "a foreign substance within but not of our body politic," the state was very much an actor in constituting this settlement of Chinese pioneers as "foreign;" Dupont (later East Pender) Street was not a party to the body politic, but nor did it escape its attention. Indeed, while the territory on Vancouver's District Lot 196 known as "Chinatown" was most definitely there in physical form, some details of which I will
briefly describe in the first part of this chapter, the major objective is to demonstrate that it was an idea and one that for "white" Vancouver's civic officials represented a mandate for action.

The study of the social production of a "racial" category then, is not only an excursion through the minds of historical actors but a study of the reciprocal relationship over time between ideology and material effect, a relationship that is mediated by agents such as the levels of state. Their practices institutionalize the dominant racial frame of reference as does the sorting of socially defined groups through space, as we argued in Chapter Two. But the importance of the geographical underpinnings of racial ideology is not simply that residence patterns reflect or cement that ideology (the Chinese being virtually compelled to live apart in a concentrated settlement). Racial ideology also creates and is invigorated by images that produce a locality as a place in the social consciousness of its representers. Indeed the spatial category, "Chinatown," cannot be explained solely by the presence of people of Chinese origin in the district - as if "Chinatown" were "Chinatown" because the (disliked) "Chinese" lived there - but, I believe, must be located within the cultural system of the beholder. We need to investigate the images that screened the streets of Dupont and Carrall Street as "Chinatown" for those held the power of definition and the authority to act upon that power. In so doing it becomes apparent that "place" is a critical nexus through which their domination is exercised and their categories carried forward. Before this argument is addressed however, it is helpful to consolidate our earlier description of the territory at the foot of Carrall Street with a brief outline of the community at the turn of the century.
I. A Sketch of the Settlement at Dupont Street, 1890-1910

During the first decade of the century, a neighbourhood of predominantly "Chinese" residents was consolidated in Vancouver. The area of concentrated settlement was bounded by Carrall Street on the west (until 1904), Hastings Street to the north, Columbia Street and extending to Westminster Street on the east, and False Creek on the south. Only a small minority lived in other areas of the city (see map page 133). In 1901, the district housed an estimated 2,053 men, 27 women and 26 children. The year before, the City's health inspector counted 1,500 inmates in 105 boarding houses in the Dupont Street area, making for a density of approximately 14 per house. Sixteen of the women were wives of merchants, eight of labourers, while the single women either performed household chores for merchant families, were home seamstresses for Chinese tailors, or were prostitutes. A tiny minority of women worked for wage labour in the first two decades of the century. The community rarely supported the total number of residents at any one time, however; much labouring work, especially in the canneries was seasonal.

The most permanent settlers in 1901 were the 143 merchants, whose commercial enterprises served and were supported by the local Chinese community, and in the case of silk and shoe retailers and tailors, by some non-Chinese. The merchants included 15 greengrocers, 3 rice millers, eight manufacturing clothiers, eight importers and exporters, two silk merchants, two custom tailors, and various numbers of butchers and poultry dealers, general retailers, labour contractors, lodging house owners and managers, pawnbrokers, intelligence officers, opium manufacturers and barbers. By 1911, the number of Chinese businesses in
Vancouver had tripled from 71 to 236. Often, first generation owners generated the necessary capital for their ventures through various forms of partnership. In particular, rotating credit associations, organized along lines of clan or locality affiliation, offered mutual credit to members.

Wage labour was sold both inside and outside the Chinese community. In 1901, 172 worked in the city's lumber mills and by 1908, the number employed in Vancouver's saw, shingle and planing mills had increased to 1,500 (or just over a quarter of the population of Chinese origin in the city for that year). The turn of the century also saw 262 Chinese in the city's homes as servants; a significant number in the employ of Vancouver's hotels as cooks and cleaners; many as itinerant peddlers of vegetables to Vancouver's homes; others in the brickyards and market gardens of Vancouver; and as many as 557 in the distant canneries of the Lower Mainland. Others worked for Chinese "bosses" who depended on the labour of their countrymen. For example, in 1901, 100 worked for tailor firms owned by Chinese merchants in the Dupont Street area producing overalls, suits, coats and silk products, while almost 200 were employed in the Chinese laundry trade. That line of business was popular among Chinese because of the relatively small outlay of capital required, the large dependence on manual labour and the early comparative advantage Chinese established in the trade. Others found work within the community in construction, restaurants and miscellaneous jobs such as rag collection for mattress and furniture dealers.

The class distinctions within the Chinese community at the turn of the century were pronounced, perhaps more pronounced than in the larger community given the relative poverty of Chinese workers. On the
basis of unusually detailed data collected by the federal Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. W.L. Mackenzie King in 1908 during his investigation of the losses sustained by 91 Chinese merchants in the riot of September 1907, Yee has identified a pyramid of economic power in the Vancouver Chinese community. At its apex, it featured the four firms of Sam Kee, Gim Lee Yuen, Lee Yuen and Hip Tuck Luck, which each earned between $150,000 and $180,000 annually, or six times the average income of two-thirds of Chinese businesses in Vancouver. Their main interests included importing and exporting, real estate investment, opium manufacture, labour contracting, and steamship commissions. At the second highest tier of the pyramid, Yee placed five merchants who earned between $66,000 and $85,000 per year for importing and supplying wholesale provisions to canneries. A diverse group of 16 businesses earning between $31,000 to $55,000 annually, comprised the third level of the pyramid, while 36 firms with incomes ranging from $1,000 to $30,000 made up the base. Between them, these merchants built a sub-economy that was "self sufficient to the degree that it provided its inhabitants with a full range of services including restaurants, lodgings, employment contractors, barbers and clothing."

As has been the case in many overseas Chinese communities, interlocking loci of power linked the merchant elite of Vancouver's Chinese population to the political and economic institutions of that community. In 1896, the separate Chinese chambers of commerce amalgamated as the Chinese Board of Trade at No. 5 Dupont Street, growing to 47 member firms by 1901. The Board's leaders included Yip Sang and Lum Duck-shew from the Gim Lee Yuen Company. In 1889, members of that company and the Lee Yuen and Sam Kee companies
established a branch of the Chinese Benevolent Association, in part to support destitute railway workers, although the association was not formally incorporated until 1906. Won Alexander Cumyow, a British Columbia-born labour contractor and court interpreter, founded the influential Empire Reform Association in 1899 on Columbia Avenue, for which a women's counterpart, composed mainly of the wives of merchants, was formed in 1903. In 1910, 90 per cent of women of Chinese origin in Vancouver belonged to the association, while in the same year, the Chinese Women's Missionary Band of Vancouver had 40 members.

The merchants were also the founders of the property base for a "Chinese" district in Vancouver. For them, the area became an "arena of investment as much as a social community of families, businesses and homes." The first legal claim to the area was made in 1892 with the purchase of lot 25, Block 13, District Lot 196 through a non-Chinese mortgaging institution (as was customary in subsequent purchases). By 1901, the total assessed value of real property in the area called "Chinatown" in the Royal Commission was $260,255, of which $192,950 was assessed to non-Chinese and $67,255 to Chinese. In 1908, Chinese ownership of land, stores, houses and stock in the district was estimated at $2 million. Of this, Gim Lee Yuen owned nine lots forming three distinct sites in the area, the company of Wing Sang possessed 16 lots including the 11 lots of Canton Alley, Lee Yuen owned two lots and Sam Kee various others. Their property purchases accounted to a large extent for the expansion of the spatial bounds of the district in the early part of the first decade of the century (see map page 134). Businesses and lodgings spread along Carrall Street, north toward Hastings Street and south toward False Creek. In 1902, "all the vacant property on the south side of Hastings Street between Carrall and
DISTRIBUTION OF CHINESE IN VANCOUVER, 1910

Based on Henderson's Directory, 1910

Fig. 3.
"Columbia Streets" was bought by Chinese merchants, resulting in protests by established white merchants of Hastings Street, who called on Chinese to move west rather than north. This they quickly did and in 1904 Gim Lee Yuen paid the Canadian Pacific Railway $23,000 for four lots on Block 17, west of Carrall Street. Soon after, Wing Sang bought half a block on the south side of West Pender Street for $50,000 from the rail company and it was through these purchases that Shanghai Alley and Canton Alleys were built. Claim was also made in that period to the 100 and 200 blocks East Pender Street. By 1914, Chinese in Vancouver had purchased 21 of the 24 separate pieces of property in the 43 lots of the unit and 100 block East Pender Street and the unit block at West Pender and Carrall Streets.

It is apparent that the community of Chinese pioneers in Vancouver was economically differentiated into a small elite of well-to-do merchants, a significant number of small businessmen and the large number of workers. Family life was the preserve of a miniscule proportion of the merchant sector who could afford the onerous head tax and whose often elegant living conditions set them widely apart from the less privileged "bachelors." (One "beautifully neat" house visited by a reporter in 1910 had doors of "stained glass" that opened onto a "sheltered balcony," "carved wood cabinets," "tasteful" furnishings with a "combination of Oriental and European ideas" and a large print of Confucius.) For the rest, the constraints on family settlement imposed by Ottawa's head tax system and the hostile social climate were very real. Mr. W. A. Cumyow informed the commissioners in 1901 of the reluctance of many fellow Chinese to bring their families to Canada: "A large proportion of them would bring their families here," he said, "were it not for the unfriendly reception . . . which creates an
unsettled feeling. A Nanaimo market gardener said in 1901: "I have been here 12 years. My wife and two children are in China. . . . I would like to bring my wife and children here. [But] . . . The people in this country talk so much against the Chinese I don't care to bring them here." By 1907, just 98 "Chinese" children attended Vancouver's schools.

For the impoverished, then, a rather circumscribed life was spent within the confines of the Dupont Street district. China's statesman, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, wrote of their existence during a visit to Vancouver in 1903, as very "distressed and cramped. . . . Their situation is pitiable beyond description," he said. The Chinese Theatre off Carrall Street and the Chinese Opera House built in the late 1890s probably relieved the cheerless circumstances for some; gambling provided the forum for socializing (and large profits to operators); the Chinese Missions entered the lives of a small number of converts; Chinese New Year united the community in celebration once a year, at least for those who did not return to China for the event; and Chinese-language newspapers, the first of which was established in 1894 by the Ying Wang Bo Publishing Company, probably provided a vehicle for social exchange about the old country and the new. Notwithstanding the social focus imparted by these activities, the material reality of many workers' lives in this district of Vancouver in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a small room and bunk, a table, a stove and long working hours, interrupted by gatherings with their countrymen in the lodging house common room.
II. "Chinatown" as a Representation

How was it that the streets of Carrall and Dupont, home to the pioneers of Vancouver we have just described, became apprehended as "China Town?" Whose term, indeed in one sense, whose place was this? As we noted in Chapter One, no corresponding term or unit of knowledge - "Anglo town" - existed in local parlance, nor were the concentrations of southern Europeans in Strathcona explicitly defined as discrete local "places." However, in the case of Chinese, the phenomenon of their overseas home - "Chinatown" as it was called - was well-known. As early as 1860, the Daily Colonist in Victoria stated that 264 Chinese arrived from Hong Kong and "finally camped on Cumberland Street near China town." Well before any substantial settlement of Chinese was identified as such in Vancouver, a "place" for them already had a distinct social reality - one likely transmitted directly by Californian gold-diggers and perhaps Australian settlers, and indirectly through written interpretations of the Chinese presence in the New World.

Commissioner Chapleau gave the term an official sanction in the House of Commons as early as 1885. "The Chinese custom of living in quarters of their own - in China towns," he said, "is attended with evils, such as the depreciation of property, and, owing to their habits of lodging crowded quarters and accumulating filth, is offensive if not likely to breed disease." After his visit to California in 1884, Chapleau wrote in the report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration: "Had Dante been able to visit Chinatown, San Francisco, he would have added yet darker strokes of horror to his inferno." Many witnesses from California referred to "Chinatown" in their testimony and told British Columbians what to expect. "The aggregation
of Chinese in any city or town in my opinion, is a sort of moral blight," said Mr. A. Briggs, president of the Immigration Association of California. "You can form a better idea of their habits by going into Chinatown than any one can give you by talking." It seems that "Chinatown" was itself a term that belonged to the nineteenth century lexicon of race; not an unemotive geographical term but rather an evaluative (pejorative) classification. The label was part of a white European vocabulary for the "Chinaman" - that immigrant who "seems to be the same everywhere," as Chapleau remarked. "The advocates of his (the Chinaman's) advent or his restriction or exclusion use the same words whether they live in Melbourne, or London or San Francisco," Chapleau said. And just as John Chinaman was the same everywhere, so his home - Chinatown - was his abiding product and signature.

Certainly, early "Chinatown" in Vancouver was thought by members of the local white society and its civic authorities to be a product of some constant qualities intrinsic to those "saffron coloured sons of the East," to use the words of the Vancouver News of June 3, 1886. It was customary for citizens to argue that a Chinese district was the natural outcome of the "herd instinct" of the "clannish Chinese" with their "habit of huddling in limited quarters of their own, directly opposed to our conceptions of civilized progress, morality and hygiene." As a separate (and inferior) race who "scorn our civilization, who scorn our morals, who scorn our Christianity and who live amongst themselves," the Chinese gravitated to a settlement where they could indulge their racially determined mode of living.

It was just as Chapleau had anticipated in 1885. He had observed that, unlike the more familiar situation where "those who inhabit Whitechapel are the dregs of a population, thousands of whom live
surrounded by the most refined civilization . . . Chinese immigrants will herd together in a quarter of their own" and in a "most unenviable neighbourhood" at that, he told the House the same year. There was a particular "Chinese" style of living, certain uniquely "Chinese" habits that accounted for this concentration, the commissioners remarked. Furthermore, their mode of life and their sanitary standards were such that - in a twist of the Darwinist logic - they might eventually subvert or contaminate the superior white race if not carefully monitored. "The air is polluted by disgusting offal with which they are surrounded," Chapleau warned after his Californian investigation, "and the vile accumulations are apt to spread fever and sickness in the neighbourhood, which in the end may affect extensive districts." Chinese settlement is an "ulcer," the commissioner told the House in 1885, "lodged like a piece of wood in the tissues of the human body, which unless treated must cause disease in the places around it and ultimately to the whole body." The diagnosis already made then, how did respective officials of the City of Vancouver confront Dupont Street? How did these officials justify the idea of "Chinatown" and invest it, through their practices and values, with the authority of some natural truth? In short, how was the City of Vancouver implicated in the social construction of a place known as "Chinatown?" The remainder of this chapter is devoted to answering those questions and is divided into two sections; the first concerns the image of "Chinatown" as an unsanitary sink, and the second deals with the perception of "Chinatown" as a morally aberrant community. These cultural conceptions of place converged around a public nuisance label of Vancouver's "Chinatown,"
the importance of which for my purposes, being its contribution to the making of the racial category.

A. The "Celestial Cesspool:" Sanitary Dimensions of the Public Nuisance Definition, 1886-1920

Shortly before the anti-Chinese riot of 1887, the Vancouver News observed that at False Creek, "an evil is only just beginning to take shape," one that risked becoming "so well defined that it will be next to impossible to expunge" if the City delayed taking action against it. A month later, a reporter for the same paper wrote: "The China Town where the Celestials congregate is an eyesore to civilization;" if the City could be "aroused to the necessity of checking the abuse of sanitary laws which is invariably a concomitant of the Chinese [it] will help materially in preventing the Mongolian settlement from becoming permanent." Come May 1, 1887, a row of "hateful haunts" on Carrall Street was specifically singled out for the attention of Council. There, warned the News "in the nucleus of the pest-producing Chinese quarter . . . strict surveillance by the City will be necessary to prevent the spread of this curse."

For more than 30 years, the municipal authorities of Vancouver conscientiously adopted this challenge set by the News in what amounted to a vigorous selective harassment of "Chinatown" by medical health officers, license and building inspectors, and the police. As early as February 1887, the way for this course was paved in the passing of a Health Bylaw which required every dwelling room in the city to contain not less than 384 cubic inches of air space for each resident. This would "compel the Chinese to obey nuisance enactments in order to prevent overcrowding and its consequent evils," the News reported. In
the absence of legal competence to invoke direct measures against Chinese business and residence in the city, such city-wide bylaws could always be selectively enforced. It was through this strategy that the City will be seen to have asserted white European conceptions of civilization and propriety, against which "Chinatown" received its local cultural profile.

True to Chapleau's concern for the "ulcer," it was the "ordinary Chinese wash-houses scattered over the city" that became the first targets of civic concern in Vancouver. Their dispersal was particularly disturbing in the first decade after the City's incorporation, when residential sorting in the city was beginning to take shape. By 1889, 10 of the 14 Chinese-owned laundries in Vancouver were located outside "Chinatown" to serve the city-wide market they had cornered. For a "race" so dirty, there was certainly plenty of work to be had in the business of cleanliness. But despite the service they offered, the medical health officer of 1900 found the Chinese wash-house "an unmixed evil, an unmitigated nuisance" and from the late nineteenth century, Council sought means for restricting Chinese operated laundries to "locations least offensive to the public."

Denied the strategy of licence restriction following Mr. Mock Fee's precedent-setting victory over the City of Victoria in 1888, the City devised indirect measures to confront the encroaching wash-houses. The most effective was Alderman McGuigan's bylaw of 1893, which specified spatial boundaries beyond which laundries could not be erected, "that is to say beyond Dupont Street and 120 feet on Columbia Avenue and Carrall Street, southerly from Hastings." Numerous residents in areas beyond the limits made sure the City enforced the bylaw in precisely the way its architects had intended. For example, 28
ratepayers from the West End complained to Council in 1900 that the
laundry at 1107 Hornby Street will "give this part of the city a set-
back that it will not get over. If this nuisance cannot be put down we
would be as well living in China-town on Dupont Street and this would
hardly be a nice place to bring up a family of small children."52 In
the estimation of the local press, Council's strategy was a "welcome
deliverance from the practice of maintaining Chinese laundries in every
old tumble down in many of the thickly populated streets."53 Or as the
Province so pointedly said in 1908, the year in which the bylaw was
repealed (and Alderman D. Stewart put in a request to open a steam
laundry outside the limits): "The measure had been passed merely to
control the taking up of shacks throughout the city by the Chinese."54
By 1910, the majority of Chinese located outside Chinatown operated
laundries (see map back) and two years later, the 53 Chinese operated
laundries were scattered quite widely throughout the city.55

Checks on laundry location were combined with other forms of
civic targeting of the "Chinese" wash-house. In March 1900, Health and
Plumbing Inspector Marrion insisted upon compulsory smallpox vaccination
for Chinese laundermen.56 In December of the same year, the Vancouver
Trades and Labour Council secured from Council a Sunday Observance Bylaw
that required the closing of laundries on Sundays.57 According to Bylaw
373 passed the same month, clothes were not permitted to be exposed to
the open air for drying, a clause which operated in favour of the newer
non-Chinese steam laundries, (including those of Alderman Stewart).58 By
1904, in an attempt to "drive Chinamen out of the trade," to use the
words of the counsel for several Chinese laundermen, Council increased
the annual licence fee for laundry operations from $10 to $50.59
Laundries were by no means the only targets of Vancouver's civic authorities. During the 1890s, an equally vigorous assault was launched in the name of sanitary reform, on the wooden shacks of the Dupont Street settlement. In 1890, the *Vancouver News* reported the fear of cholera and urged the City to take particular action against "the people of Dupont Street," given that "in Chinese style . . . they will not fall into line for the purpose of maintaining cleanliness. Imagine cholera or any other deadly disease once getting into their midst," the *News* said. The discovery of two alleged Chinese lepers in 1891 inflamed this fear and fuelled proscriptions against the entire neighbourhood, "so desolate a hole," as one reporter put it in a story that extended the neighbourhood's metaphoric condition to one of "moral leprosy." One citizen, in 1893 made an especially strong plea for civic attention to Chinatown: "I defy any writer to pen-picture that awful place. The degraded humanity from the Orient, more beastly than human, living in places that a hog would die in stench of."

The legislative arm of local public sentiment was only too willing to heed such appeals. "Chinatown" was for the City the embodiment of an inferior mode of existence that demanded treatment as such. Indeed it was this belief that prompted Council to formally designate "Chinatown" as an official entity in the medical health officer rounds and Health Committee reports from the mid-1890s. Along with water, sewerage, scavenging, infectious disease, slaughter houses and pig ranches, "Chinatown" was listed as a separate category and was designated, in the words of Health Inspector Marrion, "a special officer to supervise [it] under the bylaws." Needless to say, it was a significant act of neighbourhood definition. One of the inspectors recalled the scene that registered in his mind when he visited Dupont
Street in 1895:

"In my inspections of Chinatown this year, I have not observed any improvement in the cleanliness of the dwellings and surroundings. The former are becoming increasingly dilapidated and filthy and the latter, together with the shores of False Creek, are more and more saturated with manurial refuse and garbage. . . . All the cabins on the foreshore should be condemned and destroyed. In no other way is it possible to abate the nuisance arising from the constant deposition of filth and refuse by the occupants. At present they cannot be other than a standing menace to public health." 64

The category "Chinatown" elicited a similar response from Medical Health Officer Thomas the following year: "All the buildings on the south side of Dupont Street between Carrall and Columbia are standing over a huge cesspool," he stated (without mention of the fact that Dupont Street had not as yet been connected with public sewers). Furthermore, "there is abundant evidence of the continued deposition of refuse and filth of all kinds with the result that the atmosphere of the neighbourhood is saturated with evil odours." 65 By 1900, Medical Health Officer Maclean's images of "Chinatown" included:

"Overcrowding; unventilated, dark and noisome places of abode; dusty atmosphere laden with foul odours; filthy habits, unsanitary surroundings indoors and out; raw, half-cooked and unwholesome foods . . . which predispose to infectious disease and serve to spread it rapidly when once it is roused into activity." 66

We can see that the white European projection, "Chinatown," was acquiring a domestic actuality in Vancouver as successive health officials exerted their will to govern and tame it. And as Chinatown grew, so did the threat to its very architects - the "white" society that had given shape to a force it now felt compelled to resist.

In response to these descriptions and a special examination by City health officials of the south side of Dupont Street in 1896, four rows of wooden shacks and cottages in blocks 13 and 14 of District Lot 196 were destroyed by the City in the latter part of the decade. 67
1897, Thomas recommended the destruction of more shacks on Dupont Street because "they are dangerous to the health of the city,"\textsuperscript{68} while two years later, in 1899, the \textit{World} reported "another lot of Chinese shacks, on Carrall Street this time, will be destroyed . . . and soon there will be that much less to crowd Chinatown."\textsuperscript{69} Mayor Garden ventured to Dupont Street that year and soon after his visit, Marrion served notices to some owners on blocks 13 and 14 under the newly enacted Boarding House Bylaw. As Medical Health Officer Maclean informed the commissioners in 1901, the bylaw had been passed "in order to secure better regulation and supervision in the case of Chinese dwelling places."\textsuperscript{70}

Health Inspector Marrion adopted an exceedingly firm stance toward "Chinatown" from the time of his appointment in 1893. "The Chinese method of living is totally different to that of white people," he claimed in 1901. "The Japs try to obey the laws, but the Chinese are always on the lookout to evade them."\textsuperscript{71} Indeed the Chinese required "constant vigilance," to use his words, and by 1902 the \textit{Province} reported the need of Chinese merchants to expand their operations to the southern side of Hastings Street, so particular was Marrion about density and sanitation bylaws in Chinatown.\textsuperscript{72} One reporter applauded Marrion's scrutiny in 1899: "The whole appearance of things is enough to shock the sensibilities of a European and there is no doubt that the inspector's action will be supported."\textsuperscript{73} Of course, in the minds of Marrion and the reporter the "whole appearance of things" had little to do with the constraints on Chinese family settlement, the job and pay discrimination Chinese faced or the physical condition of the tidal area. Rather, they could be explained, as Marrion told the commissioners in 1901, by "the difficulty to get Chinese people to adopt sanitary methods. . . . Even when every convenience is provided, Chinese are
generally dirtier than whites." While "the whole of Chinatown is
governed by bylaws the same as any other part of the city," he said, "it
takes more to enforce sanitary regulations there than in a similar area
in any other part of the city." 74

Though blunt, Marrion's statements were entirely conformist for
his day; he spoke not out of irrational prejudice but rather in the
accepted vocabulary for discovering and characterizing the district that
housed these pioneers to Vancouver. According to that view and lexicon,
"Chinatown" was a generically "Oriental" phenomena, evidence in itself
of differential natural endowments and hereditary capacities for
achieving civilization. Identity and place were inextricably conflated
and the process of racial classification corroborated with every
official expedition.

Given this more or less culturally universal scheme by which
Chinatown was comprehended, it was remarkable for a non-Chinese to argue
in a letter to the editor in 1896: "It would be extremely difficult, if
not impossible, even in the worst Chinese quarter, to parallel the state
of affairs revealed amongst some white men in our city not so long ago
in some of the cabins behind the Imperial Opera House." 75 Other evidence
reveals that the bias of the municipal authorities' attention to
sanitary matters in Dupont Street was based on beliefs about "racial"
difference. Medical Health Officer Maclean was convinced that since
China was an "infected" country, "Chinese immigration is the most
dangerous element against which we have to contend." 76 Yet no actual
evidence that disease originated in Chinatown was ever provided in the
health inspectors' reports, Health Committee minutes or in the vigilant
local press. The solicitor for the Chinese Board of Trade, Mr. A.
Taylor, reminded the commissioners in 1901 with the help of City statistics on infectious disease: "No instance is given of the origin of any contagious disease in the Chinatown of either city (Vancouver or Victoria)." It is true that a greater proportion of Chinese than non-Chinese died of tuberculosis than "whites" - in fact in 1900 50 per cent of the city's tuberculosis victims were Chinese - but as the Chinese Benevolent Association of Victoria maintained some years later, most of the cases of tuberculosis were contracted in distant mines and Chinese did not have easy access to special tuberculosis hospitals.

At the same time, a number of Chinese merchants showed they were eager to establish an amenable environment for business and residence. At odds with the racial typification that gave "China town" its coherence (see figure over), some merchants appealed to City Hall for neighbourhood improvement, some of which they undertook themselves. In 1896, for example, a group of Chinese residents lodged a complaint with Council about the "bad condition" of Dupont Street and its sidewalks; in 1898, a request was made for a plank crossing over Dupont Street; 24 firms, in 1899, including Lee Yuen, Sam Kee and Hip Tuck Lung requested that Dupont Street be sprinkled twice a day in the summer and that back lanes be repaired; and in 1905, a group of businessmen asked the Board of Works to pave Shanghai Alley and another petitioned Council for improvements to Pender and Hastings Street. Far from passive victims steeped in some racially determined standard of living, or for that matter, hapless victims of some universal white prejudice, the entrepreneurial elite of Chinatown often contested the City's arbitrary actions and used its understanding of civic politics to try to elevate the physical condition and social status of the neighbourhood. The Lim Dat Company was so dissatisfied with the City's
Fig. 4.

Typical home of Vancouver white workingman.

A Warren on Carrall Street infested by 2000 Chinese

THE UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT
refuse collection in the area that, in 1906, it applied for a license to conduct its own street cleaning operation. 84

Other Chinese merchants were prepared to challenge state encroachments on their neighbourhood they felt were unwarranted. The firm of Jun Kee took the City of Vancouver to the Supreme Court of British Columbia in 1897 to claim for damages wrought by a fire lit by the then city engineer. The engineer had been ordered by Council to destroy a row of cabins in the vicinity of the firm's property. 85 A Mr. Lee Chung even appealed to the City in 1890 for remuneration for his 11 hogs, destroyed by the health inspector on the alleged grounds they had "hog cholera." Lee Chung was paid $50 by the City. 86 In 1899, the lawyer for Sam Yuen applied to the court for an injunction restraining Council from burning his building that had been condemned by Marrion. 87 "The Chinese appear to be made for litigation," lamented Marrion in 1901, and in the same year he was granted an order from the Health Committee of Council to visit "the Chinese quarters" at night "as it would strengthen his hands in cases of litigation" surrounding crowding violations. 88

The local white European construction that was cast upon the area of Chinese settlement in Vancouver continued well into the new century. In the same month as the notorious 1907 riot in "Celestialand," Marrion perceived Chinatown in no more original terms than for its "fowls, refuse, dead dogs and offal." 89 And regardless of the truthfulness of the perception of Chinatown as unsanitary - a largely irrelevant matter given that the image-makers themselves were intent on characterizing Chinatown as alien - external perceptions of place and identity continued to be the ones that had effects. They had real consequences in the form of government practices that themselves
vindicated the myths on which they were predicated.\textsuperscript{90}

Certainly the City was not prepared to compromise its idea of some essentially "Chinese" Chinatown in the face of challenges to its authority from the courts. Such obstructions served only to inspire new strategies, so assured were City officials of the integrity of their mission. By 1910, for example, a circle of City officials that included Mayor Taylor, Chief of Police Chamberlain, Building Inspector Jarrett, Medical Health Officer Dr. Underhill and City Solicitor MacDonald, sought to achieve "full control of conditions in Chinatown."\textsuperscript{91} In view of the increasing success of Chinese in fighting bylaws with injunctions that prevented condemned buildings from actually being torn down, the officials decided to seek wider powers of bylaw enforcement at the 1910 session of the Provincial Legislature. This was expected to "avert the legal difficulties which beset the path of the civic authorities in their efforts at the reform of the Chinese quarter." Most objectionable to Jarrett and Chamberlain was a requirement that they produce a search warrant before entering any suspect premises. Chamberlain also protested that police raids on "Chinatown" were being stymied as "wily Chinese" added "secret partitions and trapdoors" to their buildings. Fortunately for the residents, the Provincial Legislature was not inclined to concede greater powers to the City. There was no recourse the following year, however, when the City served notice on "two to three dozen buildings . . . occupied by a large number of Chinamen" to make way for the trackage required by the Great Northern Railway Company at the unit block East Pender Street and southwards on Carrall Street.\textsuperscript{92} This was an early sign of the City's readiness to encourage non-residential functions in the Chinatown area.
Perhaps in response to this industrial encroachment, or perhaps on the City's initiative, an attempt was made to actually move Chinatown to a separate location to the east of the existing district in 1911. Unfortunately only scant details of this project are available. Apparently, three firms, including the real estate syndicate Chung Hing Company and the Chow T. Tonge Company, "consented to the plan and bought lots aggregating $167,000 and erected a number of business blocks" on blocks 3 and 4, 15 and 16, District Lot 183D in the East End where "Albert Street was to be solely reserved for the Chinese." In September 1911, Council passed Jarrett's resolution to "extend the number two fire limits to take in the new Chinatown in the East End to prevent the cutting up of Chinese buildings into myriads of rooms . . . during the process of construction." Also suggestive of a City motive is the World's comment the following year that: "Within a few years, when the construction of the new Chinese quarter has become an established fact, the authorities will be able to evict the tenants of the worst buildings and force them to move to more respectable quarters." As it transpired, however, "the City failed to pay the price demanded for their present properties and the project failed completely." It was not as if "Chinatown" was the only district in Vancouver of actual or perceived marginal sanitary status. In 1914, Inspector Hynes visited a district in Vancouver's East End that was home to some Italian residents and found conditions as "abominable" as on East Pender Street. "The condition in the Italian district was filthy. . . . There is overcrowding in almost every house to an alarming extent. The stench in houses . . . was sickening in the extreme." But only the Pender Street settlement was publicly known and defined as a social and spatial
unit according to certain putative qualities, including its "Chinese" sanitary standard. Even the much disliked settlement of Japanese-origin people on Powell Street appears to have escaped the crude neighbourhood characterization that gave "Chinatown" its name in the early decades of this century.

Chinatown was, for the City of Vancouver, a pressing mandate and its actions and expressed values reinforced both the distilled vision and the concrete reality of a neighbourhood and a people apart. In April 1914, almost immediately after the murder of Mrs. C. Millard, the wife of a well-known West End Canadian Pacific Railway administrator, allegedly by her "China-boy," Council gave voice to the prevailing public sentiment that the Millard case merely inflamed. Based solely on the fact that Kong had been educated in the school system, Council led the clamour to have Chinese removed from the schools. It said:

"That this Council views with grave apprehension, the prevailing practice of the School Board in permitting children and young men of Oriental race to attend our public schools and to associate with our children of tender years on terms of equality. In the opinion of this Council, such association of the two races must result in a condition detrimental to the future welfare of our children who have nothing to gain, either mentally or morally, by daily association with Orientals. By being indiscriminately thrown into contact with Orientals many years their senior, our children are wantonly exposed to Oriental vices at an age when revolting incidents may be indelibly stamped upon their minds. Furthermore the health of our children is endangered by such close association with Oriental children, many of whom hail from habitations where reasonable sanitation and cleanliness are not only despised but utterly disregarded. In some cases, these Orientals come into our public school classrooms with their apparel polluted with the fumes of noxious drugs and germs of loathsome diseases on their persons."  

Although the subject of school segregation had earlier been discussed in the Legislature in Victoria on the grounds that "forced association" was "degrading and dangerous," to use the words of the member for Nanaimo in 1910, Council's request to Premier R. McBride's government for
school segregation foundered on legal obstacles, as the City solicitor had warned. Chinese consul, Mr. Lin Shih-Yuan publicly denounced Council's attempt as a vindictive response to a single Chinese crime and reminded Council, in the words of the Sun that "next to 'native-born Canadians,' the percentage of criminals among Chinese in British Columbia was the lowest." 

The lack of legal authority to enforce school segregation did not deter the City, which continued to wield its own power tirelessly. The following year, the local press described Chinatown as no less than beseiged in "the battle for morality and health" that had been waged by Council since 1914. "Lined up on this side," wrote the Sun,

"is the civic authority led by the medical health officer, the building inspector and the chairman of the Health Committee supported by the City aldermen. This great civic force has as its ally the law in the form of health bylaws, building regulations, police officers and penalties, etc. Arrayed against this seemingly formidable army is the wily Oriental of Chinatown with his fondness for defying the civic powers in the matter of health.... Civic regulations are dust to the Chinaman of Chinatown to be stamped underfoot.... For 25 years the same forces have been at war."

The residents had one ally in Ambassador Lim, the guardian of his countrymen's welfare in Canada. In 1915, Lim had taken to publishing warnings of civic visits in The Chinese Times and advised owners to apply chloride of lime treatments to ensure that places were incontestably clean. District Inspector Kinneston had closed more than 40 sleeping apartments in Chinatown in 1914 and notices were served on buildings visited by members of the Health Committee in April and October 1915, with instructions that owners comply with the Building Bylaw regarding interior partitions. Meanwhile, the city engineer was instructed to "demolish the old shacks bordering on False Creek adjacent to Main Street," whose occupants were "loathe to leave." Clearly, the
residents of Chinatown needed Lim's assistance. Indeed Kinneston turned out to be so conscientious that by 1917, Medical Health Officer Underhill remarked: "Practically all of this section of the city is occupied by foreigners who would live in filthy condition but for the daily supervision of the district inspector."107

It is apparent that the idea of "Chinatown" was being continuously inherited by successive civic administrations who encountered the area as a version of something previously known. "Chinatown" was not simply an idea: as we saw in Chapter Two it had a concrete referent in the form of a spatially segregated community whose physical presence propped up the selective vision of identity and place that the civic authorities tapped, and translated into effect. Furthermore, the circumstances of Chinese immigration to Canada probably encouraged objectively poor living conditions in many sectors of the community. In that sense, the material reality of the Pender Street area furthered, justified and fulfilled the prophecy of Chapleau's "China town." However, it was the historically prior ideas of "race" and "Chinatown" and their scope and influence that gave the settlement on Pender Street its cognitive coherence as a discrete place in the social consciousness of its representers. In the eyes of successive civic officials, "Chinatown" signified no less than the encounter between "West" and "East," to be administered and dominated in discrete ways. It distinguished and testified to the vast divide and asymmetry between two civilizations and two races. Clearly "Chinatown" was no innocuous cultural construct but an exclusive and (broadly) political projection that cemented and provided the context for the making of a divisive system of racial classification.

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B. Vice-town: Moral Dimensions of the Public Nuisance Definition, 1886-1920

Much as the "West" has defined the "Orient" (as Said has expertly shown in his book *Orientalism*), Vancouver's Chinatown was for its representers a collection of essences. It was a set of absences (non-white, non-Christian, uncivilized, amoral) that revealed the biases of a European perception and served the social distinctions being made. Matters of hygiene were only part of that vision and vocabulary out of which a racially defined territory was constructed. Equally significant and perhaps more effective, it will be seen, were moral associations. The Chinese being "inveterate" gamblers, "Chinatown" was lawless; the Chinese being opium addicted, "Chinatown" was a pestilential den; as an evil and inscrutable people, "Chinatown" was a morally retrograde prostitution base where "white" women were lured as slaves. "Is there harm in the Chinaman?" Reverend Dr. Fraser asked a meeting of the Asiatic Exclusion League in 1907. "In this city" he said, "that would be answered with one word, 'Chinatown,' with its wickedness unmentionable."108

Two City hardliners, Police Magistrate Alexander and Chief of Police Chamberlain, legitimized a very particular vision of "Chinatown" in their everyday business, a vision that is eloquently captured by the cartoon (see figure over) from the *Saturday Sunset* in 1908. As the home of the "racial Other,"109 we can see that Chinatown signified many of those impulses which Europeans feared and attempted to repress in themselves: gambling, drug addiction, prostitution, slavery in women, licentiousness and crime. As part of the construction of a racial category, only those aspects of Chinese living in Vancouver that fitted the racial categorization were being filtered. Little allusion was made
VANCOUVER MUST KEEP THIS TEAM.
in local Vancouver circles to the cultural, political and economic cleavages that residents of Chinatown, like all communities, defined among themselves. They did not form part of the historically available conceptualizations about the Chinese and if they were encountered, they did not prejudice the more comforting confluences of racial identity and place. To that extent "Chinatown" was a remarkably insensitive characterization and, as this section sets out to demonstrate, it was one actively streamlined by the local state and its "moral reform squad," appointed in 1913 to take special charge of "Chinatown."

Before this relationship between Chinatown and City Hall is discussed, however, it seems important to press one question further: why did the municipal officials of Vancouver reach the conclusions they did when describing and managing "Chinatown?" How was it that Chamberlain and Alexander were concerned with the few elements depicted in the cartoon and not others? The relevance of this question is obscured by the familiar prejudice framework for the study of race relations. That perspective has tended to explain away systems of imagery, and indeed racial categories themselves, in some ahistorical "white" mentality. That is, it eclipses the active cultural process by which categories of identity and definitions of place are constructed and reproduced in certain contexts around the perceptual category of "race."

A more incisive formulation would emphasize the collective representations that the likes of Chamberlain and Alexander drew on. We have outlined the most critical component of the symbolic system they inherited in Chapter One in the discussion of the race idea, but to understand the management of the Chinese presence we also need to elucidate the content of the vocabulary, imagery and rhetoric with which
the "West" interpreted the "Middle Kingdom" in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Those features antedated and prepared local figures like Chamberlain and Alexander to encounter Vancouver's Pender Street settlement in selective terms, or to use the terms of Clifford Geertz, to confront the district "intelligently" rather than "blindly." This is a topic which, given its enormous scope, can only be briefly addressed.

i) The "Heathen Chinee"

The desire of western Europeans to measure China against a romanticized, idealized vision of themselves dates as far back as the thirteenth century when travellers, imbued with the Greek dualisms of "Europe" and "Asia," "East" and "West," "Orientis" and "Occidentis" set out to uncover the unknown. March notes the importance of the classical world regionalization for these travellers: "Long before there was more than one or two sentences worth of knowledge (even fabulous) about China itself, the genus into which new information would be fitted was ready prepared in the European mind." It was therefore consistent with the Greek conception of "Asia" as the oldest, richest and most populous of civilizations that such medieval travellers like Marco Polo were captivated by the splendour and size of China's cities, the abundance of silks, rugs and porcelains and the opulence of China's god-like ruler. This romantic image of China as the farthest outpost to the East and the most marginal, mysterious, isolated and ipso facto most Oriental of all of Asia, lingered for more than three centuries in the European consciousness. Jesuit missionaries to China in the seventeenth century consolidated this favourable Western image in their writings on
the Confucian state. Along with its scholarly bureaucracy, it was, for the Catholic priests, a benevolent agency for the timeless perpetuation of sage ideals.\footnote{112}

However by the late seventeenth and certainly by the eighteenth century, Europe's emerging image of itself as imperial, industrial, enlightened and progressive, provided the benchmark for different perceptions of China. A new construction on China's antiquity was beginning to be put forward, one that emphasized its changelessness, homogeneity and uniformity - "the despotism of Custom," as John Stuart Mill wrote in his essay \textit{On Liberty} in 1859.\footnote{113} From the late eighteenth century, with British military power in ascendancy, the European image of China began to darken. The romantic view of China's "grand and imposing civilization," as Lord Macartney described it on his diplomatic mission in the late 1790s,\footnote{114} was not lost forever. Indeed it features "chameleon-like," to use Dawson's phrase, throughout the history of Europe's conception of China, but as a prevailing image, it was certainly preempted during the late eighteenth century. The Chinese became "a people of eternal standstill." Seminal nineteenth century writers such as Hegel and Spencer envisioned unilinear courses to progress, and civilization became more explicitly represented on a scale which left China, the inventor of printing, somewhere around the bronze age. Dawson, March and Said have all argued that, in so conceiving China (and more generally "Asia") as a negative construct - that is, non-European - Europe was giving force to its own idea of itself. Europe became what the Orient was not, and vice-versa, and by mid-century, with the support of biological determinism in science, the constructs of "East" and "West" were confirmed in dramatic opposition.

Miller traces this decline in China's image from the time of
its first trade with the United States in 1785. It was around that time that frustrated traders, diplomats and missionaries relayed home reports of China's resistance to their commercial and evangelical entreaties. All three sets of "inside dopesters," as Miller calls them, contributed to the American perception of newly arrived immigrants from China. From the records of 50 traders to China between 1785 and 1840, Miller identified the following consistent themes: China's technological and scientific backwardness; its military ineptitude, from which many traders deduced a national cowardice; the venality of the Chinese character, as revealed by their devotion to gambling and their "diabolical cunning," as the description often went; and above all, their peculiarity, for which one had only to look to their theatre, their "detestible discord" as one trader put it, their insistence on writing up and down the page, their use of chopsticks, their slant eyes, their propensity for eating shark's fin, and so on. The Chinese were a very "peculiar" people with odd manners and inferior customs. Dawson has argued that this theme lent itself well to a mass (as opposed to elite) conception of China and its people.

The diplomats' memoirs and accounts by commentators on European diplomatic missions - from Lord Macartney in 1792 to the embassy sent by President Jackson in 1832 - were more important in shaping American public opinion. Whatever their accuracy, they were regularly used in the first half of the nineteenth century by American editors, writers and academics, especially geographers. Miller reports that most memoirs were contemptuous of the backwardness and vice that China's despotism was thought to inspire. Despite some nostalgia for the Old Cathay - that vast shore washed by the farthest sea - the abiding
perception was that the proud Chinese were enslaved to an idolatrous ancient tradition. Military impotence, depravity, addiction to "pernicious" drugs and infanticide were all signs of a civilization in decline that opposed to its detriment the improvements Western embassies would introduce.118

As opinion maker, however, it was the Protestant missionary, armed with his own press, who commanded the widest audience in America at a time when, in the 1830s, a rigid fundamentalism provided a receptive climate for his outspoken charges. Unlike his Jesuit counterpart who had seen in Confucianism valuable preparation for Christian teachings, the Protestant missionary was scathing in his castigation of the uncooperative heathen.119 For him, there could be no more damning evidence against Confucianism than the rampant idolatry, infanticide, slavery in women, polygamy, opium obsession, noonday orgies, treachery and endemic gambling - pagan rites which frustrated his best efforts. So puny was their record of conversions, in fact, that some missionaries concluded that the Chinese were conscious agents of Satan who purposely dishonoured God with acts of licentiousness.

ii) Discovering the "Heathen Chinee"

In February 1912, a feature on Vancouver's Chinatown" in the World began:

"Conditions prevailing in the cities of China are familiar topics of the returned missionary, who will dwell at length upon the awful condition of the slums, the armies of the unwashed, and the prevalence of vice in the shape of opium smoking and gambling, in the empire across the seas. Would you believe that the same condition of affairs is in existence in the city of Vancouver in our Chinatown, which constitutes a considerable quarter on Pender Street between Canton and Shanghai alleys?"120

Yet how else, we might ask, could Pender Street be known?
The plight of the fallen woman disappearing into the clutches of procurers in segregated "Oriental" vice districts, was, from the turn of the century, a pressing concern for moral reform groups in North America. Not surprisingly, therefore, the anxiety was heightened in Vancouver by the proximity of its "restricted area" - where prostitution was tolerated by the police - to the predominantly male "Chinese" quarter from the time the city was incorporated. This concern served to fuel the unsavoury image that was projected upon Chinatown from the late 1880s. But the worst fears of all were realized in 1906, when the prostitutes moved en masse to the very heart of "Chinatown" on Shanghai Alley, following a Council request for their eviction from their former location. No protection of the kind offered the residents of Mount Pleasant - the area that was expected to receive the dislodged prostitutes - had been extended to Chinatown, and for some time it became the new "restricted area" for prostitution in Vancouver. Later, in the face of much local protest about the unhappy combination of prostitutes and "Chinamen" in the one location, the restricted area was moved to Shore Street and from there to Alexander Street, in the East End.

Of the various niches where prostitution enjoyed a blind eye in Vancouver, it was only in "Chinatown," as the cartoon (over) captures, that an especially evil construction was cast upon the practice. "The helpless are shackled," wrote the World in 1892, by these "past-masters in the art of duplicity and in cheating the devil." Another indignant citizen wrote in the Saturday Sunset on October 10, 1908: "A regular traffic in women is conducted by the Chinese in Vancouver. The Chinese are the most persistent criminals against the person of any woman of any class in this country... Now all this goes on in a Christian
THE "FOREIGN MISSION FIELD" IN VANCOUVER.

Saturday Sunset,
October 10, 1908
community." Often, protests in the city about prostitution was based in an economic concern for the protection of property values;\(^{125}\) however in Chinatown, the voice of the nineteenth-century Protestant missionary to China reverberated in charges that prostitution was a sign of "Oriental" depravity. One resident reported that she was "shocked to discover the streets of Shanghai and Canton (in Vancouver's Chinatown) filled by Houses of Ill-Repute and a lot of brazen women plying their trade."\(^{126}\) Another: "It is a disgrace to our city to have that evil in that location."\(^{127}\)

Chinatown's stigma, at least as depicted by the Vancouver press was relieved only by passing references to "John's" peculiarity, whose "racial oddities," such as his diet and his "quixotic" New Year festivities were a source of some wry amusement.\(^{128}\) "The only one of the lower animals Vancouver's Chinese do not eat," wrote the *Province*, on July 23, 1910, "is the cat." The more prevailing characterization had it that Chinese were a depraved and filthy people - a typification that could be confirmed simply by looking to Chinatown's counterparts throughout North America.\(^{129}\) Class distinctions certainly paled before the negative, racial characterization. For example, Council simply ignored a petition from the Chinese Board of Trade in 1906 which, in protesting the unimpeded movement of prostitutes into Shanghai Alley and Canton Street, reflected concerns of the Chinese elite that likely were not far removed from the most traditional of white Christian mission ministers in Chinatown. "We the undersigned (30) merchants and others," the Board wrote,

"beg leave to call your attention to the fact that several of the women of ill-repute who are being ordered off Dupont Street are moving into Shanghai Alley and Canton Streets. This we consider most undesirable. It is our desire to have our children grow up
up learning what is best in Western civilization and not to have them forced into daily contact with its worst phases . .."130

A number of Vancouver's Chinese merchants also undertook a campaign against another perceived vice out of which the non-Chinese vision of Chinatown was constructed. In 1908, the merchants' anti-opium league sent a petition to Ottawa asking the Federal Government to "decisively exercise its authority and powers to prohibit the importation, manufacture and sale of opium into Canada so that the social, physical and moral condition of both Chinese and Europeans may be vastly improved."131

However, try as some merchants did to counter the idea of "Chinatown," the drug that Britain had in fact introduced to China in the 1840s was now a powerful metaphor for neighbourhood definition, as the cartoon (over) conveys. In 1899, a newspaper reporter who had accompanied Marrion on one of his tours of Chinatown's bachelor shacks, remarked that "the luxury of smoking opium is beyond comprehension in such tight boxes."132 Another in 1908 noted the fine access that "Chinatown's" tight quarters provided to "bargain-rate heaven."133 Opium was further confirmation of the dubious morality of a quarter that "knows nothing of the sanctity of family life"134 and it compounded the image of "John" with his beastly afflictions. The Vancouver World's profile of the city's "plague spot" in 1912, for example, featured denizens not simply stupefied by opium, but also engrossed in gambling, surrounded by "stagnant air," worshipping strange idols, feasting on dead birds (chickens?), with "two white women reposing on couches." It was a "most repellant sight," wrote the reporter, informing Chinatown's first tourists that the most "loathsome spectacle" was to be had in the "small hours of the morning"135 when the majority were at home "passed
THE OPIUM FIEND AT HOME IN VANCOUVER'S CHINATOWN. drawn from life
out" (asleep?). And like the construction that was put upon "white" participation in Chinatown's bawdy houses, the large use of opium by non-Chinese that Mr. Mackenzie King uncovered in his 1908 investigation in Vancouver, only confirmed the belief that "Chinatown" was a menace to civilized life.136 As we are seeing, Chinatown was the local referent for all of the assumptions about race that prevailed in British Columbian culture. Thus white drug use did not prejudice, but rather validated the racial and spatial category. In Chinatown's "underworld," charged one Vancouver resident in 1907, "Chinamen keep opium dens where our young men are led into contracting this habit which marks them for utter ruination and pushes them deeper into the mire of immorality."137

It is well known to criminologists that for petty crimes such as gambling, "where the victim is a willing participant ... the appearance of the act as a crime known to police will depend on the initiative of the law enforcement agencies; policies of enforcement in these spheres are notoriously variable."138 Known to City police for his "inveterate" gambling and opium addiction, the "heathen Chinee" was actively pursued by successive officers of the Vancouver police force for five decades from the 1890s to the late 1940s. By that time the extent of the harassment had become embarrassingly transparent even to the City. Until then however, it was rare to find a year that The Chinese Times and the local press did not have a raid to report on Chinatown's gambling quarters, a record that for Mr. W. A. Cumyow, was more telling of the enforcement practices of the police than any intrinsic "Oriental" proclivity to gamble.139 About this he was explicit: "There is proportionately a large amount of gambling among the Chinese," he told the commissioners in 1901:

"Some do gamble for large amounts, but more commonly, the play is
for amusement only and for small sums to pass the time as this is
done in the common room of the boarding house. If a police raid
is made and any are caught playing, all are arrested for gambling
and looking on. If the same course were pursued in relation to
white men, gamblers could be caught in barrooms and of course all
who were at the bar would be arrested as onlookers."140

Just as the opium den raids vindicated widespread assumptions about the
moral laxity of the "Chinese," the formidable civic scrutiny given
Chinatown gambling sprang from and justified popular assumptions that
the generic "Chinaman" was intrinsically given up to the habit. For
Alderman McIntosh in 1915, "Chinese" gambling and opium required
constant government vigilance, given their links to white women slavery
and tuberculosis.141

Such cultural beliefs, supported by the prevailing science of
"race" and dignified by official fiat, produced "Chinatown" as a socio-
spatial category in the "white" European imagination, regardless of any
construction that the Chinese-origin people who lived and worked in the
area themselves placed upon it. This argument is not to dismiss the
significance of the "place making" activities of people of Chinese
origin in Vancouver, nor the validity of studies that explore the
neighbourhood perceptions and experiences of those residents. As argued
in Chapter One, a whole community of immigrants eked out an existence in
the district that likely combined old and new world elements and not to
emphasize their role is not to deny it an integrity. The point here is
that in the context of asymmetrical power relations, officially
sanctioned myths about the Chinese and the intrinsic difference between
"races" were effective enough to construct the very idea of "Chinatown,"
whatever the perceptions of its residents. The boundary separating
"their" seemingly foreign territory from the rest of the city did not
necessarily require the acknowledgment of the residents. It was an
arbitrarily conferred boundary and, as we have seen, one that quickly became a habit of mind.

Needless to say, gambling was not an activity that was restricted to "Chinatown." One letter to the editor of the *Province* on January 30, 1900, appealing for greater control of gambling in the city, said: "Everyone knows that gambling goes on promiscuously all over Vancouver, in clubs, in hotels, in saloons, in rooms connected with saloons and in private houses. Not a night passes, not a day passes that it is not indulged in." Only in Chinatown however, was a neighbourhood image built around both its practice and the attempts of police to suppress it, as bluntly conveyed by the poem (see over) published in *B.C. Magazine* in 1911. The local press relished in the struggles of "the Chinatown plainclothes squad," trapped in their searches behind "ingenious Oriental systems of spring doors" and "getaway rat tunnels," and the newspaper accounts, as did the raids, added fuel to the notoriety of a harassed neighbourhood. Mysterious Chinatown, a neighbourhood white residents did not need to experience to "know," certainly offered the capacity to entertain, and the press was quick to exploit it. Deputy Chief of Police McLennan, "the terrible axe man," for example, bore the distinction of "never being trapped by a door." But one newspaper noted nostalgically by the end of 1915 that "Chinatown is a dead issue," as civic efforts to "tame" it were being successfully contested by its residents in the courts. Merchant Chow Foo Kay, for example, sued Detective MacLaughlin in February 1914 for wrongfully searching his store and person for evidence of gambling paraphernalia and opium. (That same month, a police sergeant illegally arrested a white businessman and as a consequence had his rank reduced from sergeant to first constable; for Detective Maclaughlin's offence, a mere $50 fine was levied and
Trouble in Chinatown

By W. R. Gordon

There's trouble down in Chinatown—and the Chinks are spitting blue;
The cops have yanked old Tai Kee's bank and all his layout, too.
The fan-tan game and the py-gow frame and the chuck-luck mat all went
In one fell swoop when Sergeant Troop and his 'hulls' collected rent.

The games were going with a handsome showing and a noisy, smoky hum,
While thoughts of raids and police parades were far from the yellow scum.
The air was thick as burnt clay-brick; the smoke you could cut in chunks,
But the monks were gay in their saffron way as they set their hard-earned plunks.

A swell young Chink in a jacket pink lounged by the outer door,
His eyes were closed and you'd swear he dozed, but he saw a whole lot more
Than you or I, if we passed by, would take in at a look,
For he was scout for the whole layout and the street was his lesson book.

A cop walked by and the Chink's slant eye read trouble as he passed,
And before another could follow the other that outer door slammed fast.
He pulled a string, and, funny thing, two more tanged down the hall,
While in the room the noisy hum had changed to a heathenish bawl.

But the cops were wise, they had used their eyes to size up Tai Kee's joint.
They went at the wall in the dark back hall with an axe and a crowbar point.
In a minute or two they laid plain to view the murky gambling den;
They swarmed inside and the way they tied those Chinks was worth a ten.

Five at a time in a jabbering line, they knotted them queue to queue,
While the 'muck-a-hai's' and 'mo-bing-kai-tai's' turned the place an indigo blue.
There were forty-odd, too heavy a load for the 'Black Maria' van;
So some had to walk for many a block, pig-tailed like a human fan.

Now that is why the big ki-yi is heard in Chinatown.
The row they'll raise will be heard all ways round the streets that they hold down;
But it's all in the game, it's ever the same; they're raided from day to day.
When work is slack the cops fall back on the Chinks for a grandstand play.

B.C. Magazine, October 1911

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Mayor Baxter proceeded to refund it out of the public purse. Chinese residents had increasingly resorted to litigation after their protests to Council, such as one made by the Chinese Board of Trade in April 1905 about indiscriminate raids, proved futile:

"The members of our board are law abiding citizens. Many of them have been residents of this country for a number of years and are large holders of real estate, payers of taxes and other civic assessments. The members . . . have been constantly annoyed by what we believe to be an unjustifiable intrusion of certain members of the Vancouver Police Force . . . in the habit of going into our stores and rooms where our families live, showing no warrant whatsoever, nor do they claim any business with us. . . . We are subjected to indignities and discriminating treatment to which no other class would submit and to which your laws, we are advised, we are not required to submit" (emphasis in original) Just as part of the merchant sector worked hard to suppress the other vices that stigmatized "Chinatown" in the perception of the local authorities, a small group seemed to be as interested in the reform of gambling activities as Chamberlain himself. In 1917, for example, a petition was submitted to Council by some ministers and merchants of Chinese origin who had so inculcated the indignation of the Christian missions that they argued gambling should be even more strictly regulated on Pender Street than it already was. Indeed needless to say, the community was not united by a habit "ingrained in the Celestial nature." There in fact was significant conflict between the "recruits" to the Christian missions, and the vice-resort operators and their regular customers. Some of the latter even became police informants and almost all of them showed themselves quite capable of dispensing with the "habit" come the Sino-Japanese War in the late 1930s, when they were urged by neighbourhood organizations to give generously to the war effort of their homeland.
Conclusion

There is much evidence to suggest that "Chinatown" was a social construct that belonged to Vancouver's "white" European population, who, like their contemporaries throughout North America, perceived the district of Chinese settlement according to an influential culture of race. The notion of place was an element of that culture; it was inherited from other British-settler societies and domestically adapted in Vancouver with the backing of legislative power as we have seen in this chapter. From the vantage point of the European, Chinatown embodied all those features that seemed to set the Chinese fundamentally apart - their appearance, heathenism, clannishness, propensity to sleep 12 to a room, opium and gambling addiction, eating habits, their strangeness of language, odd graveyard practices and so on. In short, it embodied the "white" European's sense of irreducible difference between the immigrants from China and themselves. This argument does not suggest that Chinatown was a fiction. Nor can there be any denying that gambling, opium addiction and unsanitary conditions were present in the district where Chinese settled in Vancouver. The point is that "Chinatown" was an agreed-upon distinction, a shared characterization produced by and for the European who, out of cultural conformity to an order that bestowed privilege to insiders, sought to justify and reinforce the alien status of the Chinese. That he/she directed that purpose in part through the medium of Chinatown attests to the importance of place in the making of a system of racial classification.

There are of course difficulties with reducing majority perceptions to the constant of a singular "white" European viewpoint. As we have seen, however, the ideas of race and Chinatown enjoyed a
popularity that overrode whatever idiosyncracies might have existed in the British, American and Canadian perception.

In this chapter, I have argued that "Chinatown" was a Western representation and I have attempted to give further force to the viewpoint that its "Chineseness" belonged not to the Chinese but to those who apprehended it and, significantly, acted upon it. In so doing, they ensured the racial classification "Chinese" and its referent, "Chinatown," would be carried forward in the vocabulary and vision of white European Vancouver. The thesis now turns to a further demonstration of the empirical basis for this contention. It will be argued that ideas of place, insofar as they are continuously authored and transmitted, are contexts for the ongoing making of "Chinatown" and the racial category. As will be seen, "Chinatown" and "race" continued to be re-invented at the material and moral levels, and while the various levels of state were mapping the career of the Chinese in Vancouver, they would at once be defining themselves and the perceptions of the insider society whose values and interests they purported to represent.
NOTES


2. ibid., p.13.


5. The figures for 1901 cited in this section are taken from Canada. Report, 1902, p.213 and the newspaper report of Mr. W.A. Cunyow's testimony in Province, May 11, 1901.


7. See Yee, ibid., pp.44-67.

8. Province, May 27, 1908.

9. For a list of the merchants, their addresses, and the amounts (based on gross annual receipts) they were allowed for consequential damages incurred by the closure of businesses in the district for five days after the riot, see Canada. Sessional Paper, 1908, No. 74f, Report by W.L. Makenzie King into losses sustained by the Chinese population of Vancouver, B.C. on the occasion of the riots in that city in September, 1907, p.18.


11. ibid., p.43.


15. This organization had a more favourable reaction from the local
press than the area in general. On July 23, 1900, the Province praised it for attempting to "free China of despotic rule and employing our rules of parliament." See also Province, March 12, 1903.


18. For a record of the early land titles for lots from the unit and 100 block Dupont Street and the unit block West Pender Street, see Yee, P. Business devices from two worlds, op. cit., table 3, pp.64-7.


20. Province, May 27, 1908.

21. P. Yee, Chinese business in Vancouver, op. cit., p.42. A number of the companies which invested in real estate, bought property outside Chinatown. By April 1915, for example, the Lee Yuen Company owned $279,500 in land assets, only five blocks of which were in the Pender Street area. The other purchases were in North Vancouver, West 15th Avenue, the East End and elsewhere. Lee Family Papers, Special Collections, Main Library, University of British Columbia, Box 4. Sam Kee owned five hotel sites and other buildings in central Vancouver as well as numerous other holdings across the city. P. Yee, Chinese business in early Vancouver, op. cit., p.47-8.

22. Province, September 30, 1902. One Hastings Street businesssman claimed: "I am convinced that a row of Chinese stores, the same as line Dupont Street on the south side of the same block, would make it decidedly bad for the other business people in that vicinity."

23. ibid., May 10, 12, 1904.

24. P. Yee, Chinese business in Vancouver, op. cit., p.83. The growth of the "Chinese" district was accompanied by an out-movement of non-Chinese residents in the vicinity. One pioneer from Keefer Street said in 1906: "Finally the Chinaman from Chinatown approached so much about us, that we moved to Mount Pleasant . . . gradually too, the high class residential district east of Westminster Avenue slowly deteriorated." CVA. J. Matthews, Early Vancouver: narratives of a pioneer in Vancouver, B.C. unpublished manuscript, Vol. 7, p.413.


27. ibid., p.65.

28. Province, November 9, 1907. The large majority went to nearby
Central School.


30. A Methodist mission was built as early as 1889 on Dupont Street, near Westminster Avenue. See World, July 11, 1889.

31. In September and October 1908, for example, 2000 Chinese from British Columbia paid their passage to Hong Kong to return to China for the New Year celebrations. Colonist, October 16, 1908.

32. World, January 20, 1894. In 1907, the Chinese Times (daily) was established on the corner of East Pender and Carrall Streets.


35. ibid., p.369.

36. ibid., p.10.

37. ibid., p.cxxvi.

38. World, July 9, 1896.


42. D.H.C. July 2, 1885, p.3010.

43. Vancouver News, December 7, 1886.

44. ibid., January 13, 1887.

45. However in a report submitted for the royal commissioners in 1900, Medical Health Officer Maclean noted that convictions under the Density Bylaw were difficult to obtain because "the correct name of a Chinaman is difficult to obtain when he finds it necessary to name one of his 'cousin' or 'friend.'" CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 17, November 26, 1900, p.13299.

46. January 13, 1887.


49. CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 17, November 26, 1900, p.13301-2. In 1893, Health Inspector Brenton advised Council that the same fate he had sealed upon the Chinese-owned piggeries at False Creek - "wiped out to become a thing of the past" - be administered to the dispersed Chinese laundries. CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 6, July 4, 1893, p.5275.

50. Mock Fee appealed to the Supreme Court of British Columbia the decision of the City of Victoria to refuse him a renewal of his pawnbroker's license. In upholding the appeal, it was declared unconstitutional for "the Provincial Legislature, or ... a municipality, to deprive generally, particular nationalities or individuals of the capacity to take out municipal trade licenses." Regina v. Corporation of Victoria, [1888] B.C.R. 331 at 331.

51. CVA. Office of the City Clerk, Bylaw 176, May 1893.

52. CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 15, August 6, 1900, p.11766. In response, Council carried a motion to "instruct the proper authorities to stop the erection of the Chinese washhouse." CVA. Van. City, Council Minutes, Vol. 9, August 6, 1900, p.736. For similar protests against outlying laundries, see In Corresp., Vol. 8, April 27, 1895, p.6860; Vol. 9, October 10, 1895, p.8107; Vol. 15, January 18, 1900, p.11738.

53. Province, November 13, 1899.

54. ibid., February 15, 1908.

55. See CVA. Van. City, Department of Permits and Licenses, License Registry, 1910-12.

56. P. Yee, Chinese business in Vancouver, op. cit., p.34.


58. See ibid., Vol. 10, April 9, 1901, p.133.

59. Province, May 12, 1904.

60. News, August 30, 1890.

61. World, February 23, 1892.

62. ibid., March 23, 1893.

63. CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 17, November 26, 1900, p.13292. See Health Committee minutes for references to inspections of "China town."

64. ibid., p.13291.

65. ibid., p.13298.
The following year, the Health Committee resolved that the medical health officer "instruct the residents on Dupont Street that they must be vaccinated within seven days otherwise they will be prosecuted." CVA. Van City, Council Minutes, Vol. 9, February 26, 1900, p.498.

85. CVA. Van City, In Corresp., Vol. 11, August 20, 1897, pp.9119-35.


87. ibid., In Corresp., Vol. 15, December 4, 1899, p.11705.

10, April 9, 1901, p.49.

89. *Province*, September 16, 1907. The term "Celestial and" is taken from the *Province*, May 28, 1908.

90. Foucault has said that "the problem is not one of drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but with seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true or false." Cited in P. Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p.60.


93. "A religious and missionary survey of the Chinese." United Church Archives of Canada, typescript, 1919. Chinese-Canadian Project, Box 15. The Council resolution was reported in the *Province*, September 26, 1911.

94. *Province*, September 26, 1911.


98. *Province*, April 7, 1914.


102. *Sun*, April 10, 1914. Employment agent, Hop Wo and Company, of Carrall Street, reported that 60 "China-boys" were dismissed from the city's homes following the incident. The *Colonist* stated that "the disposition of the body and the callousness of the murder indicates a phase of character which is exceedingly rare among people of our own race." April 8, 1914. Such a description seems to have stemmed from the popular conception of the "Chinese" as inhumane, an idea that is perhaps related to the consciousness of China as a hugely populous country where human life was held cheap.

103. May 24, 1915.

104. See for example, February 25, March 4, 1915.
105. Sun, March 31, 1914.

106. On this latest campaign, see Sun, April 20, 27, October 5, November 30, 1915.


108. ibid., October 7, 1907.


110. See chapter 8 of his book The interpretation of cultures, op. cit.

111. A. March, The idea of China, op. cit., p.27.


113. ibid., chap. 4.


115. ibid., chap.2.


118. ibid., chap.3.

119. ibid., chap.4.

120. February 10, 1912.


124. February 20, 1892.


126. ibid., p.31.

127. ibid., p.37.

128. For an example of the treatment the press gave the Chinese New Year celebrations, see Province, January 29, 1900. That year, the mayor
of Vancouver was invited to attend the celebrations and the report also noted that "white citizens always gather to see the fireworks display."

129. For evidence that it was the external cultural bias that was the constant, see for example, P. Ward, White Canada forever, op. cit., pp.7-10, 50-2 on Victoria's (and Vancouver's) Chinatown. The stereotypes were transported to Toronto. See K. Paupst, A note on anti-Chinese sentiment in Toronto before the First World War. Canadian Ethnic Studies, 9, 1, 1977, 54-9. On American Chinatowns, see for example, I. Light, From vice district to tourist attraction: the moral career of American Chinatowns, 1880-1940. Pacific Historical Review, 43, 1974, 367-94; C. Salter, Urban imagery and the Chinese of Los Angeles. Urban Resources, 1, 1984, 15-20, 28. Some of the themes, especially those concerning white women slavery were also common in descriptions of other racial outgroups, such as "blacks" in America. See for example, D. Ley, The black inner city as frontier outpost, op. cit., chap.1.

130. Cited in Province, February 3, 1908.

131. ibid., July 3, 1908.

132. World, April 28, 1899.

133. Province, September 26, 1908.

134. World, February 10, 1908.

135. ibid., February 10, 1912.

136. King discovered that almost as much opium was sold to "white" people as to "Chinese." Canada. Sessional Paper, 1908, No. 36b, Report by W.L. Mackenzie King on the need for the suppression of the opium traffic in Canada, p.7.

137. Province, June 17, 1907.


139. Suppression of gambling in Chinatown was carried out in fits and starts. In 1911, there was a major crackdown and 377 gamblers were arrested and fined 50 cents each. W.A. Cumyow, Court Notebook, 1906-25. Won Alexander Cumyow Papers, Special Collections, Main Library, University of British Columbia, Box 2. In 1918, 1,000 Chinese were arrested. Chinese Times, December 14, 1918.

140. Canada, Report, 1902, p.236.

141. Province, January 26, 1915.

142. Sun, June 19, 1915. See also May 24, 1915.
143. Province, July 16, 1913.

144. Sun, December 14, 1914.

145. World, February 12, 1914.


Marwyn Samuels has written that landscape impressions, although "subjective in origin . . . acquire an objective content in so far as they have a history: a history of authorship, diffusion and impact." The Western idea of "Chinatown" had a significance beyond itself, much as Samuels suggests, in that it prompted action from successive local officials in Vancouver who, in legitimizing themselves as guardians of a white European society, further institutionalized the idea and reality of the district. As we have seen, "Chinatown" had a particular importance for its beholders. Consistent with a long cultural tradition, they herded humanity with the assistance of racial categories into what Said has called the "two terminal, collective abstractions" known as "The Orient" and "The Occident," "Asia" and "Europe." Accordingly, Chinatown was — above everything else that might have been identified about the area — a Chinese place, an Oriental place, and ipso facto a foreign place. Defined in contrasting image to white society, it was "their" domain, "their" home away from home, "their" doing, "their" evil.

So when some ambitious Chinese merchants attempted to breach the moral order of "place" and "race" in Vancouver in the late 1910s, with moves to the suburbs, the disturbance was a particularly visible and jarring one. According to an epistemology of separation between "us" and "them" that hitherto had been demarcated in Vancouver's landscape, the merchant Chinese were "out of place" as it were. Not only that, but throughout the province, restless Chinese had taken the opportunity of
World War One, when Canadian troops were away, to infiltrate property and occupations that for decades had been the unspoken preserves of "white" British Columbians. It was a "yellow peril" of the most undignified order.

This chapter discusses the means by which the three levels of the Canadian state attempted to impede the spatial and occupational mobility of Chinese during the post World War One period and to seal the symbolic limits of a Chinese entitlement in Vancouver to "Chinatown." It will be seen that all levels of government continued to perceive their duty and means of political legitimacy as guarding and perpetuating a hegemonic white order in Canada. Civic attempts to contain Chinese mobility were the most direct - and legally unsuccessful - but government resistance at all levels culminated in 1923 when the Federal Government of Mr. W. Mackenzie King decided to invoke the ultimate solution by ending immigration from China. Taken together, the post-war laws and attempts by lower levels of government at anti-Chinese policies lent a considerable force to the racial category by the 1930s. Likely, they also worked against any broadly shared inclination on the part of Chinese to disperse their own ghetto through residential assimilation. The chapter then will discuss the national, provincial and neighbourhood practices that both carried forward and institutionalized the mutually reinforcing ideas of "Chinatown" and "Chinese" during the late 1910s and 1920s.

The legitimacy afforded racial classification in the 1920s ensured that Chinatown remained a socially isolated and stigmatized neighbourhood. It continued to lack political power and by the early 1930s, Chinatown was relegated in the struggle for even minimal survival
requirements. Indeed in the period after the Exclusion Act, residents of
Chinese-origin in Vancouver were to be grimly reminded of the
liabilities of the outsider status that guaranteed the "white" society's
hold on power and privilege. The chapter ends with an episode that
captures the Darwinist spirit of the post World War One era when
Chinatown was, in the eyes of the European society, a metaphor for
racial contamination and for the Chinese, a maximum entitlement.

I. The Race Idea in Science, 1900-30

By the 1920s, the racial category, "Chinese," was solidly
constituted in British Columbia with a momentum and rigidity. But that
inner momentum continued to be consolidated and legitimized from
external sources, as we will see from the practices of the state.

From the 1890s to the 1910s, the idea of race was also given
fresh sanction from a new branch of science that built upon the old
"race" typology approach. The science of heredity or "eugenics" had
earned considerable influence and respect in America and to a lesser
extent in Britain, and in both countries it lent authority to the old
morphological races of Western biology and physical anthropology.
Essentially eugenics was, in the words of Stepan, "a science and a
social programme of racial improvement through selective breeding of the
human species." In science, she claims it "provided yet one more channel
for the transmission of the racialist tradition." By the 1920s it had
been institutionalized throughout the world and the countries of
Germany, Russia, Japan and the United States all boasted active eugenic
or "race hygiene" societies.

The term "eugenics" was coined by Charles Darwin's cousin,
Francis Galton, a geographer and biologist. For Galton, The Descent of
Man lent support to the vogue of social hereditarianism that had gained currency from the mid-nineteenth century. That vogue held that like man's physical peculiarities, many forms of human behaviour, including criminality, idiocy, ability, degeneracy, alcoholism and insanity were inherited; that like begets like in the most deterministic fashion. Obviously therefore, it found much comfort in Darwin's theory of the natural selection of inherited, adaptive physical characteristics in nature and saw no impediment to applying the spirit of Darwin to man's behavioural, mental and moral condition.

Faith in the priority of heredity over environment became the thrust of the eugenics programme. Galton believed that mankind could improve the human stock by promoting the breeding of the "fit" and discouraging the reproduction of the "unfit." For Galton, improvement of the human stock involved both racial and individual improvement. Of course, biologists had long believed that innate differences in ability and behaviour separated "races", but eugenics gave behavioural differences more scientific authority by linking them to the new science of human heredity. For the first time ability and intelligence became discrete and measurable qualities inherited differentially by individuals and races. The goal of the science was to explore the hereditary nature of traits and to measure their variability in individuals and classes of individuals, a goal well suited to the new biometry, or statistical study of heredity.

In practice, much dispute about the mechanisms of genetic transmission diluted the force of the science as a science (especially in Britain), but methodological disputes did not alter the belief in the power of nature over nurture. Nor was the language of "fit" and "unfit,"
with its popular appeal, compromised. Besides, many eugenists, especially in the United States and Germany, were convinced that the virtue of the science was its capacity for practical application.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, eugenists and others attempted to promote schemes that would expedite for society what nature could only accomplish more slowly. In Britain, the first (and last) legislative success occurred in 1913, when the Houses of Parliament passed the Mental Deficiency Bill that called for the segregation of mentally ill people in order to prevent their breeding.\(^5\)

Generally speaking, British eugenists, including many leading intellectuals in that country in the first two decades of the century, saw the science in "class" terms - that is as a potential instrument for controlling the biological fitness of the working class. Accordingly, it eventually came to alienate the political left and by the 1920s, eugenics had become squarely identified with political conservatism. But conservative or otherwise, British politicians showed little interest in the eugenics movement.

In the United States, eugenics became indelibly wedded to the "race" question, which by the first decade of the twentieth century embraced the emancipated "Negro" and the "huddled masses" of Europe who had been entering the country since the 1890s. In that country, Haller writes, "Racists and restrictionists at the same time found in eugenics the scientific reassurances they needed that heredity shaped man's personality and that their presumptions rested on biological facts."\(^6\)

The perceived threat to the quality of the "true" American stock generated a vigorous campaign for immigration restriction and to a lesser extent, sterilization laws. Eugenists presented their cause as a patriotic one. Fine Nordic traits had created American institutions and
the ineradicable traits of lower races threatened to undermine them. The challenge was a sort of negative eugenics; to prevent the national organism from being weakened by those who would pass their deficiency on. Analogies to nineteenth century agricultural breeding were particularly helpful because they provided that the mixing of distant "strains" would induce "reversions" or wild types of hybrids. And of course, there was no need to carefully specify the "fit" from the "unfit," the close from the distant strains - a whole history of race science had already done that for them, at least in the case of the yellow and the black races.

As for the non-yellow and non-black people, Stepan notes that eugenists in both Britain and the United States tended to refer to a range of different categories as "races," without much regard for consistency. Along with the old (seemingly unambiguous) races, "Russians," "Slavs," "Mediterraneans," "Irish" and "Jews" were also "races" in the pages of the Eugenics Review, and their entry to America was seen as an "influx" that threatened to overwhelm the nativeborn "stock." By 1924, when the most pressing needs of the new industrial economy had been served, nativist agitation, fuelled in large part by eugenist prophecies, brought about a legislative solution. Ten years later, the notion of "race" hygiene was to find perhaps its most supreme expression in Nazi Germany.

II. The Racial Category and the Provincial Legislature of British Columbia, 1919-1922

The capitulation of Ottawa in 1903 to the demands of the Provincial Legislature of British Columbia for a prohibitive head tax had finally satisfied Victoria's appetite for anti-Chinese legislation.
In the years that immediately followed, the attention of the House turned to the "Japanese problem" and the difficulties of effecting legal measures against a population with whom the Imperial government had cherished treaty relations. By the 1910s, the House had exhausted all possible avenues and the Chinese and Japanese populations (as different to each other as they both were to "whites," were increasingly defined and dismissed as the "Asiatic" or the "Oriental problem." Not until 1919 did the Provincial Legislature raise again the issue of "race" and the place of such "aliens" in "white" British Columbia. The reappearance of the race issue seems most assuredly to be a product of World War One. Fought over territorial disputes and British ascendancy in Europe, the war stirred racial self-consciousness in British Columbia, as it did throughout the Western world, in what was a context of strikingly narrow nationalisms and imperialistic competition.

The attitudinal climate was particularly predisposed to receiving and transmitting metaphors of war, along with such crude Darwinist treatises as Lothrop Stoddard's immensely popular and lurid The Rising Tide of Colour, published in 1920. Recommended to the House of Commons by the Member of Parliament for Burrard in 1922, the book's premise was that the war had destroyed "white race-unity" and left it fractured and vulnerable to the vast "hordes" of the "Far East." "There is no immediate danger of the world being swamped by black blood," the American political scientist and eugenist wrote, "but there is a very imminent danger that the white stocks may be swamped by Asiatic blood." It was not that the "yellow race" was "inferior," Stoddard argued. On the contrary, "the Asiatics have by their own efforts built up admirable cultures rooted in remote antiquity" and it was for precisely that
reason that "white men cannot, under peril of their very race-existence, allow wholesale Asiatic immigration into white race areas." The awakening of Asia foreshadowed coloured domination, mongrelization and the destruction of civilization. The vocabulary of race, it appears, had moved to the defensive.

World War One precipitated a period of profound socio-economic dislocation in British Columbia. The brief economic prosperity of wartime plummeted severely from 1919 to 1922 as the closure of the munitions industry and the return of veterans brought unemployment, general discontent, labour unrest, union formation, new heights of working class consciousness and agitation for political rights among women. By 1923, 17 per cent of the Canadian population were unemployed. A general strike in Winnipeg in May 1919, raised the spectre of the "Red Scare" and exacerbated general panic and pessimism in what seemed to be a most unstable world.

Many social scientists have observed that during times of political retrenchment and economic recession, social groups whose own organizing and defensive capacities have been seriously diminished are subjected to further estrangement from the larger society. Post-war British Columbia was no exception to this pattern. The racial frame of reference with which British Columbians had grown up was made more explicit and contributed significantly to the entrenchment of social identities. The reaffirmation of the likemindedness of the insider community was at the same time a blunt assertion of the outsider status of the "others." Indeed, no amount of war bond purchases by Chinese to support Canada's war effort could convert their status to that of "allies." (Although Chinese were not drafted, in Vancouver they contributed over $100,000 through bond purchases.)
the day, "race" and "nation" became explicitly interchangeable themes around which socio-political units were built and conquered.

It was in this climate of nationalism that, immediately after the armistice, a new and strenuous round of lobbying began in Victoria for immigration exclusion of Chinese and all such alien others. In March 1919, the Legislature under the Hon. John Oliver unanimously carried the following motion: "That in the opinion of this House the Federal authorities should forthwith cable the Hon. Sir R.L. Borden, Premier of Canada, to urge the Peace Conference, as a matter of safeguarding and keeping undisturbed international relations, the prohibition of the immigration into Canada of those races which will not readily assimilate with the Caucasian race."\(^{15}\) The war, it seemed, had given the "white" community new incentive to seize what was rightfully "theirs," and much greater certainty that what was "theirs" was under siege.

Perhaps the greatest irritant for white British Columbia was the reality of the "Oriental" wartime penetration of agricultural lands and jobs, and their increasing ownership of valuable property throughout the province. As early as 1913, a *Colonist* news report stated that: "The boards of trade throughout the Okanagan Valley are extensively taking up the problem by giving white landowners the preference over Chinese."\(^{16}\) This "infiltration" was so serious in the minds of the members of the British Columbia Board of Trade that in February 1920, they lobbied the Provincial Government for a commission that would "inquire into and devise means of providing a remedy to the serious menace of an Oriental influx into several of the richer agricultural sections of British Columbia, and particularly to make it impossible for Orientals and undesirable aliens to own, lease and otherwise control land in
Canada." Other representations were made during 1919 and 1920 by the Farmers' Institute, the United Farmers of British Columbia, the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association and the British Columbia Stockbreeders' Association and by 1921 the Hon E. Barrows, Minister of Agriculture, had commissioned the study.

The report on Oriental ownership in British Columbia did not provide comparative figures for other nationalities, it being simply assumed that any degree of "Oriental" ownership was an infringement. As it was, nearly 5,000 acres of farm land were found to be owned by Chinese in 1921 and 10,030 acres leased. Most of the land was given over to mixed farming, while orchards and dairying occupied a small portion. Ninety percent of the province's supply of "truck produce" was found to be conducted by Chinese and 55 per cent of British Columbia's potato crop. The Japanese presence in agriculture was thought to be still more threatening, given that they owned more property than they leased.

The grievance of landowners was echoed in the urban areas by respective retail merchants' associations as job and pay discrimination against Chinese in labouring spheres facilitated greater self employment in small business operations by the 1920s. In Victoria, the association informed the Legislature in 1922:

"The worst feature about it is that this Oriental invasion is spreading out into various lines of business. At first the Chinese who came here were content to work in the home or to be simply laundrymen, but now they are in the green grocery business and many other lines; they are in possession of vast tracts of land on this Island and the Mainland."

In these protests there resounded the old theme that the "Oriental" presented economic competition to more deserving retailers and landowners. Because of their standard of living, Chinese could farm the land more cheaply, offer more competitive prices and reap greater
profits. "The Chinese are successful [in truck gardening]," wrote Johnston in 1921, "owing to their tremendous energy and to their frugal habits of life. . . . Where the average wage of the white labourer is $5 a day, the Chinaman will work for $3 to $4.50 a day."21 Ultimately, however, in encroaching upon hitherto "white" occupational preserves, the newly mobile "John Chinaman" (with his "Chinese" entrepreneurial spirit) was violating the rules of a socially defined hegemony. The real or perceived economic competition presented by Chinese labour and retailers, followed from, and likely made its own important, subsequent contribution to the institutionalization of that moral order of insider and outsider.22

Indeed what was most decisive in fuelling protest was the strong sense that "whites" had come to have of themselves as belonging to an ingroup - a community with a need for firm boundaries and strong safeguards against loss of "civilized" standards and group control in a world of growing instability. Regarding the civilized standards, the Vancouver Board of Trade knew well the significance of land ownership and it told the Special Oriental Immigration Committee in July, 1921:

"During late years the matter has become serious in that the Oriental is no longer content to seclude himself in the Chinese or Japanese quarters of the towns in the Province, but is either occupying land in advantageous localities or is branching out in the retail or wholesale trades in the best districts in the cities. . . . There is a natural repugnance inherent in the soul of our people to fraternize with the Oriental with the ultimate result that they secure control of the surrounding land. . . . We strongly feel that we should retain British Columbia for our own people. We realize that the owners of land must eventually control the destinies of any country and we must urge that every precaution should be taken to preserve us and our children this great heritage of ours."23

Minister of Lands, Hon T. Patullo, found the penetration of the "Oriental strain" beyond its quarters to be so menacing as to be "detrimental to the progress of the Anglo-Saxon civilization of the Pacific Coast."24 A
year later, in November 1922, he eschewed the idea of extending "ill-will" to Orientals, but reiterated the "fact that biologically there was a great difference between whites and Oriental races. We must trade together, but I think it is sufficient to suggest that we should occupy our own spheres."25

One of the ways by which Attorney General, Hon. A. Mason, attempted to placate unemployed veterans and other citizens in British Columbia in the early 1920s was to campaign among primary and manufacturing industrialists against the employment of "Asiatics." "The man who is not patriotic enough to employ white men in his industry is not a good citizen and I am not hesitating to tell him so," Mason said.26 In 1922, almost 6,000 Chinese (and 3,000 Japanese) were employed in the province's industries, the majority in the various branches of the lumber industry and in railway construction. By mid-1922, the Colonist reported "through his [Mason's] activities, the railway companies and other large employing concerns have been induced to . . . issue instructions that hereafter, whites must be employed instead of Orientals on track and other rail work."27 Some shingle mill operators also responded to Mason's call and gave their first consideration to a minimum wage that would, among other things, remove the advantage of Chinese in the labour market. (By 1926, a minimum wage policy was introduced in the lumber industry and to the extent that it was enforced, it brought hardship to many Chinese.28)

The Minister of Finance, Hon. J. Hart, endorsed Mason's "campaign of attrition" for the "self preservation" of the province: "We want British Columbia to be a white province," he said in June 1922.29 For both Ministers, the issue of Oriental penetration was a simple but
serious one, as Mason tried to convince the Legislature in November, 1922:

"I have no real objection to the Oriental but the real objection to him and the one that is permanent and incurable is that there is an ethnological difference which cannot be overcome. The two races cannot mix and I believe our first duty is to our own people. ... It is a matter of our own domestic affairs that we should endeavour to protect the white race from the necessity of intermingling with Oriental blood, and I think we have every warrant for fighting to prevent a situation that will inevitably result in race deterioration."30

The Provincial Government under Premier J. Oliver was only too willing to assist Mason's campaign and in 1921 it decided to carry out an old order-in-council passed in 1902, according to which Chinese and Japanese were excluded from employment on government contracts. While for Japanese, the act was held by the Privy Council to be ultra vires in 1923, for Chinese it was held that "Canada's treaty with China permits the Dominion and inferentially its Provinces, to exclude Chinese from employment on government undertakings, or in connection with Government leases or licences."31

Members of the Oliver administration knew well that if Chinese occupational and residential mobility was to be ultimately contained, however, it would be necessary for Ottawa to cooperate. No other period in the history of social relations in British Columbia brought forward as concerted a front against Chinese immigration to Canada as the early 1920s. All politicians seemed to feel they needed an "Oriental exclusion" platform to guarantee electoral success and their electioneering gave fuel to the race idea. The Federal election of 1921, for example, raised a furor in British Columbia, with respective candidates accusing their opposition of encouraging the Yellow Race. (In the December 1921 Province advertisement (over), Conservative Prime Minister Meighen is depicted by the Liberals extending a welcome to an Oriental.) This round of popular province-wide agitation has been
Liberal Candidates

are pledged to a

White British Columbia

Who is to dominate British Columbia— the White or the Yellow man? Shall it be through the negligence of the Meighen Government as represented by the Hon. H. H. Stevens, that the development of this wonderful Province of ours is to come under the domination of the Yellow Race? Speaking at the Opera House on the evening of September 19, eleven years ago, Mr. Stevens promised—

"That one of my first acts, if elected, would be to try to improve the conditions of fishing on the Pacific Coast." The report of that meeting also states that Mr. Stevens "regretted to see the H. C. fisheries so largely in the hands of the Asians." And, in another meeting at the Horse Show Building on Monday night of September 19, in the same year, the report reads: "Mr. Stevens, raising his hands about, told them what mighty things he would do, if he were sent to Ottawa. About eleven years have passed. What has Mr. Stevens done? Absolutely nothing! What are the results? 1916: Japanese and 20,420 Chinese have been admitted in the last ten years. Out of 3,964 salmon licences the Japanese hold 204. The Japanese control 50,167.304 acres of British Columbia's choicest orchard lands. The Chinese control 16,751.73 of the choicest truck farm lands. These are the bare facts.

What is the Remedy?

Each Liberal Candidate has pledged himself to make a White British Columbia. Sitting on the Government side— as they undoubtedly will under the new Government— they can achieve this purpose. They will make British Columbia a White man's country. They will develop our boundless resources, our mines, our forests, our fisheries, and our fertile valleys for the profit of the White man. Each Liberal Candidate believes that every "job" in British Columbia should be occupied by the White Man. It is indeed a sorry state of affairs when a returned soldier, who has won the highest reward at the expense of his country— Michael O'Keeffe, V.C.— publicly states that "the Meighen Government and the Oriental have forced him into the bread line." If you would remedy these conditions you will mark your ballot on December 4 FOR THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE!
comprehensively treated elsewhere and it is sufficient to note here that protests to Victoria against further "Oriental" immigration to Canada hailed from a multitude of organizations and interests of all class backgrounds and political affiliations. Chinese and Japanese, both thought to be a threat to "white" domination by virtue of the "vast hordes" waiting in China, and the high Japanese birth rate in British Columbia, were equal targets of this agitation. The war provided the exclusion lobbies with a host of valuable military metaphors with which to invoke the "race" question. "These are times," wrote the Colonist in November 1922 (in an editorial about the possibility of returning the $500 tax to Chinese on the condition they leave Canada), "when the rights of nations have been asserted on the battlefield, when the policy of self determination has been vindicated as a cardinal principle." Concern for "race suicide," "extinction," "invasion" and an "Asian takeover" pervaded the province despite the fact that nearly 75 per cent of the province's population in 1921 was of British origin and that from 1911 to 1941, British Columbia had the highest proportion of British-born residents of any province of Canada.

These territorial sentiments were injected into legislative debate toward the end of 1922 when Victoria began its most strenuous drive for immigration restriction concessions from the Federal Government. For the Oliver administration, manipulation of the race idea was an effective, perhaps even necessary source of political legitimation, so prevailing had the culture of race in the province become. But the prominence given the issue was not simply expedient. By mid-November 1922, the Minister of Mines, Hon. W. Sloan, saw the matter to be so serious as to transcend a "political football" or a "social or a labour question; [but] more vitally a question of racial domination
and, eventually, of our national existence." Race had clearly become inseparable from the concept of "nation" in the eyes of the province's political elite; "white" was a fundamental criterion of the emerging idea (and reality) of "British Columbia" and "Canada." Not surprisingly then, Sloan's resolution that the assembly "place itself on record as being in favour of complete prohibition of Asiatic immigration" was unanimously carried by the House. In the same session, Liberal member for Vancouver, Mr. I. MacKenzie introduced a more ambitious motion that would convince Ottawa of the severity of the "Oriental" encroachment (and discharge an election promise of the Liberal Provincial Government):

"... And whereas a serious situation has developed in the Province of British Columbia because of the rapidly growing numerical and economic power of its Asiatic population; And whereas it is imperative for the protection of the citizens of British Columbia that strong measures be adopted designed to prevent Asiatics from acquiring further rights to this Province, the active exercise of which would give them an alarming hold on agricultural, fishing, lumbering, mining and other Provincial industrial interests; And whereas the limitation of the Provincial Legislature authority under the British North America Act precludes the Provincial Legislature from enacting such legislation as is necessary to effectively deal with the situation defined; And whereas it is essential, if the Caucasian race of the Province of British Columbia is to be permitted to work out, unfettered, the high ideals of Anglo-Saxon civilization both in the development of the country's natural resources and in the application of those ideals to proper standards of living; Therefore be it resolved that the Dominion of Canada be petitioned to grant its assent and accord its active assistance to the obtaining of amendments to the BNA Act, giving the province of British Columbia, at present most affected, and the other provinces of Canada, the power to make laws prohibiting Asiatics from acquiring proprietary interest in any form whatsoever ... "

The motion was unanimously carried and with it, the Oliver administration confirmed that "Chinatown" represented the limits of tolerance, a maximum entitlement beyond which Oriental strains tainted, and Oriental competition disturbed, a "natural" Darwinist order.
III. Civic Strategies in the Post-World War One Era

With jobs scarce in Vancouver from the time the real estate boom crashed in 1913, City Council began its own campaign against Chinese employment in the city. This was at a time when unemployment among "Chinese" was already so severe in Vancouver and Victoria that the Chinese Benevolent Association in Vancouver forwarded a circular to China advising countrymen not to emigrate to British Columbia despite the opposition of Chinese entrepreneurs who profitted from the glut of labour.\(^3^8\) Local feeling turned against Chinese employment in the city, for example in the laundry trade (see figure over). The City's vendetta began in 1914 when "antipathy to Orientals, to Chinese in particular, as a result of the murder of Mrs. Millard, caused the City Council ... to resolve to give preference to lumber mills employing white labour" for its municipal contracts and purchases. Council voted to use the white-only Anglo-American Lumber Company in the future. "It might not be absolutely legal," said Alderman Hamilton, "but it could be the unwritten law of Council."\(^3^9\)

Council also re-affirmed that Chinese labour could not be used on City works.\(^4^0\) By 1916, the Board of Licence Commissioners passed a resolution excluding Chinese workers from all liquor-licensed premises. This action was taken despite the resistance of the managers of the Vancouver Hotel and the Hotel Metropole, who protested that "only Chinese provide the right class of domestics and cooks."\(^4^1\) Consul Lin Shih Yuen also contested the exclusion and in a searing letter to the Licence Board in June 1916, threatened to take the matter to a British court and denounced the Board's "continuous class legislation which hampers my countrymen in every field of employment."\(^4^2\) Earlier, when the
A Message to the People of Vancouver

Will you help to provide employment for 500 WHITE girls, women and men? You can do it without the least inconvenience. You can help keep ONE MILLION DOLLARS in Vancouver this year, which will otherwise leave the Province permanently.

For several months past the WHITE LAUNDRIES OF VANCOUVER have been considering the best method of approaching the people of this city regarding THE IMPORTANCE OF PATRONIZING LAUNDRIES, OWNED AND OPERATED BY WHITE PEOPLE AND EMPLOYING WHITE MEN AND WOMEN. There are, in this city, many hundreds of WHITE women and WHITE men who could be regularly employed by the WHITE laundries if the people would send their laundry work ONLY to the WHITE LAUNDRIES.

It is not our point to attack the CHINESE. Our appeal is to WHITE men and women of Vancouver in the best interests of WHITE men and women. If every family now patronizing CHINESE laundries will, in future, send their work to WHITE laundries, more than FIVE HUNDRED WHITE MEN AND WOMEN would FIND WORK AT ONCE. Also, more than ONE MILLION DOLLARS PER ANNUM would remain right here in Vancouver to support WHITE families, many of whom have given their fathers and brothers to the great cause which is so dear to loyal Canadians.

We are going to do our part, beginning Monday, by reducing our prices on laundry work.

WORLD,

May 1, 1915
Consul heard of the impending resolution, he had appealed to the Board to "consider further, that the class of workmen you would deprive of their means of livelihood . . . have paid the sum of Five Hundred Dollars to enter this country at the stipulation and acquiescence of your Government."  

Among the worst casualties of the heightened sensitivity surrounding employment opportunities in the late 1910s were the itinerant Chinese peddlers, whom it was thought presented unfair competition to white grocers. Perhaps the oldest profession of Chinese men in Vancouver, peddling had always provided a secure, if modest, livelihood, with a ready suburban market available in Chinese domestics and Chinese restaurant cooks. Supplies were also assured because from the time of the incorporation of Vancouver, the cultivation of fresh produce was one of the earliest occupational ventures open to Chinese. "In hundreds of families that should be the white man's best customers," wrote the Sun in 1913, "the Chinese cook wields his malevolent influence. . . . For the Chinese cook buys Chinese grown vegetables." Civic harassment of peddlers had begun as early as 1894 when Council passed a bylaw preventing the sale of produce outside normal store hours. The hours of work for peddling were further regulated in a 1908 amendment to the Market Bylaw, a move that the Supreme Court upheld in an appeal by a Chinese peddler. By 1913, in an effort "to put the white man on a more equal basis in the growing of vegetables," Alderman McMaster proposed that peddlers be licensed. Come 1915, a further obstacle to the trade was presented in the form of a Council proposition to control the location and hours for peddling in the city. However, in February 1915, the Private Bills Committee of the Legislature declined to accept Council's request for enabling power to control the
distribution of peddling in Vancouver. What was deemed within the power of the City, to the delight of the Vancouver Retail Merchants Association, was the jurisdiction to fix a licence fee and in May 1915, a hefty $50 annual tax was set by Council.

By August 1918, one of the earliest labour organizations in Chinatown was established in the form of a 300-400 member Vegetable Sellers Association. Its first target was the proposed Trades Licence Law of the Finance Committee of Council which aimed, in the words of the Province, to "exclude Orientals ... and others classified as unfair competition against local legitimate dealers." To fight the proposed law, the organization was joined by the new Consul for China, Mr. Koliang Yih, who in a letter to Council in December 1918, wrote: "The discrimination against the Chinese and the unrighteousness of such a course, Gentlemen, has moved me to appeal to your spirit of fair play in this trying time of readjustment." But not only was the appeal in vain, Council decided upon a still more vindictive course in the new year. While retail stores were required to pay a $10 licence fee per year, the levy for peddling was raised to $100. The new Consul for China found the move so prejudicial against Chinese trade that he charged in April 1919:

"This Bylaw is purposely established to destroy and prohibit the business carried on by peddlers, and to discriminate indirectly against the Chinese only and directly against them in favour of retail merchants and shops. May I ask you, if you can impose $100 on these peddlers, who can make only a gross profit of $350 a year, how many Hundreds or Thousands of dollars will you impose on a lawyer or a doctor or even yourselves, who can make ten or one hundred times more profit than those peddlers? The City is supposed to look after the interest and welfare of the public. Now the City is to use a kind of means to help retail merchants to hold up to the public to suffer high cost of living and inconvenience. The $100 licence fee is prohibitive, therefore it is unlawful, impracticable, unobservable and unreasonable."
Ambassador Yeung also stepped in to protest Council's action and the Finance Committee saw fit to return the fee to $50 in June 1919. However, the itinerant vendors were not prepared to accept the discriminatory and onerous fee and in November, when the Supreme Court of British Columbia upheld the right of the City to charge the $50 fee, they decided to escalate the protest with strike action. To rally support, the peddlers distributed circulars to households in Vancouver defending their position, threatening higher prices, and appealing for support. The door-to-door vendor, an indispensable institution to Vancouver housewives who were keen to avoid cumbersome trips to the City market, won the support of over 5,000 clients in a 1920 petition to Council.

The Vancouver Retail Merchants' Association and the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, however, were powerful adversaries whose interests Council was keen to protect. Both of these organizations supported the heavy tax on peddling and called upon Council to retain it. This it obligingly did, despite the tireless efforts of the attorney for the peddlers, and the $50 tax remained in force. By 1923, 152 Chinese peddlers were in business in Vancouver, less than half the number that the Consul for China reported were in operation in 1918.

In harassing the Chinese peddler, Council (and the Retail Merchants' Association) unwittingly invited a much graver menace. In conjunction with other factors, the civic persecution of peddling during the 1910s had the unintended consequence of facilitating the rise of Chinese owned and operated grocery stores in locations outside Chinatown. Chinese peddlers had built up a busy trade throughout the city with their competitive prices and it was with this assured suburban market and the guarantee of steady suppliers that merchants began to
establish small businesses with attached residences, at locations more convenient to their clients. By 1920, 30 of the 88 "Chinese" grocers and as many as 25 of the 31 Chinese greengrocers were located outside Chinatown. Six years later, 71 of the 74 Chinese greengrocers had set up shop outside Chinatown. As the table (over) indicates rather dramatically, Chinese in Vancouver virtually began the separate line of stores called "greengrocers" in the early 1920s as an extension of the early colour-based division of labour. Previously, produce was sold by peddlers, in groceries or at the City market. Only nine greengrocer shops were owned by "other nationalities" in Vancouver in 1920. Of the other trades in which Chinese held licences in 1920, only laundries, and to a lesser extent restaurants, were disproportionately located outside of Chinatown.

By 1920, Chinese settlement in Vancouver still exhibited a high degree of concentration. Three years earlier, the annual report of the civic Health Committee noted that, "The Chinese population in the city appears to be rapidly increasing, occupying a district bounded by Campbell Avenue on the east and the CPR tracks [near Carrall Street] on the west." The map of settlement for 1920 confirms this new spill of Chinese into Strathcona and also indicates that a minority had moved since 1910 to other districts of the city, such as Fairview, Mount Pleasant and Grandview (see maps pages 207-8). Most of these non-Chinatown residents lived on laundry or grocery premises, according to the address and occupation information in the directory - a notable new concentration of which was located near the Granville Street bridge on the west side of the city. The small concentration near Commercial Drive and Hastings Street, lies on Woodland Drive and Albert Street, in the vicinity of the district that was to have been reserved for Chinese in
Table II. Licences Issued to Chinese in Vancouver in 1920, 1922, 1924.

1926

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Licence</th>
<th>Chinese '20 '22 '24 '26</th>
<th>Other nationalities '20 '22 '24 '26</th>
<th>Distribution outside Chinatown '20 '22 '24 '26</th>
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<tr>
<td>Auto (Taxi)</td>
<td>8 8 9 7</td>
<td>282 211 309 258</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auto Livery</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td>60 16 59 62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auto (Gas &amp; Rpr)</td>
<td>1 1 1 -</td>
<td>117 276 289 231</td>
<td>- - -</td>
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<td>Apartment Hses</td>
<td>- 4 4 2</td>
<td>- 368 481 547</td>
<td>3 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auto Painter</td>
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<td>- - 21 -</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Plr</td>
<td>- - - -</td>
<td>8 23 48 -</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billiards</td>
<td>3 1 2 2</td>
<td>75 55 53 -</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>1 1 2 2</td>
<td>- - - -</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>6 8 8 5</td>
<td>116 124 121 126</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber</td>
<td>17 20 17 20</td>
<td>180 182 199 206</td>
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<td>Broker</td>
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<td>243 136 229 280</td>
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<td>Boot &amp; Shoe Dlr</td>
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<td>59 73 53 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boot &amp; Shoe Rpr</td>
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<td>Bath Prl &amp; Mssg</td>
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<td>12 15 26 32</td>
<td>- - -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bath, plain</td>
<td>2 4 5 5</td>
<td>12 12 13 11</td>
<td>1 - -</td>
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<td>Candy, etc</td>
<td>37 33 29 22</td>
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<td>1 3 4 3</td>
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<td>Contractor</td>
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<td>Delicatessen</td>
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<td>Drygoods</td>
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<td>Dressmaker</td>
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<td>Grocer</td>
<td>88 73 68 67</td>
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<td>Green Grocer</td>
<td>31 46 70 74</td>
<td>9 6 7 11</td>
<td>25 40 66 71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gents Clothier</td>
<td>11 4 6 5</td>
<td>87 54 71 71</td>
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<td>Hardware</td>
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<td>Jeweller</td>
<td>13 18 14 9</td>
<td>89 59 60 66</td>
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<td>Lodging House</td>
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<td>328 329 330 387</td>
<td>7 7 6 8</td>
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<td>Laundry</td>
<td>43 39 40 40</td>
<td>15 16 14 12</td>
<td>38 36 36 37</td>
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<td>Laundry Offices</td>
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<td>- - - 13</td>
<td>- - - 13</td>
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<td>Music Dlr</td>
<td>- - - -</td>
<td>16 27 28 32</td>
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<td>Milk Vendor</td>
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<td>Printer &amp; Publ</td>
<td>3 3 4 5</td>
<td>63 74 71 74</td>
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</table>

contd. over
the aborted move of Chinatown during 1911-12 (discussed in Chapter Three).

It is difficult to document the informal practices that limited the residential choices of Chinese in Vancouver in the first part of this century. Evidence is spotty, but includes newspaper advertisements for lots that Chinese were not eligible to buy; statements made by community spokesmen in more recent years about the lack of residential choice of Chinese until the late 1950s (see Chapter Six); references to steering practices by real estate agents; and other evidence such as the operation of restrictive covenants in various districts of the city, as we will see later. It is also the case that in the late 1910s and early 1920s, a number of ratepayer groups and the Vancouver Retail Merchants' Association made explicit their opposition to Chinese spatial and occupational mobility. In 1914, the Grandview and Ward Three Ratepayers' Associations passed resolutions calling for the prevention of property ownership by Chinese in Vancouver and throughout British Columbia during the war. By 1919, the Grandview Chamber of Commerce had joined them and in February of that year, the Highland Echo, the chamber's official organ, reported under the heading "To Fight The

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DISTRIBUTION OF CHINESE IN VANCOUVER, 1920

Based on Henderson's Directory, 1920
"Grandview merchants, besides many prominent men in the district were out in full force last Monday... The first speaker was Alderman Jos. Hoskins who promised his every endeavour to stamp out the evil. However, the landlord, he said was the only man who could effectively keep the Oriental out of the district by refusing to sell or rent to him. Before closing Ald. Hoskins made a motion that efforts be made to bring about a bylaw, whereby no licences would be given to any Oriental, who had not been an ally of Britain, to do business in the city. The motion was unanimously carried."62

Alarmed by the spirit of such exclusionary sentiment, "all the Chinese merchants at both Grandview and Fairview... sent in a joint petition" to the Consul for China, complaining that "on account of the recent agitation their business has suffered to a marked degree."63 But the Grandview and the Central Ratepayers' Associations were not satisfied with preventive strategies for a "clean, white Grandview," and in the same month they protested to Council the inroads Chinese had begun to make and the deleterious effects this was assumed to have for property values and hygiene in their areas.64 Equally alarmed were the merchants of Upper Granville, Davie and Robson Streets, who petitioned Council in 1919 for measures that would restrict Chinese settlement to one area of the city, such was the indignation the entrepreneurs felt at "John's" new form of competition.65 Having learned the trades and earned the capital, "John" was no longer content to work for "whites," but was now actually producing and retailing for the home market.

Until the late 1910s, Council had not found it necessary to take formal action with regard to Chinese residence in the city. As the City clerk informed his Calgary counterpart back in 1910: "The City of Vancouver has not had to take any action with reference to the matter of segregating the Chinese for residential purposes... They are mostly confined to one district of the city."66 But by the end of the decade,
when the Chinese population of the city had reached approximately 6,000 (about 3.5 per cent of the city's population),67 Council felt provoked to take action on behalf of the commercial and residential lobbies it purported to represent. For Aldermen Elkins and Hoskins, the threat of Chinese infiltration into the residential districts was so grave as to warrant a strongly worded appeal to Ottawa for Chinese immigration exclusion. Otherwise it would be necessary to "take up arms to drive them into the sea," Hoskins told the Province in early February, 1919.68 By February 10, Council had resolved to appoint a committee of aldermen "to enquire fully into the question of the immigration of Asiatics into the Province and their employment subsequent to arrival." A month later, it unanimously carried Elkin's motion that gave moral force to the collective European view of the time:

"Whereas the number of Chinese of all classes immigrating to the Province of British Columbia is too large and at the present time there are too many Chinese residing in this Province. . . . And whereas . . . a large number of Chinese are operating farms and stores throughout this City and Province in unrestricted competition with our own citizens, and such conditions being prejudicial to the best interest of this City and Province; And whereas the great majority of these immigrants to Canada remain in the Province of British Columbia on account of the climatic conditions and it is undesirable that they should assimilate with our citizens on account of racial prejudice; And whereas it is undesirable to increase the difficulties of providing sufficient employment for our soldiers now returning from overseas . . . And whereas we believe the system of collecting $500 head tax is wrong in principle and tends to create a condition of slavery in our midst with its attendant evil; Be it therefore resolved -:

1. That this Council memorialize the Dominion Government asking that the necessary regulations be immediately enacted to prevent further Chinese immigration into Canada . . . "69

But if immigration exclusion offered part of an ultimate solution to the problem of the mobility of Chinese-origin residents, a more immediate task in the eyes of Council was to seal the limits of the
"Chinese" claim to Vancouver at "Chinatown." To that end, Mayor R. Gale simply ignored Mr. Koliang Yih's request that he "warn the editors of the Highland Echo to stop further agitation against the Orientals and to assure us that the owners of property will not use their efforts to force Chinese tenants to vacate, or to unreasonably advance the rent to a prohibitive price." Gale's allegiances on the question of Chinese commercial and residential diffusion lay with the Retail Merchants' Association, as he assured its members on their speech day two years later as the Liberal candidate for Vancouver Centre in the impending federal election. Meanwhile, in a letter read to Council in March 1919, the Chinese Consul wrote that: "The proposition to segregate the Oriental residents is certainly ill-advised, thoughtless and unwarranted in the first place." Be that as it may, Council carried a motion by Alderman Hoskins the same day that gave short shrift to the Consul's fears:

"Whereas the City Council has been approached by deputations representing retail business and residential districts of Vancouver requesting relief from encroachment of Asiatics into business and residence sections; And whereas the said spread of Asiatics is daily growing to be a graver aggravation; Be it therefore resolved that the City Solicitor be instructed to advise the Council whether or not some system of segregating cannot be legally adopted to confine Asiatic retail business into some well defined given area of the city."

It was not until 1923, after an extensive enquiry by legal advisers to Council and by the Retail Merchants Association of Canada, that City Solicitor Williams was forced to bluntly inform Council that "the City does not at present enjoy the power to restrict Orientals to any particular section of the City. . . . The only effective solution from a practical standpoint, would appear to be for enabling legislation of both a Federal and Provincial character to be secured, delegating powers
to municipalities to deal with the matter."  

The Canadian municipalities, like their American counterparts after 1917, did not get their legislation, but in Vancouver, their strength of purpose was to ensure that their aims would be realized in fact, if not in statute. Some strictly residential municipalities simply overcame the constitutional limitation on their powers to wield the racial category by establishing "gentlemen's agreements," unwritten rules by which segregation was assured through adherence to a common goal - the denial of property rights to socially defined outsiders. The authorities are known to have turned a blind eye to such collusion and other gentlemen's agreements in Point Grey, the University Endowment Lands, Capilano Highlands, Shaughnessy, the British Properties, sections in the Hastings Townsite and Mount Pleasant until the late 1940s, and in some instances beyond this. Only in the post-World War Two period did the courts demolish the legal validity of these restrictive convenants. In other mixed residential and commercial districts of the city, such as Grandview, there was little, bar the informal pressure that had the indulgence of officials of Council, to prevent Chinese from operating green groceries on premises that often doubled as houses.

Some things, however, were still assuredly in their place. As the Consul for China reminded Mayor Gale in January 1919 after a meeting over the matter at City Hall, "Chinese in Vancouver and Victoria alone are paying something like $300,000 municipal taxes annually, and also a considerable amount in provincial taxes." While all British subjects over 21 years of age who had become naturalized were entitled the provincial and civic vote, Chinese were denied the privilege, Yih protested, a "most unjustifiable condition [of] taxation without
representation." The professions of pharmacy, dentistry and law were also closed to people of Chinese origin and in Vancouver, occupational closure extended de facto to other jobs in banking, in the department stores and in nursing at the Vancouver General Hospital, an institution where in the 1920s, sick Chinese were treated only in the basement. Chinese in Vancouver's schools also became targets in 1921, when the Vancouver School Board decided to pursue the possibility of school segregation, despite the assurances of all but four of Vancouver's 34 school principals that Chinese students were not a hindrance to the achievements of white students. The lines of social and political closure also continued to be drawn around the sacred preserve of Canadian citizenship, depending of course on the discretion of respective judges. Citizenship was so jealously guarded by some that they would go to absurd lengths to justify denying it to Chinese, as witness Vancouver Judge Grant's 1922 decision to refuse the application of Chinatown tailor Yew Gan Hoy on the grounds that, having taken the trouble "to investigate the kind of farmers they make, I am told from an agricultural point of view they are ruining the Lower Mainland. . . . My duty is not to approve any person whom I do not believe would keep this country as good as it is." By the early 1920s, white Vancouver demonstrated the excesses of a solidly rooted cultural hegemony fuelled by eugenist prophecies about the dilution of the white race. Another expression was the formation of the Asiatic Exclusion League in 1921 with its base in Vancouver. In that year, according to the Chief Controller of Chinese Immigration for the port of Vancouver, every household in the city was canvassed to support the league, with "considerable success." The following year, secretary Mr. C. Macauley reported a membership of 40,000 throughout the
province. Its hysterical publication called *Danger: The Anti-Asiatic Weekly* sought, in the words of Macauley "to educate the people of this country to the terrible effect of allowing Orientals a foothold in Canada." In its lurid tone and language, it was rivalled only by Hilda Glyyn-Ward's fiction called *The Writing on the Wall* published by the *Vancouver Sun* in 1921. "The leopard cannot change his spots any more than a white man can be Orientalized or an Oriental be brought to live by the customs and laws of the European," Glyyn-Ward wrote. In a story which concluded with a projection to a future in which the mayor of Vancouver and all but two of the aldermen were Chinese, the author conveyed her essential message: "Between the Orient and the Occident, there lies more than a mere ocean, there is a great divide, intangible and insurmountable."

i) *Once "Chinatown" Always "Chinatown": More on the Public Nuisance in the 1920s*

Behind the walls of the "great divide," Vancouver's "Chinatown" continued to be defined and monitored after 1918 according to some perceived "Chineseness." And as City Council saw its role, the racial divide was one to be closely policed and enforced. This it attempted to do in two ways: by lending its moral will (if not its legal authority) to the cause of physical segregation, and by its management of the ghetto itself. Both agendas attempted to cement the racial hierarchy in space; the former in a straightforward material sense as we have seen, the latter through the classification of "Chinatown" as "their" territory and *ipso facto* as an "Oriental" product. The two mandates implied and reinforced each other, as the *British Columbia Monthly* wrote in 1921:
"For years its [Chinatown's] unsavoury reputation has been a sidewalk topic. Different authorities on the shady side of the city have condemned it in no uncertain terms as not only the breeding place of such diseases as flourish in the dens of the Oriental, but also as a crime centre in Vancouver. Opium, gambling - to each Chinatown is a home.... The manner of life of its inhabitants is indescribable.

And this district has, of late years, spread amazingly. Residential localities which, until lately, were occupied by people who were white, are now entirely Chinese. Business blocks, which a few years ago were occupied by Canadian firms are now filled with the goods of the Oriental. It may be said that this is part of the price of war but, if so, it is surely nonetheless deplorable." 

During the 1910s and early 1920s, the City of Vancouver drew upon prior civic definitions of the "Chinese" and "Chinatown" to justify close scrutiny of the Pender Street district. The City continued to operate assertively in the idiom of race. Sanitary reform proceeded apace and the familiar remedies were brought to bear. In 1919, for example, Chinatown was denounced by the Health Committee of Council as a propagating ground for disease and an inspection team was set up to monitor the hygiene of the area. Within 10 months, the owners of more than 20 lodgings were threatened with orders to condemn their properties, including the Chinese Hospital at 106 East Pender Street. In March 1921, the entire City Council inspected Chinatown and some weeks later, under the charge of "discrimination" by the Chinese Times, three officials ordered 278 of the 280 owners of Chinese origin they had visited to upgrade and paint their homes, failing which they would be pulled down. There was another effort launched to control density violations in Chinatown when, in 1922, Council established a minimum of 400 inches of breathing space per person per room. Gambling and opium raids and arrests also took their usual busy course and in the first few months of 1921, nearly 1,000 gamblers were arrested and fined. By another civic dictum, all noodle and confectionary stores and
restaurants in Chinatown using what were thought to be inferior eggs imported from China, had, as of February 1922 to indicate this in their windows. In 1924, Mayor Gale and the chief of police made known their view that Chinatown was a place of evil doings and unsanitary habits of living.

In the early 1920s, "Chinatown's" authors found new ammunition to compound the old. Former vice associations became incorporated into a new perception of Chinatown that carried forward the public nuisance definition. In particular, the image of "Chinatown" as an opium den was assimilated into a new image of the territory as a narcotics base, and a conception of "Chinese" as dangerous drug distributors. On March 22, 1920, for example, a Sun editorial asserted that "It has been proved beyond all peradventure that the traffic in habit-forming drugs centres in Chinatown.... If the only way to save our children is to abolish Chinatown, then Chinatown must and will go, and go quickly." Faced by the puritanical excesses of the press, Consul General Yip appealed to the Provincial Government and twice to Mayor W. Owen for an end to such unsubstantiated claims. The mayor, however, argued that Chinese were frequent drug users and the Sun continued its charges. In April, 1921 an editorial described Chinatown as a "cancer corroding the vitals of this community... overstraining the power of civic endurance" and attacked Chinese merchants for forcing upon the public the belief "that no degradation is too vile to be inflicted upon the white people so long as it brings easy money in Chinatown." A World editorial took greater license in 1922 when it described Chinatown as the "corrupter of white girls who are taken round in curtained taxis to Chinese labour camps and lodging houses so that they might earn the money to purchase more of the foul stuff."
In the context of rising official anti-Chinese sentiment, particularly in the House of Commons, Consul General Yip and the Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver were eager to find ways of placating the public and in 1921 they formed a Self Improvement Committee to try to elevate the public image of "Chinatown."97 Mr. W.A. Cumyow, by this time president of the Chinese Benevolent Association, also tried to abate the force with which the idea of "Chinatown" was being wielded in the following letter to the editor of the Sun:

"It is indeed too obvious to state that habit-forming drugs do not of their own accord drop from the heavens into 'Chinatown' and it is needless for us to state that all means of ingress and egress by which this illegal drug traffic can be carried on is neither directly or indirectly controlled by the Chinese. . . . That Chinese vendors have been engaged in the traffic we do not deny, and we greatly deplore this condition of affairs, but at the same time we deem it pertinent to call to mind the suggestion of Police Commissioner Buckworth that Chinese vendors are merely conveniently used and that the traffic is controlled by persons other than Chinese. . . . In conclusion we wish to assure the general public that we are only too glad to render any assistance in eradicating this nefarious trade and that the Chinese people are not afraid to attempt to prevent this illegal drug traffic is more than proven by the fact that not so very long ago China went to war with Great Britain in an endeavour to stamp out that evil."98

The irrepressibly anti-Chinese Member of Parliament for Vancouver Centre, Mr. H. Stevens was not to be deterred however. In a series of emphatic speeches in the House of Commons in the early 1920s, the former secretary of the Vancouver Moral Reform Association was in part responsible for transmitting these most recent charges against Vancouver's "Chinatown" to the senior level of government.99 In a May 1920 speech to the House aimed at convincing Parliament that Chinese "are incapable of assimilation," Stevens declared that the "basis" for the "pernicious drug habit" on the Pacific Coast is "Asiatic:

"We have seen in Vancouver almost innumerable cases of clean, decent, respectable, young women from some of the best homes dragged down by the dope traffic and very, very largely through the
medium of the opium dens in the Chinese quarter.100

Two years later, a more lurid and detailed tale of Chinatown's "snow parties" was related to Parliament by Mr. L. Ladner of Vancouver South as part of his appeal to Prime Minister Mackenzie King (a hardliner on the Chinese drug question since his 1908 opium investigation) for Chinese immigration exclusion. Ladner spent a considerable amount of his speech describing how the traffic in cocaine and morphine, organized "almost entirely by Chinese," was orchestrated:

"Chinamen of great wealth, engaged in this odious practice, give parties at which white women, whom they employ, act as hostesses. Young girls are invited from about the city.... Interspersed among these young people are two or three addicts who are trained and whose business it is to inveigle other people into the use of narcotics.101

Other members for British Columbia also used this new ingredient of the Chinatown idea to great effect in that critical session of Parliament. The member for Yale, Mr. J. MacKelvie did the job of interpreting the "drug evil," as he called it, to the rest of the House by appealing to the idea of "Chinatown," a notion which all members could relate to. He said:

"If any member wishes to acquaint himself with how degraded human nature may under certain circumstances become, all he has to do is to visit certain Oriental quarters in British Columbia cities, where he will find a condition of filth and vice, vice which must be unmentionable before audiences such as this, which ought to convince him that the fewer of this class of people that any country has within its bounds, the better it will be for its people and for its civilization to progress upon really proper lines."102

Spurred to action, the Federal authorities decided in 1922 to strengthen their control over Chinese drug abuses by amending the Opium and Narcotic Drug Act so as to provide for the deportation of aliens found guilty of any drug offence.103

In such ways, the idea of Chinatown "acted back" to influence new rounds of legislative activity in the production and reproduction of
social boundaries of distinction in Canada - a process of uneven exchange monitored by the state, that at once assigned privilege and liability. "Chinatown" had become a powerful metaphor indeed. It had assumed a discourse of its own that was easily received at the most senior (and distant) level of government which had the greatest power to implement it - both the metaphor and the racial category itself - as we shall see in the following section.

IV. Ottawa's Solution: The Ultimate Sanction of the Racial Category

The racial classification, "Chinese," had been institutionalized in federal policy since the Chinese Immigration Act was passed in 1885 and the head tax system introduced. The category was no neutral cultural abstraction, as we have seen. According to a particular epistemological framework through which people of Chinese origin in Canada were seen, and out of which the guardians of white European cultural domination acted, that category signified non-white, non-Christian, non-Canadian and carried the penalties of unambiguous outsider status. It was a classification that overrode, among other possible criteria of self-definition, those of citizenship, birthplace and adopted country of residence. The disabilities imposed on Chinese affected equally all men and women of Chinese origin whether by nationality Chinese, American or British. In short, "Chinese" signified something essential and constant. These connotations, I have argued, can be attributed to the idea of race which, as we have seen, delivered the "Chinaman" and his "Chinatown" to white Vancouver society.

Once a category of outsiders was a legal and administrative entity at the federal level, it provided the medium and justification
for successively tighter restrictions on immigrants to Canada of Chinese origin. In that way, outsider status became self-fulfilling. This force for amendments to the Chinese Immigration Act would have been less significant in the Act's evolution, however, were it not for the public pressure (against both Chinese and Japanese immigration) that required the Act's administrators to scrupulously enforce the letter of that law. It was this combination of pressures from "within" and "without" that came to rest with but one federal solution, strictly for Chinese, in 1923.

As noted in Chapter Two, the Chinese Immigration Act was a cumbersome law from the outset. It granted exempt status to certain classes of Chinese - merchants, students, scientists, tourists and diplomats - and the rest were charged a $100 head tax in 1901 and a $500 levy from 1903. In subsequent years, administrators of the Act in the Department of Trade and Commerce, the Department of Interior after 1911, and the Department of Immigration and Colonization from 1919, were preoccupied with refining the qualification of exempt status and the procedure for determining the status of persons claiming exemption. The problem they faced was that the enforcement machinery of the Act was ill-fitted to manage abuses of exempt status. This difficulty had been invited by "the framers of the legislation" who - as the Chief Controller for Chinese Immigration, Mr. W. Scott, told a barrister for a Chinese student in 1913 - set out "to place obstacles in the way of the Chinese desirous of entering the country, but at the same time to avoid provisions which would tend to diminish trade between the Dominion and the Chinese Empire."104

Prior to 1908, a distinction was made between students having student status prior to their landing in Canada and those declaring
their intention to enter Canadian schools. The first class of students was exempt of the tax and the second was required to pay the tax on the understanding they would be eligible for a refund upon producing within 18 months, a certificate showing regular school attendance for at least one year. But by 1908, suspicion was being cast upon the entry of "students" to British Columbia. In that year, the number of Chinese entering Canada had risen to 2,234 (of whom 752 were exempt), nearly 10 times the number who had entered the year before. It was argued by a member for British Columbia in the House in 1908 that Chinese labourers were entering the country, the province gave them an education for a year, and then they joined the regular labour market. "I don't see why we should leave a loop-hole for these people to escape from the head-tax," the member stated. Soon after, the Act was amended so as to require the tax from all students on entry, with the provision that it would be refunded to students who complied with new conditions, on leaving Canada. From that time, a "student" had to be registered at a university with "satisfactory proof" of his student status in both Canada and China.

A similar management problem arose with regard to the admission of Chinese merchants. Here again, the operational definition and procedure for assessing this status devolved to officials in Ottawa and the ports of entry, who confronted the problem of fraudulent entries of non-merchants posing as merchants. In the face of an increase of tax-exempt entries beginning in 1908, a Royal Commission was appointed in 1911 to inquire into Chinese immigration at the port of Vancouver. The customs interpreter and some government officials were found implicated in scandals surrounding the processing of spurious merchants.
With scrutiny of incoming immigrants intense after the commission, the number of exempt entrants fell to 498 in 1911-12, nearly half the number for the previous year.109

As for non-exempt Chinese immigrants, their entry to Canada had also been proscribed, despite the requests to Ottawa of the likes of railway entrepreneur Mr. Charles Hays for a more relaxed policy.110 Far from opening the doors, successive federal administrations increasingly restricted Chinese labour not merely through tightening the operational definition of exempt categories, but more directly through extending the terms of application of various orders-in-council to Chinese immigrants. On the eve of World War One, officials in the Department of Interior recommended that the provisions of an order-in-council, passed in 1913 to exclude labourers and artisans from landing in British Columbia, be extended to Chinese immigrants even if they could pay the $500 head tax.111 The extension of the order to Chinese had an immediate impact. The number of Chinese entrants paying tax decreased from 5,274 in 1913-14 to 1,155 in 1914-15 and 20 (students) in 1915-16.112 These regulations against Chinese entry remained in force under various orders-in-council for the following seven years, again despite the pressure of Canada's "captains of industry" who were forced to look to other sources for their labour.113 Meanwhile, concerted immigration recruitment programs were commenced by the Department of Immigration and Colonization in the British Isles, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, France and Switzerland.114 Concern at the civic and provincial level for racial safety then, appears to have had little to do with the actual, relative extent of entries from China, and much to do with fearful premonitions of that nation's "vast hordes."

It was through these controls then, for the most part initiated
independently of Parliament, that the avenues for Chinese immigration were slowly being circumscribed throughout the 1910s. But while attempts to circumvent outsider status were themselves sufficient to prompt amendments to the Chinese Immigration Act, it was external pressure, as channelled through the members of the House of Commons, that ensured administrators would look to the strictest interpretation of the exempt status provisions in the Act.

Perhaps the most outspoken among the critics of the "Chinese" in British Columbia in the 1910s and early 1920s was Mr. H. Stevens, federal Conservative member for Vancouver Centre. Stevens began his crusade to exorcise Orientals (and the "Hindus") as soon as he was elected in 1911. He made regular speeches on the subject to his constituency and built a prominent political profile around the yellow peril slogan. Inside the House, what distinguished Stevens from previous members for British Columbia was the blunt tone he brought to the lexicon of debate in an institution which had always attempted to steer a diplomatic path around crude exclusionary vocabulary. In 1914, when charging southern China with hookworm infestation, Stevens made his position clear in one of his more controlled speeches:

"Orientals have a distinct life, distinct in ideals, in habits, in conditions, in morals and every other way. I care not what value you may place upon it, it is distinct from ours, and that life and these ideals are what guide them in their decisions. . . . I hold that civilization finds its best exemplification in the civilization which we see in the British Empire and in the other countries of northern Europe. I hold that it is the sacred trust of the Anglo-Saxon and kindred peoples to hold that civilization and to cherish it. . . . We cannot hope to preserve our national type if we allow Asiatics to enter Canada in any large number."

Stevens paved the way for other crude enunciations of the race idea. On the same day, Hon. F. Oliver, spoke out in favour of extending the order-in-council of 1913 to Chinese with words that appealed to,
sought to deepen still, the metaphorical "great divide:"

"I will admit that the labour feature of the question is important, but I maintain it is a less important part of it. As the civilization of the West differs radically from the civilization of the East, it will be agreed that if western or European civilization is to prevail on this continent, it must be without the influence of Asiatic civilization. . . . The two civilizations are radically different and cannot exist together and maintain their own characteristics."117

Three years later, Oliver appealed to the moral equation of race and nation to try to convince the House to reject an amendment to the Act that would return Chinese students to regular exempt status:

"For my own part, I desire in this House to promote the idea of a white Canada and the exclusion so far as it is reasonably possible, of those races, who, by a policy of peaceful penetration permitted to be carried on, would change the condition of this Canada of ours from being a white Canada to being a Canada of some other character."118

The amendment concerning student exempt status passed the House, despite the efforts of Oliver and many other members. It had been prompted by criticism from the Chinese government concerning the lack of diplomacy of the government's treatment (compared the American government) of Chinese university students. And true to the fears of the amendment's critics, the old menace of fraudulent entries soon reappeared. In 1918, over 4,000 Chinese were admitted with "student" status, many of whom were shown upon investigation to be labourers. Within months, Scott had advised port officials to refuse head taxes from all Chinese immigrants except merchants' sons less than 16 years old, whose fathers had deposited an affidavit with the department guaranteeing the child would attend school and nothing more.119 The agents of all steamship lines were also given instructions to limit transportation to returning and exempt Chinese. These measures to tighten the "noose" on Chinese immigration had the desired effect of
reducing to approximately 500, the total number of entries in 1919-20.

By 1921, however, another "influx" broke the calm for the officials. To enter Canada, merchants required a certificate of entry issued by a recognized official of the Chinese Government or a British consul in China. Suspicion was immediately cast upon the method of securing certificates and at the earliest possible moment, legislation was introduced to close this loophole. In an important amendment to the Chinese Immigration Act in April 1921, all Chinese applying for admission to Canada, regardless of whether they were bearers of certificates (i.e. exempt), had to substantiate their status to the satisfaction of the Controller of Chinese Immigration, subject to the approval of the Minister of Immigration whose decision was final.120 Soon after, the first Chinese merchant possessing a certificate but unable to substantiate his merchant status, arrived at Vancouver. He applied for a writ of habeas corpus, which was granted, and thereby allowed him exempt admission. In so doing he set a significant legal precedent. And it was in the face of such increasingly troublesome litigation that Mr. Jolliffe, Controller of Chinese Immigration, finally remarked to Immigration Superintendent, Mr. W. Scott, in February 1922:

"In so far as the Chinese Immigration Act is concerned, this statute does not now serve the purpose for which it was created. . . . The department's officials are experiencing considerable difficulty in carrying out the policy now in existence, due in my opinion to the fact that existing legislation does not meet the situation. . . . The present enforcement of the regulations is being systematically opposed by Chinese now in Canada - shown by the number of habeas corpus applications."121

The head tax system of control seems to have contained the seeds of its own ultimate impracticability. By 1922, when the clamour in the House for exclusion was at its most feverish, as we shall see, the only option left open to the Liberal Government, if it was to further indicate its
solidarity with "white" Canada, was to repeal the Chinese Immigration Act and draw the noose in the form of a new law.

In May 1922, the member for New Westminster, Mr. W. McQuarrie, introduced a resolution into the House of Commons to exclude "Oriental aliens" from Canada. The resolution received much sympathy during the course of an entire day of debate. By this time, eastern and central Canadian members were aligned with British Columbia's contingent against the Chinese who had infiltrated over the Rocky Mountains during World War One. In 1921, returned soldiers associations, trade unions and other organizations from across Canada petitioned Ottawa for an end to Asiatic immigration. Still, it was the experienced members for British Columbia from both political parties who provided the tone, vocabulary and arguments for the rest of the House. McQuarrie defended his resolution to Parliament with words that indicated the extent to which the race idea was entrenched in the culture and lexicon of post-war British Columbia:

"They (Orientals) cannot be assimilated. They will always exist as a foreign element in our midst. The real test of assimilation is intermarriage. The divergence of characteristics of the two races is so marked that intermarriage does not tend to perpetuate the good qualities of either race. The races are fundamentally different. Their morals are different, and language, heredity, religion and ideals will militate against and prevent even sociological assimilation."

McQuarrie's other reasons for presenting the motion were: the inevitability of racial conflict in British Columbia; the lower standard of living of Orientals; their economic competition in certain lines; their responsibility for the drug traffic, and their unsuitability for Canadian citizenship. The well organized British Columbia members reiterated these claims using all the influence of the rigidly binomial opposition of "ours" and "theirs." Mr. A. Stork of Skeena argued: "It is
good policy to settle this Oriental problem while the white population is still in possession of British Columbia." It was all the more pressing, he argued because the contest was "unequal. The white man is handicapped by the responsibilities of civilization; the Oriental is prepared to struggle for his solitary existence." The member for Burrard, Mr. J. Clark, also used words that reflected less the hidden workings of some latent white prejudice or the structural imperatives of a system of production, and more the cultural and political force of the race idea. "In my opinion," he said, "the basic factor is the future of the white race as a racial type. That is the basic factor in the future of the Dominion, and if our race is to be mixed with that of an Oriental country, we cannot have that racial type." Mr. C. Dickie of Nanaimo agreed: "We cannot conceive of a commingling of the blood of our Canadians with that of the Ethiopians; we cannot conceive of a commingling of our blood with that of Asiatics." In addition to the drug issue, Mr. L. Ladner also focused upon the issue of "commingling." "I submit," said Ladner,

"that in order to have national harmony, the people must hold in common such great fundamentals of nationhood as, national ideals and aims, the Christian religion, race tradition - the colour and habits of the race, and perhaps, most important of all from the standpoint of immigration, the practice of intermarriage."

But it was Stevens who, as the final speaker for British Columbia, attempted to interpret the issue for the rest of the House, and through it, the rest of Canada, with his concluding question:

"Shall Canada remain white, or shall Canada become multi-coloured? Shall British institutions, traditions, ethics, and social standards prevail; or shall they, by blind neglect and purposeless procrastination, submit to a peaceful conquest by the forerunners of the hordes of Asia? Shall Canadianism, which we are always proud to picture as the perfection of British democracy, prevail; or shall it recede before the races that, as I have already said, are incongruous and incompatible with our mode of life?"
Presented with the patriotic conviction of their Pacific Coast counterparts, members less directly experienced with the Chinese readily conformed to the lexicon of race. The member for Yukon, who was "happy to say" that there was "no Chinamen" in his constituency, was nonetheless well versed in myths about essential racial characters, mentalities and spirits. "Canada wants settlers," Mr. G. Black stated, "but she wants only settlers who will become Canadians. We want only races which will intermingle and which can intermarry with our people and become not only with us, but of us." Mr. E. McMurray of North Winnipeg remarked that: "The integrity of the Chinaman is pronounced. But we must look at this question from the point of view of its national importance... The nations that succeed are those that have been built up slowly of one homogeneous people."

Prime Minister Mackenzie King preferred to argue in analogies. Particularly instructive he thought, was the "law governing the precious metals" which had it that when "two kinds of metals are in circulation as coinage, if one [is] of finer quality than the other, the baser metal tend[s] to drive the finer metal out of circulation." King therefore had "entire sympathy" with McQuarrie's resolution, at least as it affected Chinese immigration. After all, China was "a second rate power, not a first class power," said King, and whereas the government's hands were tied with regard to Japanese immigration, for Chinese immigration "we have an open field," as McQuarrie had observed earlier in the debate. That being said, the Prime Minister insisted that the wording of the resolution be changed from "exclusion" to "effective restriction" in the interests of diplomacy. At the time, King was planning to visit Peking to try to secure a bilateral arrangement with the Chinese government. The amended resolution calling for "effective restriction"
was carried by the House, without the support of diehard prohibitionists such as Stevens.133

Although Prime Minister King was successful in his appeal to the Chinese government in February 1923 for a gentlemen's agreement by which the Chinese government would control migration to Canada,134 and despite the most concerted of efforts from Chinese organizations across Canada,135 the Minister of Immigration brought down a massively restrictive Bill. It was, in effect, an exclusion act—only consistent with Canada's veiled strategies vis-à-vis "alien" entry in the past, it was not framed as such. It eliminated the troublesome head tax system and substituted a system whereby entry was granted only to specified classes (subject to the discretion of the Minister of Immigration, who was granted the final authority for admission).136 According to the wording of the new law, merchants, university students for the period of their degree program, Canadian-borns returning from several years of education in China and representatives of the Chinese government could enter. However, the law was designed to actually prevent these categories from meeting the operational qualifications, which were left to discretion rather than statute. And even if merchants, for example, did possess a minimum of $2,500 invested in a business at least three years old in China dealing exclusively in goods produced in China, they could only bring their families to Canada for short terms. The Act also required all people of Chinese origin in Canada to register (an experience which proved to be humiliating and difficult).137 Finally, by placing a Canadian official in Hong Kong, rather than previously at the port of entry, troublesome litigation was to be avoided and discretion exercised effectively "to cover," as King put it, "what we want to have
understood as coming within the provisions of the law.\textsuperscript{138}

But for the lone, and for his time, remarkable attack by Rev. J. Woodsworth, member for Winnipeg Centre, the Parliament of Canada gave solid support to the new Bill 45. Woodsworth said:

"It seems to me that we must definitely and consciously attempt to overcome the prejudices which we have against men of other races and other than our own. All students of ethnology recognize that, after all, there are many more things in common between the different races than things which separate us and the apparent divergences are not so great as sometimes we imagine."\textsuperscript{139}

The soon to be founder of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was utterly ignored by the rest of the House and an Act was passed that was to exclude all but a handful of Chinese from entering Canada for the next 25 years.

The exclusion legislation represented the most extreme of the post-war attempts by different levels of the Canadian government to legislate Hilda Glynn-Ward's "great divide." It was a bold attempt to confirm the relative entitlements of a socially constructed order, one whose epistemological underpinning had in part been geographical. Spatial distance had separated and secured "us" from "them." Not only that but space, as place, had taken on a social meaning that interpreted "their" home as something far greater than its mere physical reality. "Chinatown" was a metaphor. As we have seen, it was for its representers an incubator of vice and disease that threatened to silently but surely penetrate and corrode the pure "stock" of a race and its nation. If eugenists were correct, as many North Americans believed them to be in the 1920s, race deterioration, even suicide, would follow where the "unfit" encroached. Legislators took this as their call for action. As the guardians and enforcers of a hegemonic white order, they saw their mandate as containing the disease-carriers by restraining their mobility.
and opportunities. The member for Yale put it this way in 1922: "We say - cut right down to the root of the evil, cut right home to the very marrow of this disease and apply the only effective remedy that will meet the situation - absolute and complete exclusion." 

The mandate to restrict Chinese mobility cannot be conceptualized as a reactive one, where politicians blindly acted out their role of representing the interests of the dominant white group. Insofar as politicians attempted to legitimize their control over the social order, they actively wielded and dramatized that calling, not simply to secure votes, but to build a socio-political unit under the banner of white cultural domination. In that sense the state-society relationship has been a thoroughly reciprocal dynamic in the construction and maintenance of a socially based hegemony.

Although at the civic level it had not been possible to administer the most direct of remedies to Chinese mobility, we have seen that at the federal level, the power to further engrave the contours of a culturally defined and "achieved" order was supremely exercised. If leakage from the ghetto could not be directly plugged, the flow into Chinatown could at least be stemmed at the source. Henceforth, July 1, celebrated in Canada as Dominion Day, was to be observed for another reason. It was the day the Exclusion Act came into force, and it became known to the Chinese as their own Humiliation Day.

V. The Pender Street Soup Kitchen: The Depths of the Depression

Long on ageing bachelors, short on women of child-bearing age and denied the direct means of demographic replenishment, Vancouver's Chinatown began to stagnate in the years after exclusion. A Province editorial some years later anticipated the most final of solutions as
the effects of the legislation were beginning to be felt: "The number of Chinese in British Columbia declined by 25 percent from 27,139 in 1931 (of which 2,239 were women) to 21,740 in 1936." Specifically in Vancouver, the Chinese community lost 6,000, or half of its number during the 1930s. Residents given no prospect of being joined in Canada by their families returned to China; others died and some migrated to the eastern provinces, especially Ontario.

While white Vancouver society embraced the optimism of the 1920s, the social and political isolation of Vancouver's Pender Street community was brought home in a number of ways. In 1924, the City treasurer presented a case to Council for moving Chinatown on the grounds that its site could be put to valuable industrial use. In the same year, Attorney-General Mason launched a year-long investigation into the murder of Ms. J. Smith, a Shaughnessy "nurse girl" who was allegedly killed by the home's, "China-boy." The China-boy was eventually acquitted but in the meantime the press and the Provincial Legislature played on the notoriety of Chinatown. Mason also lobbied Ottawa for the repatriation of "Orientals" on the grounds that "Oriental and European blood" could not be "mixed with advantage." In the mid-1920s, a spate of robbings and physical attacks took place in Vancouver's Chinatown and in view of a blind eye taken by the police, the Chinese Benevolent Association asked City Council in October 1927 to afford greater protection to life and property in Chinatown. The City also refused to sell a piece of City-owned land to a Chinese in 1927 while in 1928, Mayor W. Malkin was elected on a platform which included curtailment of the spread of Chinese in Vancouver. Their encroachment "constituted a menace and should be stopped by confining all Oriental
stores to fixed Oriental districts," Malkin stated. Three years later, the Tolmie Provincial Government reclassified married Chinese men as single workers and taxed them accordingly. In the same year, a federal order-in-council limited the issue of citizenship certificates to those Chinese who could produce evidence they had renounced their Chinese citizenship. By 1941, just 5 per cent of the Chinese population who were not born in Canada were naturalized Canadians.

The white European image and assessment of "Chinatown" came to have some of its more onerous effects for the Chinese during the Depression. Chinatown organizations had traditionally supported the indigent, sick and needy within its own welfare structures, but the Depression exerted enormous pressure on these internal networks and exposed the vulnerability of the Chinese community at large, and Chinese labour in particular. Needless to say, the plight of Chinatown and its residents evoked little sympathy in the badly stricken larger community. Seldom was the sense in which Chinatown was not only the limit of tolerance but also the limit of a Chinese entitlement in white Canada, revealed so forcefully as during the Depression.

The dependence of Chinese on economically vulnerable service industries, the closure of most shingle mills near Vancouver in 1929 and the general displacement of unskilled manpower in industry due to mechanization exerted a formidable strain on Chinese employment in Vancouver, as it did throughout Canada. The Chinese Benevolent Association was so concerned by the pressure that unemployment placed upon Chinatown's resources that it petitioned Council on November 30, 1931:

"Whereas 40 per cent of the Chinese community are at present unemployed;
And whereas for the last two years the Chinese Benevolent
Association and other Chinese associations have carried on relief work amongst Chinese nationals without any assistance whatsoever from the Dominion or Provincial Governments or the City Council; And whereas the funds appropriated by the Chinese Benevolent Association are now utterly exhausted; And whereas there are at present in the City of Vancouver approximately 260 Chinese nationals who are absolutely destitute; And whereas there are at present only approximately 75 Chinese nationals on City Relief . . . Now therefore we the Chinese Benevolent Association do humbly request and recommend the cognizance of these facts be taken by the City Council and that instructions be given to the relief Department of the City of Vancouver to provide such relief as may be necessary to alleviate the suffering of the members of the Chinese community who require assistance by way of food and lodging to keep body and soul together and to prevent death by starvation which is the only alternative unless immediate action is taken."152

In response to this and a complaint from white workers that Chinese on relief could use their meal tickets and live where they chose, while non-Chinese were sent to relief camps, the civic relief officer and the provincial supervisor of unemployment relief contracted the Oriental Missions (run by the Anglican Church) to feed Chinese men on relief.153 A separate scheme for Chinese relief was thereby established in mid-1932, it being felt by the civic relief officer "that the usual scale of relief is such as to induce Chinamen to apply for assistance."154

By the following year, poor and differential relief treatment provoked 50 Chinese to march to City Hall in demand of welfare assistance.155 In the confusion over jurisdiction of Chinese relief, however, the Mayor deflected the grievance. A restaurant association was also set up to protest the exclusion of Chinese restaurants from the right to redeem welfare meal coupons.156 By January 1935, the appeal of Chinatown had grown more desperate. A petition was submitted to Mayor G. McGee and Premier T. Patullo regarding "the inhuman and menacing conditions that exist among Chinese people in Vancouver, who are subject to the deplorable conditions existing in the soup kitchen at 143 Pender Street East, operated by the Board of Oriental Missions."157 To this
petition, 520 Chinatown residents signed their names. The men particularly resented the provision of "two meagre meals per day which do not cost more than 3 cents a meal, while the Board receives from the Government 8 cents a meal. In addition, the Chinese unemployed have not received an issue of clothing or shoes since January 1934." The petition closed with an appeal "that the soup kitchen be closed and that direct relief be given to the Chinese unemployed through the relief system at present in practice in Vancouver, the amount of relief to be the same for Chinese as other unemployed workers." But as late in the Depression as June, 1936, the provincial relief administrator found the idea of equal relief payments to Chinese unfitting. As he advised the civic relief officer, "a lower scale should be applied to Oriental cases... We can never expect Orientals who have a much lower standard... to become self-supporting as long as they are getting more on relief than they ever earned in good times." Some Chinese did eventually receive cash payments; others, especially elderly men and the sick, were repatriated to China under a Provincial Government offer during 1934-6. Still others failed to register for relief, perhaps because of language difficulties, ignorance of welfare regulations or fear of non-Chinese officials in what was probably the first encounter for many with non-Chinese officialdom since their arrival.

There should be no doubt about the degree to which the ascription of identity, in a context of white European hegemony, affected the lives of the residents of Chinatown. The Canadian state, in particular Vancouver's local government, quite simply abdicated all responsibility for an unprotected bloc of workers. Through the Pender Street soup kitchen, the ultimate expression of the vulnerability of alien status
was played out from 1931 to 1935, when at least 175 Chinese customers of the soup kitchen died from starvation. If they died for a cause, it certainly was not their own. The cause was their deliberate separation by the state, whose construction of outsider status confirmed not just the boundaries of the racial category, but the limits to the very survival of a neighbourhood apart.
NOTES


4. Biometry measured the degree of correlation between traits and the intensity of resemblance between individuals. For a discussion of the approach, see N. Stepan, The idea of race in science, op. cit., p.116-7.

5. ibid., p.118.


7. N. Stepan, The idea of race in science, op. cit., p.130.


12. ibid., p.187.


16. Colonist, August 9, 1913.
17. ibid., February 7, 1920.

18. See ibid., February 24, 1920; February 17, March 1, 1921; Premier's Correspondence, 1919-1927, File 60. Box 8, Chinese Canadian Project.


20. Colonist, March 1, 1922.


23. CVA. Additional MSS 300, Board of Trade files, Vol. 1, July 21, 1921.

24. Colonist, November 2, 1921.

25. ibid., November 21, 1922.

26. ibid., November 15, 1922.

27. ibid., July 6, 1922. See also Colonist, September 13, 1923.

28. See Colonist, March 2, 1926. Chinese Times, July 26, December 2, 1926. In that year, the Asiatic Exclusion League went on record as favouring a minimum wage for all forms of labour in the province.

29. Colonist, June 3, 1922.

30. ibid., November 14, 1922.

31. British Columbia. JLABC, 1920, XLIX, p.246; Colonist, April 2, September 9, 1921; December 12, 13, 1922; February 22, 1923.


33. November 12, 1922.

34. P. Roy, British Columbia's fear of Asians, Social History,
35. *Colonist*, November 11, 1922.


37. ibid., p.137-8.


49. ibid., August 13, 1918. A month later, the Federal Government began its wartime campaign against "subversive" organizations and dissolved a number of labour groups and connected associations in Vancouver's Chinatown. *Chinese Times*, October 12, November 4, 15, 1918; *Colonist*, March 12, 1919. Chinese shingle workers were particularly politicized and in March 1919, 1,000 went on strike to protest a reduction in their salaries and to negotiate a shorter working day. See *Chinese Times*, March 7, April 9, May 27, June 14, October 27, 1919.


52. Cited in *Chinese Times*, January 18, 1919.


59. See the advertisement at the beginning of the real estate boom in Vancouver for lots for sale on Ontario and Quebec Streets. *Province*, August 18, 1909.

60. In a news report in 1941 on segregation practices (see Chapter Five), reference was made to the fact that "Vancouver real estate dealers individually oppose the infiltration of Orientals into select residential districts." *Sun*, February 5, 1941.


63. ibid.

64. *Province*, February 8, 1919.

65. ibid., February 20, 1919.


67. E. Wickberg, et al, *From China to Canada*, op. cit., p.95. This figure included 210 families.


70. See footnote 64.


74. CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 95, Solicitor's File, Williams to Clerk, May 1, 1923.
75. A Supreme Court decision of 1917 put an end to legalized urban residential discrimination in US cities. In that year, the Court declared a Louisville residential segregation law unconstitutional on the grounds that it denied an owner the legal right to dispose of his own real estate in the manner of his choosing. G. Fredrickson, *White supremacy*, op. cit., p.254.

76. See discussion of Point Grey in Chapter Five; on the University Endowment Lands, see *Sun*, June 12, 1954; the Capilano Highlands and British Properties barred people of African and Asian descent from living there except as servants, by the same clause that excluded people from keeping swine, sheep, poultry and other animals. *Sun*, March 5, 1951; *News Herald*, July 5, 1941. The operation of an "iron curtain" in Shaughnessy, Kerrisdale, the British Properties and Capilano Highlands was revealed in 1950 when a Jewish person took his exclusion from property ownership in one of the areas to the Supreme Court of Canada. See A. Kloppenborg, ed., *Vancouver's first century: a city album, 1860-1960.* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Limited, 1977), p.139. An area of the Hastings Townsite in the estate of Joseph Martin used a covenant in its sales that ran as follows:

"No Asiatic, Negro or Indian should have the right or be allowed to own, become tenant of, or occupy the said land . . . and that all of said land, whether sold at public auction or private sale, should be subject to said condition."


It is known that Orientals were excluded by a clause in the title of a property in the vicinity of Kamloops and Nanaimo Streets from the late 1920s (personal communication with new owner, 1986). Unfortunately it is impossible to assess how systematic this process was across the city.

A gentlemen's agreement existed in a section of the Mount Pleasant Subdivision that excluded Orientals. Halford Wilson Papers, op. cit., Vol. 2/27. Petition to C.P.R. re sale of property in the Little Mountain Area to a Chinese, January 28, 1940. (Alderman Wilson himself lived at 650 West 30th Avenue). Whether other such agreements were entered into with the C.P.R., a large landholder in the city, is unknown.


78. *Chinese Times*, February 26, 1921. In 1918, when two Chinese tried to enter law school in Vancouver, the law students' association prohibited their registration. *Chinese Times*, January 19, 1918, October 30, 1920; *Sun*, March 3, 1951.


83. *Sun*, October 5, 1921. Odd copies of the publication are kept in the Special Collections Division of the Main Library, University of British Columbia.


87. CVA. Van. City, Council Minutes, April 7, 1919, p.435; *Chinese Times*, January 24, 1920.

88. *Chinese Times*, March 4, 8, April 5, 1921.

89. CVA. Van. City, Council Minutes, Vol. 23, April 24, 1922, p.467; *Chinese Times*, July 12, 1922; *World*, February 6, 1922.


91. ibid., February 13, 1922.

92. ibid., October 4, 1924.


95. *Sun*, April 14, 1921.


97. *Chinese Times*, April 15, 1922.


99. See also *The Black Candle*, (Toronto: Coles, 1973) a book written by a well known Canadian, Justice Emily Murphy. It was first published in 1922 after being serialized in Maclean's magazine. The book highlighted Chinese involvement in the trafficking of narcotics and is known to have had an impact on legislative changes regarding the drug trade. For a short discussion of the book's influence, see H. Palmer, *Patterns of prejudice*, op. cit., p.84-5.
100. D.H.C. April 26, 1921, p.2598.
102. ibid., p.1536.
110. In 1909, for example, Hays asked Prime Minister W. Laurier for a more liberal immigration policy for Chinese labour. However, the race question was a critical political issue in the eyes of Laurier and he did not acquiesce to the entrepreneur's interests. In the 1908 federal election, Laurier's Liberals had lost five out of the seven seats they had previously held in British Columbia. He thus took a stand against Hays that revealed the political concern of Laurier for popular demands:

"The condition of things in British Columbia is now such that riots are to be feared if Oriental labour were to be brought in. You remember that in our last conversation upon this subject I told you that if the matter could be arranged so that you have an absolute consensus of [premier] McBride, that dangers would probably be averted, but with the local government in active sympathy with the agitators, the peace of the province would be really in danger and that consideration is paramount to me."

111. See D.H.C. March 2, 1914, p.1220.
113. In 1917, Scott wrote to the Trades and Labour Council of Ontario: "The Government has been strongly urged to rescind the orders-in-council by large employers of labour, so as to permit a large number of Chinese arrivals. So far, their requests have been refused." PAC. RG 76, Vol. 121, File 23636, Part 3, August 21, 1917. Box 28, Chinese Canadian Project.

114. The Commissioner for Canada in London, England, suggested that when the war is over, "we can greatly increase our propagandist efforts... [and] educate to the advantage of Canada." Canada. Sessional Papers, 1919, No. 18, Department of Immigration and Colonization, Report of the Commissioner of Immigration for Canada, London, England, p.21. See also Colonist, November 29, 1922; D.H.C. March 19, 1923, p.1287. In an effort to settle the tracts of land in Western Canada, Ottawa offered incentives to white homesteads. Province, April 27, 1921.

115. In a speech to the Local Council of Women in Vancouver in 1917, an election year, Stevens described Oriental immigration as "an unmitigated curse, and foul from the bottom up." Province, April 14, 1917. In a campaign speech to the Vancouver branch of the Retail Merchants' Association in 1921, he stated "history holds many examples where large bodies of Occidentals have been swallowed up by Orientals." Province, October 31, 1921. See also Province, February 24, 1922; November 15, 1922.


117. ibid., March 2, 1914, p.1220-1.

118. ibid., June 8, 1917, p.2149.

119. PAC. RG 76, File 23635, Part 4, Scott to Cory, February 17, 1919. Box 28, Chinese Canadian project.


121. PAC. RG 76, File 23635, Part 5, Jolliffe to Scott, February 7, 1922. Box 28, Chinese Canadian project.


123. S. Andracki, Immigration of Orientals into Canada, op. cit., p.131. For more on the national cultural context of the time, see J. Nelson, Shall we bar the yellow race? Maclean's, March 15, 1922, 13-14 and 60.


125. ibid., p.1518.

126. ibid., p.1522.

127. ibid., p.1524.
128. ibid., p.1529.
129. ibid., p.1554.
130. ibid., p.1521.
131. ibid., p.1527.
132. ibid., p.1559.
133. ibid., p.1577.
134. See E. Wickberg, et al, From China to Canada, op. cit., p.141.
135. ibid., pp.142-5.
137. On the anxiety of registration for Chinese, especially those who had come to build the railway and were not issued entry certificates, see Chinese Times, March 28, June 14, 23, 1924; January 13, 1925.
139. ibid., May 4, 1923, p.2485.
140. ibid., May 8, 1922, p.1536.
141. February 28, 1938.
142. E. Wickberg, et al, From China to Canada, op. cit., p.149.
143. Cited in Chinese Times, October 11, 1924.
144. The murder led to a prolonged discussion in the Provincial Legislature about the merits of a bill that would exclude white women from working in homes where Chinese were also employed. See Province, November 13, 28, December 5, 1924. Eventually, having made considerable political capital out of the issue, Mason suggested the bill would be ultra vires and he dropped the matter. In the meantime, he supervised a morbid post-mortem on the body of Janet Smith in the search for incriminating evidence against the "China-boy." See Province, November 19, 1925.
145. Province, February 25, 1927. Mason continued: "It is well established that the Eurasian is a very unsatisfactory product in that in nearly every case he absorbs the weaknesses of both races without acquiring the virtues of either race."
146. Chinese Times, October 31, 1927.
147. ibid., March 12, 1927.
148. CVA. Additional MSS 237, W. Malkin Papers. Colonist, October 12, 1928. A Vancouver lawyer had inflamed the issue of Chinese diffusion in 1928 with a campaign in the press about the "extending tentacles" of Pender Street East. See for example, Province, July 17, 1927. Malkin carried out his election promise with an investigation of Oriental trading in the city. His administration also gave consideration to the Provincial Trades License Bill that extended enabling power to an independent board to deny licenses in the "public interest" of the province's municipalities. Interestingly, the determination of Council to restrict the licensing of Orientals, did not extend to relinquishing its own power over city-wide licensing and Council voted against using the power. CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 126, L File, Counsel McCrossan to Malkin, November 16, 1928.

149. Province, May 4, 1931; Sun, March 10, 1931.


151. On the Depression experience of the Chinese in Calgary, for example, see H. Palmer, Patterns of prejudice, op. cit., p.145-8.


154. ibid., Vol. 166, 1932, Relief Officer File, April-June. Cooper to Harvey, June 6, 1932.


156. ibid., p.3.


158. ibid., Vol. 207, 1936, Relief Officer File, April-June. Bone to Smith, June 29, 1936.

159. In 1934, a few hundred elderly and destitute Chinese from British Columbia were returned to China by the Provincial Government. See Province, December 28, 1934; May 3, 1935.

Chapter Five


It was during the Depression that Vancouver's Chinatown found its first real allies, although concern for the neighbourhood's plight did not arise out of a sudden rejection of society's racial frame of reference. Rather, continued abdication of responsibility for the "Chinese" during the levelling era of Depression, was, in the eyes of some nascent political reform groups, an obstacle to the much broader ideological struggle against a stratified society. The November 1933 march on City Hall by 50 Chinese was led by two unidentified white men.1 The Provincial Workers' Council and the Scandinavian Workers' Club informed Premier Patullo and Mayor McGeer in 1935 that the Chinese were "the only foreign race in Canada that is discriminated against in such a brutal and inhuman manner," while protests against the Pender Street soup kitchen were forwarded to the two levels of government by the Canadian Cooperative Federation, the Women's Labour League, the North Fraser Workers' Protective Association, the Canadian Labour Defence League and the Provincial Workers' Council on Unemployment.2

But just as the Depression encouraged some sympathy for Chinatown, so did it generate some equally ideologically inspired critics who, as will be seen, carried on with their arbitrary "category legislation" in much the same manner we have been examining so far.3 Armed with the still influential Darwinist logic, they continued the challenge of trying to limit residential and occupational entitlements of the Chinese. The same logic also dictated that "white" women had their appointed place, one that did not include employment in Chinatown's
cafes, as a civic proclamation would declare in the mid-1930s. Only by the mid-1940s, with the dismemberment of the British Empire underway and with news of Nazi Germany's deeds, did the die-hard, almost fundamentalist invocations of the race idea give way to the more liberal climate first fostered by Chinatown's Depression allies. The tension between these tendencies then, the one reaching back to an inflexible past and the other extending to a more tolerant future, is the empirical concern of this chapter.

By adopting a narrow definition of racism as the invidious belief in the superiority of one race over another, the liberal tradition in the race relations literature has tended to concentrate on the shift from an "intolerant" to "tolerant" majority society and to neglect the persistence of a racial frame of reference underlying both those sets of attitudes. In addition to its empirical aims, therefore, this chapter also attempts to trace the deeper continuity of the racial category underlying continuity and change at the level of attitudes during the 1930s. We shall note the rise of a new social definition of Chinatown in the 1930s that drew upon old Western romantic conceptions of the "Oriental" and his ancient and opulent civilization. This more amiable interpretation of the Chinese and Chinatown had played only a minor part in the evolution of the racial category in Vancouver before the 1930s. But in the wake of the first expressions of sympathy for the Chinese - "our Oriental friends," to use the words of Mayor McGeer in 1936 - a notion of Chinatown as an exotic piece of the "Far East" began to be more explicitly articulated. In an important civic initiative in 1936, old ideas of China's "grand and imposing civilization" were resurrected and given a domestic embodiment in Vancouver through the
manipulation of landscape imagery - an activity in which the "Chinese" themselves will be seen to have been willingly implicated. Underpinning the initiative, it is argued, was the racial category, invigorated from a fresh, albeit benign perspective and structured, as it had been in the past, through the physical and symbolic medium of place.

As will be clear from the comments above, however, it can in no sense be said that the new definition of place began entirely afresh, simply displacing what went before as if history were a string of beads. Just as the present is always informed by the past, so the idea of Chinatown as a tourist attraction relied on prior conceptions of it as an aberration from white society. It grew out of the earlier vice definition in a continuous process, and as will be seen in this and the following chapters, both old and new conceptions converged in a more or less uneasy alliance - "chameleon-like" in the European consciousness, - for the balance of Chinatown's career.

I. Vancouver's Chinatown, 1930-40

In our concern for the idea of "Chinatown," it is important not to overlook the physical presence of a Chinese community in Vancouver that eked out its own life over the decades, quite independent of the perceptions of white society. As will be clear by now, this study does not contribute to the body of knowledge about that community as a lived community from the vantage point of its own perceptions and interests. It is important, however, to acknowledge the ongoing geographical referent for the idea of Chinatown and describe it briefly as we did in Chapter Three for the earlier decades.

In 1931, Vancouver possessed a Chinese-origin population of 13,011, the largest such community in Canada.5 As mentioned in the last
chapter, however, the demographic future of Chinatown had looked bleak in the late 1920s. The exclusion legislation terminated growth and the birth rate of six per 1,000 Chinese residents in Canada in 1931 (compared to the national birth rate of 23.2 per 1,000 in that year), did not augur well for the natural growth of Chinese communities anywhere in Canada. Also, between 1931 and 1938, nearly 5,000 Chinese emigrated from Canada to China. By 1941, a Vancouver news report headlined "City Chinese Face Racial Extinction" stated that the Chinese birthrate had sunk to half the deathrate. One important demographic implication was that the local-born population of Chinese origin gradually grew in numerical significance in Chinese communities during the 1930s and 1940s.

Dispersal of Chinese business and residential activities increased somewhat after 1920 as the map of Chinese school attendance in Vancouver for 1937 indirectly indicates (see map over). The concentration in Strathcona was pronounced but there there had been a consolidation of the earlier movement into Fairview, Grandview, Mount Pleasant and Hastings East. It is possible that the demographic constraints on Chinese community growth, together with the economic stringency of the 1930s, provided the pressure for merchants to seek more expanded markets. By 1939, Chinese held licences for 133 of the 156 greengrocers in Vancouver and 26 of the 40 laundries. Both of these trades were disproportionately located outside of Chinatown, as was noted in Chapter Four.

The spatial boundaries of Chinatown itself in 1936 were observed by Mr. Q. Yip, a Chinatown merchant who wrote a short pamphlet on the neighbourhood for Vancouver's Jubilee celebrations in that year:

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Data source: Halford Wilson papers Vol. 1/17

Fig. 12.
"Chinatown is situated on Pender Street, stretching from Carrall Street to Gore Avenue, including the whole of Canton and Shanghai Alleys, part of Carrall Street, part of Columbia and part of Main Street. Also a small colony is located at Keefer and Georgia streets which for the most part caters to wholesale produce."10 Within these boundaries, Yip counted six schools which operated after public school hours, 12 "large societies," four churches, the premises of the Chinese Times newspaper, six hotels, one theatre, two cabaret halls, nine cafes, six butcher shops, nine "chop-suey houses," two "genuine chop-suey houses," 18 tailor stores, 12 barber shops, 24 merchandise stores, two jewelry stores, one antique store, a Chinese-language branch of the Bank of Montreal, agencies of the Canadian Pacific, Blue Funnel and Admiral Liners, a doctor's office and St. Joseph's Hospital on Campbell Street. He might also have included a number of lodging houses, and various other small businesses such as laundries, shoemakers, booksellers, gambling houses, pawnshops and so on. These outlets and the map of Chinatown land use for 1943 (see over) suggest that after World War One, the physical base of a Chinese community was consolidated by the growth in associational and business activity and by the desire of immigrants from the same country to participate in common institutions.11 Labourers found work within the Chinatown sub-economy, but also in suburban market gardens, the wholesaling and distribution of produce, in various unskilled capacities around the city and increasingly in service industries such as restaurants.

These Chinese employment niches were evident province-wide in data compiled under the authority of Mr. H. Stevens on Oriental employment for 1931.12 The categories in which Chinese were significantly represented are as follows: 8,203 Chinese were employed in
unskilled work (other than agriculture, mining and logging); 5,182 were employed in the "personnel" sector (over half of whom were cooks and a significant minority, waiters and restaurant keepers); 4,193 held jobs in agriculture (two-thirds were farm labourers); 1,841 were employed in commercial sectors (half were owners/managers of retail stores while the rest were salesmen and peddlers); 997 were domestic servants; 749 worked in the laundry trade (almost 600 were workers and 106 were owners/managers); and 653 were employed in the logging business (four were owners/managers). A total of 22,999 Chinese men and 161 women were employed in British Columbia in 1931. The categories in which Chinese were noticeably under-represented were the professions (where just 78 were employed as teachers, musicians, clergymen, health professionals, journalists, photographers and "others"), in building and construction, fishing and in the finance/insurance category. Clearly the most significant occupational mobility for Chinese since the turn of the century had been in the service industry and in particular in restaurant work. Unskilled labour was more widely employed in agriculture than in the increasingly mechanized lumber, canning and mining industries where minimum wage legislation of 1926 also eradicated the competitive advantage of Chinese. (Just six years earlier, in 1925, over 3,800 Chinese had been employed in the province's lumber industry.13) Professional work outside the Chinatown sub-economy remained virtually non-existent while public service was prohibited by law.

The associational life of Vancouver's Chinatown flourished after 1923 as the Chinese community looked inward for support and protection.14 The impetus for organizational change in Chinatown came largely from shifts in China's national politics and to a lesser extent from the strain of the Depression years and various forms of external
harassment. Both Kuomintang and Freemason organizations consolidated their support (and mutual antagonisms) after the Kuomintang's rise to power in China in 1928; new district and clan associations were formed; others amalgamated, some developed cross-Canada links and others such as wholesalers' organizations and the Mainland Grower's Cooperative Association were established in response to outside economic discrimination. Many organizations were devoted to local welfare and fund-raising for projects in China, a cause which thoroughly consumed the community after the outbreak of war between China and Japan in 1937. Women played a particularly significant role in orchestrating various fund-raising drives. In conjunction with the exclusion legislation, the homeland's involvement in a war created the conditions for some degree of unity within a community that was more accustomed to internal discord, conflict and stratification.

II. First Foes as First Friends: Labour, the CCF and a New Spirit of Cooperation

The drastic curtailment of production and the spiralling of unemployment in the vulnerable resource-based economy of British Columbia from 1929 to 1933 sparked new heights of union solidarity and politicization among workers. Out of the ferment, socialism was reborn and in August 1932, the Socialist Party of British Columbia voted to affiliate itself with a new national socialist organization, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. Under the CCF's wing came various reformers and proponents of a new social order such as teachers, social workers, doctors, women's leagues, church associations and some farmers. By 1933, the CCF had mounted a vigorous election campaign in British Columbia and although a rejuvenated Liberal Party defeated the
Conservative Tolmie government that year, the CCF became the official Opposition in the Legislature.¹⁵

Prior to the Depression, the attitude of organized labour throughout Canada to Chinese workers had been one of competition and conflict. The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (established in 1883), had never initiated a campaign among Chinese workers to encourage them to seek higher wages. For the most part, it had adopted expedient, short-run actions aimed at worker solidarity and power at the expense of a non-white enemy, rather than actions geared to long-run class solidarity. At the time, organized labour was, in the words of Ireland, "fighting to define its role and to secure its place in the total Canadian social structure."¹⁶ Something of a change of heart had been expressed in 1919 when the British Columbia Labour Union opened an office in Chinatown to recruit supporters for the general strike, but it proved to be a short-lived gesture.¹⁷

What might have been expediency in 1919 gave way during the levelling experience of the 1930s to a recognition by the Trades and Labour Congress that the source of conflict between "Orientals" and "white" labour was due to the competitive position into which Orientals had been forced; that legalized discrimination ultimately militated against the interests of all workers. With that realization came some important political action by branches of organized labour. In 1929, for example, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council explicitly registered its non-participation in the newly formed White Canada Association because it "would not support any movement which would relieve the pressure on one class of the community at the expense of the other classes."¹⁸ Two years later, the same organization protested the
exclusion of Chinese from registration on unemployment rolls. Some labour organizations even began to recruit Chinese, Japanese and native Indian workers, a form of cooperation that was made easier in the case of Chinese workers by the decline of the labour contract system. One member of the CCF encouraged this alliance in a campaign speech in October 1935 when he said: "The Oriental is a better man than some of the superior whites in the matter of class consciousness." Beliefs in the fixity, reality and to some extent the hierarchy of human types remained, but the tenor of attitudes was clearly under transformation.

It was the enfranchisement issue that forced into relief the new polarization between the committed agents of change and the equally committed defenders of the Darwinist order. Important among the players who were attempting to crack the stigma that had been erected around residents of Chinese-origin in Canada, were the Rev. J. Woodsworth (whose caution to the House of Commons in 1923 we noted in Chapter Four), Vancouver East member of Parliament, Mr. A. MacInnis and, outside Parliament, Professor H. Angus, Head of the Department of Economics at the University of British Columbia. Angus was particularly interested in the status of local-born Canadians of Chinese origin and spoke out eloquently against their treatment as "aliens." As early as 1931, he pointed out that the disabilities of fellow "underprivileged Canadians" were a reflection on Canadian democratic principles; that inequality was not a function of the attributes of the minority communities themselves, but a consequence of prejudiced thought and discriminatory action within the receiving society. It was an important breakthrough locally, and one that a school of race relations in the social sciences had begun to articulate. For Angus, the problem could only be solved by a policy of accelerated assimilation beginning with an amendment to the Provincial
Elections Act of British Columbia and repeal of the 1923 exclusion legislation, which he labelled as "a contribution to international ill-will."24 (By the 1930s, the Elections Act still deemed that any person of Chinese, Japanese and East Indian "race" could not have the provincial franchise. The same legislation excluded them from election to the Provincial Legislature, nomination for municipal office, nomination at an election of school trustees, jury service, possessing licences for hand-logging, admission to the professions of law and pharmacy and also from the federal franchise.)

Agitation for the enfranchisement of Canadian-born Chinese began in the House of Commons in 1934, when, in a debate about a plan to disenfranchise "subversives" such as Doukhobours, Woodsworth expressed his opposition by arguing the House should in fact enfranchise those already denied the right. Known for his fearlessness in espousing unpopular causes, Woodsworth stated: "If these people are qualified, there is no reason why a colour line should be drawn on the right of voting."25 The right to vote was one of the key issues of the federal election campaign in 1935, although in British Columbia, the CCF candidates had to steer a careful course. There, opposing campaigns made much of the fact that the CCF stood for "Oriental" enfranchisement. They attempted to counter the "socialist" position with more explicit appeals to the race idea than had perhaps been necessary in previous elections (see figure over).26 Mr. P. Winch, secretary of the newly formed Anti-Oriental Penetration League of British Columbia called for Angus's dismissal by the Minister of Education and described the enfranchisement question in terms that suggested the race idea had devolved around the ideological interests of the political left and right:
50,000 ORIENTALS IN B.C.

C.C.F. Party Stands PLEDGED
to Give THEM the Vote

The LIBERAL Party Is OPPOSED to Giving
These Orientals the Vote

WHERE WILL YOU STAND ON ELECTION DAY?

A Vote for ANY C.C.F. CANDIDATE is a VOTE TO
GIVE the CHINAMAN and JAPANESE the same
Voting Right that you have! A Vote for a Liberal Candid­
de is a VOTE AGAINST ORIENTAL Enfranchisement

Canada's Next Government Will Be Liberal!

Under the new Liberal regime Canada will
follow Britain's lead forward to prosperity—
even as Australia and South Africa al­
ready have done. It is important that Van­
couver and the Lower Mainland have a
solid Liberal representation at Ottawa in
harmony with the new Mackenzie King
Government which will be in power after
October 14th.

Calendar of Liberal Meetings First Three Days of This Week

Province.

October 7, 1935
"What he (Angus) advocates is the foundation wedge of Communism, the brotherhood of man. Obviously democratic ideals among a homogeneous population of Nordic blood is one thing, but it is quite another for the white man to share his blood with, or entrust his ideals to brown, yellow or red men. This is suicide pure and simple and the first victim of this amazing folly will be the white man himself." 27

With the election over, those CCF members who had been elected became more daring in their pledge to grant political rights "without regard for race." MacInnis, for example, put forward a motion in the House of Commons in February 1936 to secure voting rights for Chinese and Japanese born in Canada, but it was solidly defeated. 28 A special House committee was formed to examine the issue, however (itself an important moment in the history of outsider status in Canada.)

Perhaps more important was the fact that discussion of the franchise issue in political circles enabled new-found allies of the Chinese to express their sympathies with more confidence. As early as December 1929, one letter to the editor stood out dramatically for its time with the words: "As a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so no nation is greater than its suppressed minority." 29 In March 1932, the Vancouver General Hospital decided to allow Chinese membership in its alumni on the grounds that Chinese had a right to "equality of treatment," as the provincial health officer said. 30

By the mid-1930s, a small number of letters to the editor began to appear expressing support for the CCF position, beginning with the grudging rationale that "if we have to live with them, better to live with good than bad citizens." 31 One Vancouver newspaper feature, in September 1934, fully supported reformists such as Angus, however, for wishing to treat "as equal citizens in the fullest sense, all men and women born in Canada, to close no occupation to them, to withhold no political right from them and to make them feel that Canada is their
native country deserving their undivided loyalty. "32 Two years later, the British Columbia Conference of the United Church went on record as favouring the enfranchisement of all residents born in Canada, just as the "Aryan myth" began to make itself heard in the letters pages of the local press.33 The opinions of Professor Angus and of the CCF were by no means universally accepted, but their very expression signalled a new mood in mainstream society that was to have important consequences for Vancouver's Chinese.

III. "Chinatown" as a Spectacle: A New Civic Presence on Pender, 1936

Although Vancouver's "Little Orient," as B.C. Magazine called "Chinatown" in 1911, had long been a mysterious and foreign place in the minds of the local white society, the mystery had always been informed by stereotypes of a unflattering nature about the inscrutable heathen and his disease-ridden home. As was noted in Chapter Three, Chinatown's early stigma was relieved only by an incidental curiosity about "John's" peculiar diet and his gay festivity at Chinese New Year. Out of that essentially uninformed view of the Chinaman sprang a kind of titillation of the European imagination. Chinatown was "epic, undomesticated and natural," according to a news report in 1914, and when "City Hall eradicates the evils of Chinatown, with it will pass the last vestige of romance in the Oriental quarter which so long has been a place of mystery and adventure to the visitors to the Pacific Coast and Vancouver."34 At the time, however, the burden of public attitudes militated against a broadly shared or developed conception of Chinatown as a tourist attraction.

By the mid-1930s, in the context of the new mood in parts of white
Vancouver society, a more innocuous vision of "Little China" began to be put forward that relied on fantasies about China's ancient and venerated civilization and on Chinatown's quaint peculiarity. In "our little city-within-a-city" said a Province feature in May 1936,

"Yellow Gods rule and the Occident fades into the background. . . . Even in western garb Vancouver's Chinese carry the look of the East. And the East lurks in windows crowded with strange merchandise. In the queer shops of the Orient, there are . . . herbs and bark and healing root, the properties of which were known when the Dragon Kingdom was young . . . while up and down the street is a steady soft shuffle."35

The appeal to an old romantic image of the "Dragon Kingdom" suggests the inertia of European conceptions of Chinese civilization, especially given that the perception of Chinatown as "an innocent reflection of a foreign and medieval civilization" was emerging when Chinatown's facade was becoming more Westernized, and the commercial sector more "modernized," as one writer put it in 1929.36

The City of Vancouver played an instigative role in developing a tourist definition of Chinatown. In May 1936, the City decided to include Chinatown in a civic celebration, a quite different official acknowledgement of Chinatown's presence within the community than it had hitherto enjoyed. That same month, Council approved an application by the Chinese Benevolent Association to "erect Chinese buildings adjoining the south-east corner of Pender and Carrall during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations."37 A guide to Chinatown, promised "100 per cent Celestial atmosphere" during the City's 50th birthday celebration.38 "This Chinese village," Yip wrote, "will be most artistically and becomingly decorated with Chinese lanterns and hundreds of Oriental splendours . . . directly imported from the Celestial Empire." The City was captivated by the appeal to the once great and opulent Old Cathay, and Chinatown merchants, eager to find ways of alleviating the rigours of Depression,
emulated the route to economic gain and social status that had proved effective for their counterparts in San Francisco and New York City.

Few other racially defined minorities in North America have enjoyed this opportunity to indulge once positive European conceptions of their homelands and civilizations.

The local press also revelled in the idea of an "artistic contribution to the Golden Jubilee" from "our Chinese colony." Much as medieval travellers had been captivated by China's "richness and plenifullnesse," the press was enchanted. In anticipation of the event, it told readers to expect an "ornate," 80-foot bamboo arch tower, at the entrance to the village at Pender and Carrall Streets and a nine-tier Chinese pagoda in all its "Oriental grandeur." The merchant organizers of the event (who contributed $40,000 toward it) also promised to exhibit items of Chinese material culture that had so impressed Westerners in the eighteenth century that a "cult of chinoiserie," as Dawson put it, had flourished then in Europe. Hence the "specimens of Chinese artistry," such as antiques, art pieces, porcelains and tapestries. A "Mandarin house" complete with "carved and jewelled" furnishings and a "Buddhist temple never before exhibited to the Occidental eye" would also be featured. A week before the celebrations, the Sun anticipated that the village "will reveal to Occidental eyes many of the wonders and mysteries of the Orient."

The official opening of the village by Mayor G. McGeer on July 17, 1936, was preceded by what the Province described as a "gay parade" over to Granville Street, "symbolic of customs and traditions that were old when the oldest firs on the coast were seedlings." Thousands watched the procession, the paper reported, including "the
weird Chinese ceremony [in which] the spirit of the ancient warrior was invoked to aid the carnival." Another story reported that "the mingled crowd of Orientals and Occidentals" was also "treated to an exhibition of Chinese acrobatics and strength."46 This "quaint gesture of the Orient" was followed by "Occidental formality," when McGeer spoke of "the destiny of young Vancouver as Canada's entry to commerce and commune with the vast millions of the Orient" and expressed the City's pride "at the work our local Chinese have done toward the establishment of a Chinese village for the Jubilee." The moment was captured in a photograph of the Mayor on the arm of "Chinese Queen," Grace Kwan, that appeared on the front page of the Province (see figure over). "Here in the Chinese village," wrote one reporter, "East and West are meeting each other."47

So popular was the Chinese Village at Carrall Street that the City's Jubilee Management Board decided to extend the display for two weeks after the other Jubilee celebrations were closed.48 The Board also registered its appreciation later in the year:

"The contribution of our Oriental friends, notably the Chinese, was a matter of great satisfaction. The care that was taken in securing and exhibiting precious specimens of art and culture from China should receive our heartfelt thanks. The committee of Chinese residents who raised the funds and supervised the venture did so without trouble or worry to us and displayed a fine cooperative spirit."49

The Sun also stated that the efforts to which the local Chinese had gone to "glorify the birthday of a city that speaks an alien tongue, thinks alien thoughts and worships alien gods" can only make us "proud of the energy, initiative and citizenship of our fellow Canadians of Chinese birth or extraction."50

The Jubilee episode was a form of cultural incorporation of the Chinese that supported the socially defined hegemony we have been
In the Chinese Village

The Chinese Village which has already become an important feature of the Golden Jubilee programme was opened on Monday afternoon with Mayor G.G. McLean officiating. Mr. Geo. Moore, of the Chinese coinage commission made a brief address of welcome and then introduced Us Hsun, chairman of the committee; Y.C. Lushong, president of the Chinese Benevolent Society; Dr. Kung Kung-Mei of Peking, who brought over valuable Chinese works of art; and J.H. Eckelmann, Jubilee secretary.

Miss Grace Huen, Chinese Queen, was introduced and after the ceremony she and Mayor McLean went on a tour of inspection of the exhibits. He was delighted, he said, with the magnificence, beauty and variety of the exhibits.
examining, to the extent that it was entirely predicated on old, if benign, conceptions of the "Chinese" as separate and apart. It represented a slightly more subtle form of cultural domination than had hitherto been exercised by the agencies of the Canadian state, but one that nonetheless expressed and confirmed the epistemological separation between us and them, and the definition of Canada as a white and European society to which the Chinese and Chinatown were merely exotic contributions. In so defending the claims and values of the white society, the City, like other levels of state we have been examining, also legitimized itself as the propagator and guarantor of a particular symbolic order. To that extent, the making of a symbolic order of insider and outsider around the idiom of race has been a recurring political process, one geared (not always consciously) to fulfilling the hopes, prejudices, beliefs, frames of reference and interests of an electorate. This political motivation continuously fuelled what was ultimately a cultural process and praxis, the social production and enactment of which we have been monitoring over time.

The epistemology of separation between "Chinese" and "white" had a recurring geographical underpinning. To the extent that the spatial distribution of the Chinese could be regulated, the system of racial classification was cemented through physical distancing strategies, as was noted in Chapter Four and will be discussed later in this chapter. But perhaps more significantly, the moral order of "us" and "them" was played out at the local level through the nexus of place. "Chinatown" was an arbitrary areal category of white apprehension that over time was continuously being produced and transformed, as we are observing, as "Chinatown." Needless to say, Chinatown was always far more than its mere physical reality. With properties — cultural and
biological - that inhered in the very nature of the category "Chinese," Chinatown was immutably "theirs," different from "ours," a product of the East. It gained its identity negatively, based on, to use the words of Said, "a very unrigorous idea of what is 'out there,' beyond one's own territory. . . . {where} all kinds of suppositions, associations and fictions appear to crowd."51

By the mid-1930s, and this time with the acknowledgement and participation of the Chinese themselves (a point to which we shall return in later chapters), Chinatown was becoming a commodity born of old European images of the exotic Orient and tailored for European consumption. A news report in 1936 could not have put it more directly:

"Vancouver is chiefly indebted to the sponsors of this interesting Chinese village in the fact that it calls attention to the Chinese community as a permanent tourist attraction. It is something the city apparently has never realized. Other cities - New York, San Francisco and even London have utilized their Chinese colonies very freely as a point of interest for visitors. Vancouver has never taken advantage from a tourist standpoint of the interest that attaches itself to the life and manners of our Oriental citizens. Even without the pagodas and palaces and bazaar of the Chinese village, Chinatown has a rare fascination for eastern visitors. Perhaps the present exhibit will remind us that our Chinatown is worth exploiting as a tourist attraction year in and year out."52

Within two years of the Jubilee celebration, Vancouver's Chinatown was officially opened up to tourism and Gray Line, the tour operator, was negotiating with a Mr. Y. Leong over financing arrangements for a Chinatown tour.53 For a short while during 1938 and with the consent of Chinese leaders, Chinatown guide Mr. C. McDevitt hired jobless Chinese to run yelling through the streets holding rubber daggers covered with ketchup to convey to his sightseers the infamous Chinatown Tong Wars.54

By 1940, a news feature distinguished the new Chinatown with these words: "No other city in Canada possesses a Chinatown which has retained the glamour, fascination and customs of the parent country to the same
extent as this Little Corner of the Far East located in Vancouver. It is China itself, age old, mysterious, inscrutable."55

IV. Sparing White Women: Old Vice Associations Mobilized, 1936-7

The idea of the distinctiveness of the "races" was as alive in the tourist definition of Chinatown as it was in the platforms of the likes of the White Canada Association, formed in Vancouver in 1929 to "prevent further Oriental penetration in British Columbia, and [to] reduce the present menace to our national life."56 The Association also opposed the extension of the federal and provincial voting right to naturalized and Canadian born "Orientals." The Association was by no means a fringe group. At its founding meeting on November 27, 1929, 27 organizations favoured its formation, including the Retail Merchants Association, the Vancouver Board of Trade, the Central Ratepayers Association, the British Columbia School Trustees Association, the Native Sons of British Columbia, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Vancouver City Council. The provincial Minister of Agriculture, Mr. W. Atkinson, also participated in the first meeting.57

What had become less universal, if no less influential in certain hands (as we shall see in the case of Alderman H. Wilson), was the language of such figures as the founders of the White Canada Association. Its secretary, Mr. Charles Hope, drew heavily from themes of the "Master race," "Aryan purity," race deterioration through intermarriage and others that had gained ascendancy in Europe in the mid-1930s.58 Hope's particular concern was that of the eugenists, the "half-caste," or the "impure" product of a mixing of "widely divergent blood strains." Instruction was to be had, Hope believed, from "the
science which relates to the breeding of new varieties of plants and animals." There, "it is commonly held that the crossing of widely divergent strains is inadvisable and rarely produces improvement, but on the contrary usually results in progeny much less valuable that either parent."59 A news report in 1938, however, assured the likes of Hope that the "mixing of Oriental and Occidental blood is rare in British Columbia. Of 109 babies born to Chinese mothers (in 1936), 108 had Chinese fathers."60

Out of this most recent ferment came Alderman Halford Wilson and other anti-Chinese civic officials, who saw the first rumblings of sympathy for the Chinese as part of a politically threatening intellectual critique from the left wing. As such, it was a call for conservatives to enforce more stridently the geographical props of the old Darwinist order. The mandate applied most directly and obviously to the encroaching "Chinese" as we shall see, but it also had an inverse application to some "whites." As a category, whites too had their properly appointed place, as it were, and in 1919 the Women and Girls Protection Act had been passed by the British Columbia Legislature precisely to guard that divine decree, at least in the matter of white women's employment on Oriental restaurant premises.61 The Act had raised a spate of protests from Chinese diplomats in Victoria, Vancouver and Ottawa at the time of its passage and in 1923, an amendment was passed that dispensed with the stigma of "exclusion nominatum," and vested discretionary authority in the hands of the Chief of Municipal Police.62 It was left to the chief's judgement to decide unsuitable places for women to be employed. In so doing, the legal path was cleared for any such officer to wield age-old conceptions of the lascivious Oriental and to appeal to lurking fears and fantasies about the wickedness of
"interracial" sexual union, a carry over perhaps of the complex sexual tensions that had been projected onto relationships between white women and the libidinous Negro in the United States.63

The statute had been only sporadically enforced in British Columbia since 1919. In 1931, however, Mary Shaw, a waitress in Vancouver's Chinatown was murdered, allegedly by her admirer Mr. Lee Dick, who was said to have shot himself to complete the deed. The jury urged Council to enforce whatever legislation might exist to prevent such occurrences in the future.64 Such was the call to action that Vancouver contractor and insurance agent, Halford Wilson, was only too eager to receive in 1934 when he entered civic politics. On behalf of the West Point Grey branch of the Canadian Legion, the United Scottish Association and other organizations, Wilson pressed the matter before Council and Mayor McGeer's recent appointment, Chief Constable W. Foster, winning their ready support.65

For the purpose of attracting non-Chinese customers and maintaining a cheap supply of employees, Chinese restaurateurs, like others in Vancouver in the 1930s, saw the advantage of employing young white women. But in Chinatown, Chief Constable Foster saw a more sinister motive afoot. In 1935, the retired Colonel and known hardline moralist, decided to invoke the Act for the Protection of Women and Girls solely in Chinatown, by advising three restaurants there to release their white employees.66 To use the words of Foster himself, "the restaurants affected by the ban are situated entirely in the Chinatown district and are patronized exclusively by Chinese with the possible exception of a few low type whites."67 Action was to be taken "on moral grounds," Foster said, "the police not being concerned with questions affecting minimum wages or hours of work." What particularly
concerned the Chief Constable were the deeds he claimed were committed in Chinatown against young and inexperienced waitresses, "induced" as they were "to prostitute themselves with Chinese." Contact would be set up inside restaurant booths and after working hours, girls would go to Chinese quarters, "where immorality took place." Furthermore, new girls "were very quickly influenced to become loose." It was also "established," said Foster, "that the majority of Vancouver's known prostitutes had formerly been employed in Chinatown restaurants, thus indicating they had started on their careers of vice through their early association with those cafes." The old vice characterization of Chinatown was clearly a resilient and serviceable one for those who wished to justify and reinforce the alien status of the Chinese for the European.

By the end of November, 1936, eight Pender Street restaurants that employed a total of 29 women and girls had been given the notices required by the Act to dismiss their white help.68 But when put to a legal test, the Act proved ineffective in securing convictions. Foster did not see this as an impediment to his mission "to remove the evils arising from contact between Chinese customers and white waitresses," however, and he decided to enlist the services of License Inspector H. Urquhart, another hard line official. The upshot of their combined effort was a new round of warnings to the restaurants, this time carrying the threat of licence cancellations. Authority was also obtained through an amendment to the City bylaw governing restaurants that gave owners eight months to eliminate closed-curtain booths, narrow passageways and screens that obstructed the view of civic officials. (There can be no doubt where that bylaw was intended to be enforced.)
Further to that, it was decided by Foster and Urquhart early in the new year that licence renewal applications for the Chinatown cafes under notice would be withheld until the owners promised to dismiss white women and forego employing them in the future.70

In the face of protests "made through various sources to the City Council that it [Foster's and Urquhart's ultimatum] was unfair and in the nature of discrimination against a certain race"71 - something that was slowly becoming frowned upon by the society at large - Alderman Wilson suggested a compromise policy of "attrition."72 This would allow the restaurateurs to retain their current white help on the understanding that they would not take on further white women when positions were vacated. With this supposed new understanding, the 1937 licences were granted.73 But in February 1937, the Chinese Benevolent Association informed officials at a meeting in its Chinatown headquarters, that no such arrangement had been made.74 (As it understood the agreement, extra white help could not be hired, but white women could be employed to replace any that left.) A lawyer was hired to act on behalf of the Chinese, a meeting convened between the concerned parties75 and in early May, the Chinese presented an ultimatum of their own to the new Mayor, G. Miller. The restaurateurs agreed to upgrade their restaurants in any way the City felt necessary for sanitary purposes and to discharge any waitress whom the police could prove was guilty of improper conduct, on the condition that they "not be singled out for any special treatment over and above what treatment is handed out to other reputable restaurant proprietors."76

The arm of the law was diligent to its intent, however, and when Foster and his so-called "morality officers" discovered white staff turnover in the Chinatown cafes,77 the Chief Constable, with the support

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of the Mayor, set about devising a new strategy. This time, Prosecutor O. Orr came to the assistance of Foster with the advice:

"... that we should use the remedy that we have got, namely, the power to cancel licences. ... Proceedings for the cancellation of licences need not be conducted with the same strictness of proof as a criminal prosecution and I do not say this with the idea that we should punish persons without proof but merely that a great many things are perfectly obvious to a Licence Inspector ... which would be difficult to paint in Court. Suppose, for instance, the Licence Inspector makes a personal visit to one of these places and finds loose conduct, such as, a white waitress sitting down with a Chinese. No outward crime is being committed but the chances are that procuring may be well under way."78

On September 14, 1937, Licence Inspector Urquhart, under the authority of Council, cancelled (as an example to the others), the licences of the Hong Kong Cafe at 126 East Pender Street, owned by none other than the president of the Chinese Benevolent Association, Mr. C. Ting; the Gee Kong Cafe of Mr. H. Lee at 168 East Pender Street; and Mr. T. Wing's B.C. Royal Cafe at 61 East Pender Street.79 Mayor Miller announced to the press that he was "out to clean up Chinatown."80 The owners immediately applied for injunctions restraining the City from interfering with their businesses. In the meantime they continued their operations in defiance of the City, only to be issued summonses for operating without a licence. Some days later, Justice Fisher of the Supreme Court, convinced of the City's power to act in the matter, dismissed the application from the Chinese on the grounds that proceedings brought by Urquhart concerning their defiance of licence cancellations were still pending in the Police Court.81

The City's disciplinary action provoked many merchants and prominent figures in Chinatown to speak out against the issue in particular, and neighbourhood targeting in general. Mr. Foon Sien, secretary of the Chinese Benevolent Association, berated: "In every
licence case concerning white men the City gives a warning. In every case of a Chinaman, the City cancels first and talks later.\textsuperscript{82} Mr. Lum Fung Ting, one of Vancouver's wealthiest Chinese, saw "no reason why they should make these spasmodic attempts to clean up Chinatown. . . . And anyway, if the girls are allowed to work in Oriental cafes uptown, why should they not be allowed to do likewise in Chinatown?"\textsuperscript{83} But perhaps the most revealing protests came from the waitresses themselves. A number of the women expressed indignation at the implied reflection on their reputations. One woman, for example, attacked the "self-appointed directors of the morals for the girls in Chinatown." She said, "We must live and heaven knows if a girl is inclined to go wrong, she can do it just as readily on Granville Street as she can down here."\textsuperscript{84} Another waitress, Ms. K. Martin said: "I would much prefer working for a Chinese employer than for some other nationalities."\textsuperscript{85} Indeed the women felt so strongly about their right to choose their own place of employment, that a delegation of 16 waitresses from the three restaurants marched to City Hall on September 24, 1937 to protest the ban on their employment in Chinatown (see figure over). Some weeks later, a group of 30 waitresses, armed with a lawyer, demanded reinstatement in their old jobs at a meeting of the Civic Services Committee, but again they left City Hall dissatisfied.\textsuperscript{86}

Faced with such adversaries, the Chinatown proprietors finally accepted the City's terms for reinstatement of their licences. They did this before Council on September 27, 1937 and the City agreed to abandon its Police Court prosecutions.\textsuperscript{87} Other cafe owners reluctantly agreed to observe the civic ruling. Their solicitor informed Prosecutor Orr that it was doubtful the City's legal power to regulate businesses extended to prohibition on such grounds,\textsuperscript{88} but the Chinese Benevolent Association
Representing all of the white girls employed in Chinatown restaurants, this group paraded to City Hall Friday to interview Mayor George C. Miller, who they expected to intercede on their behalf. They didn't succeed in getting an audience with His Worship, however.

The girls want to continue working in the Chinese restaurants but the city license department is in negotiation with the cafe owners for an agreement whereby suspended licenses will be restored if the restaurant men dismiss their white help.
decided not to pursue legal proceedings on the constitutionality of the ruling, perhaps because there was no assurance of winning and a good chance of completely alienating a demonstrably unsympathetic civic administration. The following year, the CBA president attempted to test the colour line by employing white women once again, only to have his licence promptly cancelled.89

The fight over the employment of white women in Chinatown restaurants took place precisely as the larger society was being encouraged to visit Vancouver's latest tourist attraction, Chinatown. That tourist definition, set out as it was by the white European community, clearly extended only as far as the larger society's curiosity. Certainly the actions of a circle of committed City Hall officials the year after the Jubilee episode point up a tension behind the civic overtures to Vancouver's "Oriental friends" that had been made in 1936. As we have seen, the restriction on the employment of white women went ahead even in the face of objections from the waitresses themselves, and also despite Alderman Hurry's contention in October 1937 that the City, in concentrating upon Chinatown, was overlooking vice in other areas.90 Foster approved only one of the waitresses' appeals, when in March 1939 he allowed white women to be re-employed in Chinese-owned restaurants that served only "English meals to English customers."91

The issue affected only a few restaurants and waitresses but it demonstrated the resilience of unflattering images of the Chinese and the effectiveness of the state in disseminating and reproducing them. The direct involvement of the civic authorities in defining and delivering the notion of the "Chinese" and their "Chinatown" to the white European community was alluded to in the Sun when in an August 1938 editorial, it said:
"No matter how harmless the practice may be in itself, this City and this Province is determined that Orientals shall not employ white women in their business establishments. This prejudice may be well founded, or it may be absurd. This is not the question. What matters is that the law . . . supports the prejudice and condemns the practice."^32

A circle of determined officials had lent fresh authority to the idea of Chinatown in a way that assimilated the increasingly stale beliefs of an earlier age into an emerging, more complex formulation. The sinister and the exotic in "Chinatown" had been distinguished in two successive years and as we shall see in Chapter Six, the City would come to explicitly juggle the themes again, but always according to its own agenda and ideologies. For the time, Mayors McGeer and Miller had, in different ways, paid tribute to the racial category and through the medium and imagery of place. In their actions, they carried forward the racial frame of reference which, in providing a rallying point for the self-definition of a privileged category of insiders, ensured that the Chinese Village-on-one-day-cum-Vice-Town-the-next, told forever of some deeper "Chineseness," some pre-existing, inalterable, transindividual and ultimately foreign essence.

V. "They Simply Don't Comply With Our Standards:" Alderman Wilson's Vendetta

The agreement between Chinatown cafe proprietors and City Hall was not the first or the last episode in the harassment of Chinese restaurateurs, cooks and restaurant help during the 1930s. In March 1935, Chinese cooks in Western restaurants had been obliged to undergo a physical examination for infectious disease by a non-Chinese doctor.93 By the late 1930s, the Vancouver Restaurant Owners Association attempted to secure from the City a more strict enforcement of civic health bylaws.
in Chinese restaurants (which were growing in popularity and number) and
in restaurants where Chinese were employed.94 Obligingly, the
Metropolitan Health Board, while it could not explicitly target Chinese
restaurants, did so indirectly by devising more refined bylaw standards
for Vancouver's restaurants. The Chinese Benevolent Association was
quick on the trail of Council's thinly veiled strategy, however, and
protested it to members of Council's Health Committee at its Chinatown
headquarters in February 1936.95 But the grievances were deflected
and in May 1937 the Board decided to examine "Oriental establishments
for traces of communicable disease" (although legal action taken by the
CBA averted the City's attempt to carry out medical examinations
specifically on Chinese restaurant employees.)96 Late in 1939, the
Restaurant Bylaw was again amended, granting power to the City's food
inspector to compel any person preparing or serving food to submit to a
medical examination.97

The moral and sanitary cleansing of Vancouver's Chinese
restaurants was just a practice run for Alderman Wilson. The continuing
penetration of Vancouver's produce and retailing industry by Chinese,
who usually lived on the (non-Chinatown) shop premises, became one of
Wilson's main political causes. Typical was the protracted battle Wilson
waged over one row of Chinese-owned and operated premises on 19th
Street, between Main and Quebec Streets. In May 1935, a special
committee of Council was established to investigate that particular
wholesale vegetable distributing centre in response to repeated
complaints from nearby residents.98 Its resolution that the City "take
every step within its power to have this business removed" set Wilson,
the city solicitor and the building inspector on a search for legal
means to do so. Come the end of June, Wilson moved that "the medical
health officer be instructed to placard as unfit for human habitation the premises at 19th and Main," winning the approval of the rest of Council.\textsuperscript{99} Two years later, Wilson put forward a motion, carried by the City Properties, Licences and Claims Committee, that no licence be issued to "Orientals" without first being approved by the committee (of which he was a member).\textsuperscript{100} This had the advantage of allowing the City Health Department to inspect the proposed premises of the applicants for their compliance with City bylaws. One such inspection of a Chinese establishment in Dunbar in May 1938 carried the assurance "that the premises of the applicants are in good condition; also that there are no living quarters in the said premises."\textsuperscript{101}

In March 1939, a special committee was struck by the Social Service Committee of Council to investigate living quarters at the rear of stores, out of concern for Chinese residential mobility.\textsuperscript{102} A letter to Wilson the following year from a Mount Pleasant resident concerning the movement of Chinese into the district of Cambie and 24th Street reveals the alderman's hand in trying to fight their encroachment. "On March 6, 1940 you wrote me advising that you would make every effort to prevent Orientals using their stores as places of residence . . ."\textsuperscript{103} The same resident in another letter, wrote:

"The district has been zoned for stores but we do not intend accepting the position of stores being used as places of residence as well as business, especially by Orientals. We look to the Aldermen to protect our interests and we know that especially from you, Mr. Wilson, we are assured of every effort in this direction."\textsuperscript{104}

In the meantime, amendments were made to the Building Bylaw which granted broad discretionary power to building inspectors and medical health officers regarding the enforcement of such things as the partitioning of the store from living quarters, ventilation, placement
of conveniences and so on. The efforts of Chinese to escape their stigmatized home were thus discouraged at every turn.

Of course the surest way to fight residential encroachment was to deny Chinese the economic means for mobility. Mock Fee knew the power of such a strategy back in 1888, when, as was noted in Chapter Three, he successfully contested the right of the state to deny him a business licence. But Wilson, known for his political expediency, was not one to let legal obstacles impede a display of anti-Oriental action before his constituency. Besides, he believed in his cause. "It is imperative," he wrote in a letter to a member of the Royal Society of St. George in March 1938, "that those possessed of British ideals and imbued with British tradition must stand together in an effort to combat any movement that would, in time, dominate and suppress British influence in our Province."106

True to his pledges, Wilson investigated the establishment of a quota on "Oriental" business licensing in 1938, charging: "Orientals are creeping into the retail trade, taking possession of it and enforcing lower standards of living." Wilson wanted to deny licences to Chinese and Japanese "where the number of Orientals holding licences exceeds five per cent of the total number of licences issued," despite the advice of counsel that no such power was vested in the City charter. Wilson took the issue to Council anyway, which, with the exception of CCF member Alderman H. Gutteridge, accepted his motion "that the City proceed to advertise and apply for a proposed amendment to the Charter to limit to a stipulated quota, the granting of licences to persons of Asiatic extraction." (Gutteridge later claimed such discrimination "could extend to other nationalities in the same way as
in Europe."\(^{110}\) Wilson was not discouraged when the City lost this amendment before the Private Bills Committee of the Provincial Legislature - the plan smacked of "Hitlerism," chairman H. Perry denounced\(^{111}\) - and the loss only spurred him to suggest to Council the appointment of a special committee on Legislation. In 1939, the committee received Council support for a second bid to Victoria.\(^{112}\)

But again, Perry's Committee declined support for the amendment. In 1940, the committee also denied Council's request, sponsored by Wilson, for a Trades Licence Board that would grant powers to Council to control licences "in the public interest of the city."\(^{113}\) By 1942, when Council carried his motion to relay support to the Federal Government for a measure that would remove residents of Japanese origin from the Pacific Coast, Wilson was sufficiently buoyant to try another round of negotiations in Victoria. This time, however, the alderman had lost the support of Council.\(^{114}\) The indefatigable Wilson was not content to be overruled forever, however, and in 1939 he sought the provincial seat of Vancouver Centre. "A vote for the Liberal candidate," he said in April that year, "means a standard of living of fish and rice; a vote for Wilson means one of beef and bread."\(^{116}\)

The uniquely "Chinese" entrepreneurial spirit also became a cause for a member of the Provincial Legislature, Mr. C. Planta, in the late 1930s. After Wilson, Planta likened the expansion of the Chinese owned and operated produce outlets from their Chinatown base to a disease that threatened to infiltrate and undermine the whole. A Province editorial painted the image this way in 1937 in support of Planta's investigation:

"Twenty years ago lowly John Chinaman leased a parcel of land from its white owner and mostly by hand, produced what he could peddle through the streets of town. Today that picture is quite outmoded. Big Chinese corporations own large farms . . . and their produce is sent to market in trucks owned by Orientals, driven by Oriental
chauffeurs, delivered to Oriental warehouses, sold finally to Oriental retail stores — where the salesgirl is very apt to be a brilliant young Chinese graduate of UBC."

As Planta protested before the House in Victoria, "a financial web runs through the Chinese operations." What with their singular living standards and their filthy and amoral habits, Planta charged, the Chinese could slowly engulf whole industries, as they were currently doing in Vancouver's vegetable trade. Whereas in 1922, there was only one Chinese wholesale vegetable dealer, by 1936 there were 21. In the West End, Kitsilano, Point Grey and Fairview districts of Vancouver, there were 69 Chinese retail stores handling produce, Planta warned.

It was a concern derived less from Planta's personal prejudice than from the cultural context of "us" and "them" and the secondary effects, such as Chinese occupational segregation that had ensued over time. Indeed, what for Planta was the "financial web" of "too many cousins" was, in the eyes of one Chinese, merely the "unity and cooperation" needed to surmount such discriminatory practices as the Provincial Government's Produce Marketing Act of 1927. According to that legislation, produce had to be marketed through a centralized marketing control board which fixed prices in order to eliminate Chinese competition.

The category of race collapsed the range of differences among Chinese in the interest of one difference, that of setting "Chinese" off from "Canadians" or "whites." According to this power relation, "they" were unsuited for certain occupations, for citizenship, for political office and certainly all of the elite domains that somehow symbolized the most celebrated expressions of a European cultural fabric. Among such domains were "the better residential districts," to use Wilson's words in 1941, when Wilson and his main ally on Council, Alderman H. de Graves, took up the cause — well tried and tested by white America —
The quest of Wilson, whom the Chinese Times knew by this time as "the bad member of Council," also involved confining Orientals "to their own recognized localities" as the Province reported in February 1941.

During the early 1940s, Chinese residential mobility aroused a number of area associations to speak out. In 1940, for example, the South Granville Chamber of Commerce protested to Council the movement of Chinese into the Fairview district, while the English Bay Improvement Association and the Kitsilano Chamber of Commerce made similar complaints. The following year, residents from the Little Mountain area protested the intrusion of Chinese. A Vancouver judge made a general statement in 1938, saying: "The status of the Oriental family in the white community is low. White tenants voice resentment when an Oriental settles down in the neighbourhood; houses rented to Orientals can seldom be rented later to white families."

The protest which finally aroused Council to action was a 1941 delegation, bearing a petition with more than 80 signatures, from the residents of Southlands, an exclusive corner of Point Grey. The irritant was the purchase by a man of Chinese-origin and his non-Chinese wife of a property for which they had bid the highest amount. Residents in the Highbury Street area were insistent that Council lower their tax assessments to correspond to an anticipated 20 per cent fall in property values and that it devise measures to, in the words of the petition, "prevent the intrusion of the Oriental into desirable residential districts." For Wilson, the purchase was for all intents the "thin edge of the wedge" that the Vancouver News had alluded to in 1886. "They simply don't comply with our standards," he said. "Real estate values
are falling. Where one Oriental buys property another follows. . . . The time has come to do what has been done in other Pacific Coast and eastern cities.  

Not one to make idle promises, Wilson was the force behind the Council's appointment in February 1941 of a special committee to draft a by-law to prevent "Orientals" from being either tenants or owners in areas other than "their own localities." (The bylaw would not affect the movement of Oriental servants, Wilson informed the press.) Discounting previous rulings from the City's Legal Department that the City could not implement the plan, Wilson actually defended his initiative on the grounds that "Orientals" were already discriminated against by the municipal government, and that any further discrimination must therefore be acceptable. It was hardly a reasoned defence for a move that was, in the opinion of Consul-General C. Pao, "prejudicial, discriminatory, a gross miscarriage of justice and a reflection on the national dignity of China."  

If the attempt to confine Chinese to Chinatown was any of these things, it was certainly illegal. Once again, the division of state powers in Canada and the requirement that each level of government confine itself to its allotted sphere of competence, exerted a check on political will. Some days after Council pondered the measure, Wilson conceded that he had misunderstood what he had thought was a legal precedent for City action in a Toronto restriction statute. But what could could legally be done, Alderman H. Corey advised the Point Grey delegation, was to include anti-Oriental clauses in the titles of new subdivisions - a strategy that, as was noted in the previous chapter, was at work in a number of areas of the city until 1956, when a new Real Estate Act abolished the clause's legal status.
Alderman Halford Wilson was not alone in his anti-Chinese crusade in Vancouver, but he was certainly more of a propagator and sponsor of discriminatory measures than were many civic politicians of his time. Wilson's singleminded and outspoken defence of the traditional order against the threat of the "heathen Chinee" is important for two reasons. In the first instance, it is obvious from Council's support for most of his entreaties that Wilson's views were widely held, and that those less vociferous than him were still willing to indulge his crusade, if only less noisily. As Mayor J. Cornett said in 1941, "If anything can be done to segregate them and put the Orientals in the same districts, we are all for it." In that sense Wilson was less on the fringe of Canadian society than his bold enunciations and practices might suggest. His, more than any others who went before him, was the cause to consign the Chinese to their lowly and appointed place and in that pursuit, he was backed by a supportive constituency and Council. What Wilson had not taken sufficient account of, however, was not simply the power of the Courts to limit his own, but the growth of liberalism and the need, if not to dispense with the underlying ideology of difference, to at least restrain his articulation and conduct in a way that conformed to the rhetoric of an increasingly accepting society.

Wilson, like his counterparts elsewhere in the 1930s, was also important therefore, for the role he played in bringing hostile manipulations of the race idea into disrepute by dint of sheer volume and repetition. Virtually no one at the time questioned the distinctiveness of the races, but many had begun to doubt the once axiomatic belief that they were ordered on a hierarchy of superiority. What we have witnessed then, was the last full-throated roar before
decades of cultural hegemony finally gave way to a more subtle, if no less proscribed agenda by which the Chinese would continue to be singled out.

V. Dismantling the Racial Hierarchy

Unlike World War One, where the struggle was over territory, World War Two was a battle of competing ideologies, of the liberal democratic order against communism and fascism. The Depression had challenged the confidence of the West in unfettered laissez-faire capitalism and the Soviet example had, by this time, shown there was an alternative to the free market. The war became a pivotal clash therefore, which, in its duration and atrocities, alerted the West to its vulnerability and to the possibility of subjugation by powerful adversaries, one of which was "Asiatic."

At home, World War Two tested people's consciences, including those of many scientists who saw Nazi crimes as a ghastly perversion of science for political ends. The confidence of scientists in racial typologies waned considerably and eugenics fell, if it had not already, into scientific disrepute. The gap between the rhetoric of the West's international struggle for "liberation," "democracy," and "freedom" and conduct at home was not lost on British Columbia's residents. As was noted earlier, the chairman of the Private Bills Committee of the Legislature interpreted Council's requests in 1938 and 1940 for greater powers to control licensing in the city as a request to "persecute Orientals." "Substitute the Jews for Chinamen," he remarked, "and you are copying Hitler."133 Editorialists also chastized home-front violations of democratic rights, especially against Chinese, fighting as they were a long war of "democracy" against their old foe, Japan.
"Justice is not a racial prerogative," said one editorial in 1943.134 "Rabid racialism is an evil which leads to the Master Race idea and the lengths to which anti-Semitism has been taken," another stated the following year.135 In 1945, an editorial advocating Oriental enfranchisement said "Canada must not sabotage the efforts on the field of battle by practising racial intolerance at home while they fight for tolerance abroad."136

The pressure of international events in the 1940s consolidated the more benign definition of the Chinese that had emerged during the Depression. Still, some legislated props of white supremacy proved resistant to change. The most important was the denial of the franchise to Orientals, including local-born residents and naturalized Canadians. One Chinatown resident was provoked to speak out in 1940, soon after a Provincial Government order-in-council required Orientals in British Columbia to surrender all their firearms (despite the fact that China was aligned with the Western allies against Japan).137 Mr. C. Louie wrote:

"I am one of the hundreds of Canadian-born Chinese, of military age, and glad of the privilege of fighting and dying for Canada. Although my parents are naturalized British subjects for 35 years and myself born in Vancouver, I am not allowed to vote. Second, although I possess registered firearms for hunting, I must surrender them by September 30, 1940. The government's reason, I am an alien. Third, Canada adopts conscription, therefore I am drafted into the Canadian army. The government's reason, I am a British subject."138

In fact, Canadians of Chinese origin were not accepted for service when they volunteered and were not drafted until as late in the war as November 1944.139 The delay hinged partly on the dilemma that their service implied for the franchise issue, as Alderman Wilson knew too well. (During the First World War, over 100 Japanese managed to enlist in the Canadian force and in 1931, by a one-vote margin, the Provincial Legislature had enfranchised 80 Japanese veterans.) In September 1940,
Wilson presented a motion, which Council carried, "to obtain from the Federal authorities the assurance that certain privileges now denied Orientals in Vancouver will not be granted as a result of their serving in the home defence forces."\textsuperscript{140}

The collapse of Chinese and Japanese into the single category "Oriental" was a biting affront to Chinese in Vancouver during the Sino-Japanese War and World War Two. So much so, in fact, that the Chinese Benevolent Association supplied Vancouver's 9,000 Chinese with buttons bearing the Chinese flag in 1941 so they would not be confused with Japanese.\textsuperscript{141} Meanwhile, residents of Vancouver's Chinatown demonstrated their loyalty to the allied cause with generous contributions to Victory Loan campaigns. In 1941, one Vancouver resident was awarded a silver cup by the mayor for selling the highest number of loan bonds in Vancouver.\textsuperscript{142} Slowly, the significance of China's war with Japan and its role in the World War against that aggressor began to elevate the Chinese in the estimation of white Vancouver society and to dissipate the voices of antagonists.\textsuperscript{143} Mayor Cornett even joined the executive of the Chinese War Relief Fund in 1943 and expressed to Mr. Foon Sien words of "sympathy with your distressed people" and recognition of the unity over the cause of "mankind and democracy" that "Canada, the British Empire and China had found in their struggle against Japan."\textsuperscript{144} In the same year, Council's unwritten law against leasing market stalls to Chinese in the City Market was undone and approval granted to a firm of Chinatown fish dealers for rental space.\textsuperscript{145} By 1945, Council also lifted its long-standing colour bar on the City's swimming pool in the West End.\textsuperscript{146}

Organized labour continued to be among the greatest advocates of political rights "without regard for race," as the phrase often went. In
1938, the president of the Vancouver and New Westminster District Trades and Labour Council, Mr. E. Jamieson, boasted: "We have Orientals in our council and welcome them there." Cooperation was practised in 1943 when 3,000 Chinese workers in the local shingle and shipyard industries threatened to strike against the 1931 provincial law that denied pension benefits for wives and children of Chinese living in Canada. The unions of automotive workers, shipbuilding workers and shingle workers urged the Chinese against their own strike and in July 1943, the International Woodworkers of America undertook to present a brief to the federal tax authorities on behalf of the aggrieved workers. The threat of the strike was withdrawn when the demand for equal treatment was met with retroactive payments. Of course, the unions needed members as much as the Chinese needed labour advocates and in 1944, the IWA appointed a Chinese representative for British Columbia to build up Chinese sublocals in the union.

The tenor of public opinion in British Columbia had clearly changed and open, formal discrimination was no longer a guaranteed vote-getter for politicians. By 1945, the non-Chinese stand against enfranchisement was reduced to a fringe group. In that year, 50 Chinese war veterans and approximately 400 Chinese then serving in World War Two were granted the vote. It took more time and strenuous lobbying from a host of reform-oriented organizations and of course, from Chinese, Japanese and "East Indian" groups themselves, but finally in 1947 the Provincial Legislature under Premier J. Hart voted to enfranchise all Canadian-born residents and citizens in British Columbia of Chinese and Indian origin. (Two years later, the same right was extended to Japanese.) Following suit, the Dominion Elections Act of 1948 extended the federal vote to all British subjects by birth or naturalization and similarly, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the
Vancouver City Council recommended without dissent in 1949 that the Legislature remove the disqualification of "Orientals" from the Municipal Elections Act. Chinese had finally been relieved of the stigma of outsider status, at least in its most obvious official guise. "Now that Chinese have the franchise," said Mr. Foon Sien a few years later, "finally they feel a sense of permanency."152

The question of immigration proved to be the acid test of the new liberal climate. Political rights without regard for race was one thing, but the "continuous infusion of foreign blood and foreign cultures from abroad" was another, and sufficient of a concern to the Federal Government to commission an investigation in 1942 into the changing "racial structure" of Canada. A comprehensive study examined the balance of what were said to be different "primitive racial stocks" in Canada based on "geographical association," "cultural makeup" and "biological strain." It used Census data from 1931 to assess the extent of assimilation or "fusion" of the disparate elements of Canadian society into a "homogeneous type." That such concern about the racial purity of Canada still guided political action in the 1940s was made abundantly clear in the manner of the repeal of the Chinese exclusion legislation.

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 attracted considerable notice in post-war years, after the Canadian Parliament signed the United Nations Charter proclaiming freedom, human rights and equality. Mr. A. Jolliffe, Director of Immigration, however, remained a solid defender of the 1923 legislation he himself had had a large hand in drafting, and by the early 1940s he was prepared to consider only a reciprocal system of temporary renewal immigration permits for approved categories of Chinese. But the authorities in China resisted such an operational
definition of "reciprocal," as Dr. H. Keenleyside of Canada's External Affairs Department had anticipated: "It is necessary to recognise," he told a colleague in 1942, "that the Chinese temper may now be such that they will no longer accept what is essentially an exclusion agreement, even when it is tarnished with the lacquer of mutuality and reciprocity." Notwithstanding all that was changing in the public domain, the dilemma of how to exclude Chinese without telling them as much was still the key concern of behind-the-scenes immigration administrators in Ottawa and China. Canadian policy-makers simply dismissed a proposal made by a senior Chinese official in early 1947 that the Chinese government might be receptive to a quota system enabling the reunification of families in Canada, while restricting the number of new entrants.

At a Cabinet committee meeting in May 1947 on Chinese immigration, Canadian officials contemplated the spectre of a deluge of immigration to British Columbia, were restrictions on the entry of Chinese wives and children relaxed. In 1941, there was a total Chinese population of 34,627 in Canada, of which 30,713 were males and 3,914 females. Repeal of the Act would allow females to enter and the Chinese population to multiply, an unacceptable scenario to the immigration officials. No-one would have known of these back room deliberations from the speech of Prime Minister Mackenzie King in January 1947. "Repeal," he boasted, "will remove all discrimination against Chinese on account of race and... bring Chinese persons under the general provisions of the Immigration Act and no longer under legislation applying exclusively to persons of Chinese origin." In fact, a far less breathtaking measure was introduced.

Contrary to public expectation, the Bill repealing the Act of 1923 did not remove, but rather upheld the principle of discrimination.
Under its terms, Chinese were not placed under an order-in-council passed in March 1931, which covered immigrants and their dependents in general. Instead, they were placed under an order-in-council passed in September 1930 that denied entry to Canada of any immigrant of "any Asiatic race," except the wife and unmarried children under 18 years of age of a Canadian citizen. Shrewdly, the House had been denied the option of a quota agreement with China during the committee stage of the Bill and therefore, despite heated opposition to the new Bill in the House, no compromise position could be suggested or reached. Mr. D. Croll of Spadina charged that after 25 years of the "Chinese Extermination (sic) Act . . . our enemies in two wars may bring their families to Canada, where the Chinese who have been on our side find that their families are inadmissible." Mr. J. Diefenbaker, Conservative member for Lake Centre adopted a new rhetoric (first articulated by J. Gibbon in his book *The Canadian Mosaic* in 1938), in his comment: "This country is great on the basis of the number of races. Canada can never achieve greatness on the basis of intolerance." British Columbia's members (except the member for the Cariboo) were conspicuously silent on the issue and Prime Minister King had once again shown himself a shrewd judge of political fortunes and the consequences for Liberals in British Columbia of repeal without "effective restriction."

In effect, the new legislation to which Parliament gave its assent on May 14, 1947 merely allowed the reunion of wives and children of the few Chinese who were citizens, and eliminated the obligation of Chinese to register. Andracki describes the shift in policy as "nothing more than removing Chinese from a 'special' discrimination and bringing them under the general rule of discrimination against Orientals in the
mattes of immigration.” As was noted in Chapter Four, only 5 per cent of the Chinese population of Canada were “naturalized” and 19.3 per cent were citizens by birth in 1941. Prime Minister Mackenzie King had certainly distinguished himself as one of the most artful of Canada’s architects in the making of a “white” hegemonic order. By 1948, his Liberal Party had opened an office at 86 East Pender Street in Vancouver and was holding picnics in pursuit of the new “Chinese” vote.

Conclusion

By the end of World War Two, "Chinatown" was Vancouver's cultural enigma, a "glint of the Orient in an Occidental setting," as portrayed by a newspaper feature in 1943. The tourist definition first sponsored by the City of Vancouver in 1936 had taken root and come to supersede, if by no means preempt, Constable Foster's tarnished vision - just as throughout North America, Dr. Fu Manchu, the sinister character made popular in the 1930s by American writer Sax Rohmer had become the heroic war ally, representative of the hardworking, persevering, law abiding people of curio stores and exotic dishes. The transition was not a tidy or decisive one, as the manner of the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act captures, past formulations of identity and place continuously invading and thickening the present. In the same year Chinatown was integrated into Vancouver's Jubilee celebrations, Alderman Wilson and his allies began indulging their own, less charitable agenda. But the war did consolidate a more amiable conception of the Chinese and Chinatown in so far as it helped to cast doubt upon the notion of the racial hierarchy. Mr. A. Stewart, CCF member of Parliament for Winnipeg North stated as much in 1947:

"The war taught us there are no superior and inferior races, that the superior races might easily become the inferior races and vice versa, that we are all dependent upon one another for mutual
protection, that the old shibboleths are obsolete, that narrow nationalisms must give way to a broader community of nations."

It was a powerful breakthrough in attitudes that contributed in no small measure in the subsequent years, to the mitigation of inequalities in Canadian society.

That being said, the war and other pressures of the 1940s did not challenge the old ideas of the "Chinese race" and "Chinatown" themselves, and the belief in the essential distinctiveness of the races, each with their own sui generis culture. It is apparent that racial ideology was enduring through changes in its expression. As Mosse states: "It was the Nazis who perpetrated the deed, but men and women everywhere believed in the distinction between races, whether white, yellow or black, Aryan or Jew."

The new, benign assessment of Vancouver's "Little Orient" gave it a much needed economic boost from tourists by the end of the war. Such perceptions of place, it is argued, no less than the blunt efforts we discussed of Alderman Wilson to keep the suburbs for "us" and "Chinatown" for "them," continued to help produce that place in both a material and an ideal sense during the 1930s and 1940s. The restaurant industry on Pender Street blossomed, in turn encouraging a vertical expansion of grocery stores, butcher shops and fish markets. Import outlets, bric-a-brac and curio stores prospered along the principal thoroughfare in response to the increasing traffic of tourists. Merchants added neon exteriors to their restaurants in order to maximize the scenic attraction as part of what Light has called the "purposeful Orientalizing" of North American Chinatowns. The use of neon certainly demonstrated that Vancouver's Chinatown was no transplanted Peking. The White House Chop Suey restaurant at the foot of Columbia Street began the trend in Vancouver in the late 1930s when that
establishment installed what was said later by a news report to be "a traditional moor gate in white neon."174 By the end of the war, neon had been extended to:

"whole storefronts with architectural combinations of slick facades and lighting. In some cases it is more than surface, it goes right inside to the alley and up to the second storey. Before the war the White House was patronized exclusively by Chinese. Now they can't find a seat. The Occidental population has moved in en masse."175

It is clear that by the end of World War Two, "Chinatown," with the consent of the Chinese themselves, had come to suit the imagination and tastes of North American consumers. As it had in the nineteenth century, Chinatown embodied in the minds of the host community the irreducible essence of an alien culture and people. Of course the Chinese were different in physical features and cultural expression from European society. The point is that for those with the power of definition, such endowments were the defining characteristics of a set of residents and their place. They testified to something primordially distinct about "East" and "West," and social realities such as "Chinese" and "Chinatown" were being re-created on that premise. The morality or otherwise, or "truthfulness" or otherwise, of that premise aside; the issue here is that it was having consequences. With the backing of the state, the racial and spatial categories dramatized, polarized and institutionalized certain arbitrary distinctions for the European. By the 1940s, "Chinatown" stored the history of a sinister connotation and bore the imprint of a new exotic association. The idea of "Chinatown" had been re-made during the inter-war and war period into a more complex formulation. One local newspaper published a guide to Vancouver's Chinatown in 1943 that captures the deeper continuity in the categorization of place and race that was underpinning the change in attitudes of the late 1930s and 1940s:
"Chinatown! Time was when that foreign quarter between Canton Alley and Jackson Avenue, between Hastings and Georgia Streets, had an aura of wickedness for the Vancouver consciousness. It was a sinister place 'twas said where white girls should not walk alone through its crowded narrow streets. 'Chuck-a-luk' and other gambling games, rumour had it, were played behind mysterious doors without handles... And when the police raided... trapdoors into subcellars provided emergency exits for white and Chinese players alike to escape by devious underground passages. Or so many Vancouver people believed....

Chinatown! pungent, mysterious wicked Chinatown where one bought jasmine tea and wicker furniture and rich embroideries, always with a feeling of danger lurking in the dim shadows of the dark shops. How it has changed! Or perhaps, how we, under the impact of World War Two have changed. China is now our ally, and visitors look at Chinatown through new eyes... In the shopkeepers along East Pender Street they see a counterpart of the Chinese who make up the armies of General Chiang Kai Shek.

Chinatown! Chop Suey houses where delicious foods are served with wooden chopsticks... Chinese theatres with their sing-song voices and their twanging instruments....

Chinatown, indeed, is one of the most interesting places of all for the wartime 'home sightseer' to visit....

(For) even with its Red Cross groups, its first aid classes, its Victory Loan campaigns, its ration book headquarters, its displays of Canadian merchandise, Chinatown still seems "foreign."

Therein, perhaps, lay Chinatown's abiding signature... and so too its vulnerability.
NOTES


2. CVA, Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 198, 1935, Unemployed Organizations File. The Provincial Workers' Council on Unemployment charged that "the insufficient and low-grade food breaks down the resistance of the Chinese ... Since the soup kitchen has been started many Chinese workers who have been forced to eat there have died."

3. The term "category legislation" is taken from F. Reeves, British racial discourse: a study British political discourse about race and race-related matters. (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1983), p.7. Reeves uses the phrase to underline the broad political significance of "race."

4. A historian who has written on the Chinese in Canada defines racism (in a similar way to Ward) as "antipathy toward a racial group." H. Palmer, Patterns of prejudice, op. cit., p.7. Such a view overlooks cultural forms of racism common to the twentieth century as later chapters will discuss. See also notes 76 and 77, Chapter One.

5. C. Ma, Chinese pioneers, op. cit., p.56.

6. These figures were used by Mr. Mun Hope of Victoria in a letter to the editor in 1935 to correct the use of "inflated, misleading statistics flung around as vote-catching ammunition" by those opposed to Oriental enfranchisement. Colonist, October 8, 1935.

7. Province, January 22, 1938.

8. Ibid., October 15, 1941.


11. In 1920, when property values were depressed, a number of Chinese associations had bought up property in the Chinatown area. Most purchases were made through share-holding arrangements. See Chinese Times, April 3, 14, 15, 22, June 19, July 17, September 7, 27, December 22, 28, 1920; January 17, May 2, 1921.


13. British Columbia. Report on Oriental activities within the province, 1927, op. cit., p.17. The drop in employment in the lumber industry was in part due to the Depression when the value

14. For a comprehensive discussion, see E. Wickberg, et al, *From China to Canada*, op. cit., chap.12. It is estimated that Chinese communities in Canada increased the number of their organizations by approximately a half in the 1920s and 1930s. ibid., p.166.


20. For example, the Vernon fruit growers' association asked for Chinese assistance in the fight against legislation that impeded open competition in the selling of produce. *Province*, January 30, 1931.


23. For the Chicago school of sociologists, host society attitudes and conduct were seen as obstacles to the assimilation of "blacks" and certain immigrants into the American melting pot. See the collection of Robert Park's essays *Race and culture*. (Glencoe: Illinois: Free Press, 1950). In a chapter on racial prejudice first published in 1928, Park wrote "The fact seems to be that we ordinarily regard as instinctive and biologically determined in our behaviour and attitudes toward people and races other than our own is merely, in the first instance at least, the spontaneous response to what is strange and unfamiliar." p.237-8.

24. H. Angus, A contribution to international ill-will. *The Dalhousie Review*, XIII, 1933, 23-33. Angus lobbied his cause to many Vancouver groups, including the Board of Trade. *Province*, November 13, 1934; *Sun*, February 10, 1937. He advocated enfranchisement among workers as a policy of "self interest," appealing that discrimination was counterproductive insofar as it promoted


29. *Province*, December 1, 1929.


31. See for example, *Province*, November 13, 1934; *Colonist*, October 12, 1935.

32. *Province*, September 1, 1934.


34. *Sun*, December 14, 1914.

35. May 21, 1936.


38. Q. Yip, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, op. cit.


42. *Province*, July 18, 1936.

44. Sun, July 13, 1936.
45. Province, July 18, 1936.
46. Sun, July 20, 1936.
47. ibid., August 2, 1936.
48. Colonist, August 2, 1936.
50. July 18, 1936.
51. E. Said, Orientalism, op. cit., p.54.
52. Sun, July 13, 1936. At the time, the City of Vancouver was more generally beginning to recognize its tourist potential and in the late 1930s, Council extended its Market, Exhibition and Industries Committee to include tourist development.
53. ibid., April 16, 1938. An undated news report in the Foon Sien papers states that the Chinese Benevolent Association provided a Mr. C. McDevitt with the first "passport" to conduct tours of Chinatown. Wong, Foon Sien Personal Papers, Special Collections, Main Library, University of British Columbia, Box 3. Concerning the Grayline sightseeing arrangements, see Halford Wilson Papers, op. cit., Superintendent B.C. Motor Transportation Limited to Mr. Y. Leong, March 31, 1938.
55. Province, July 6, 1940. For another attempt to give a deeper interpretation to a carnival event, see A. Cohen, A polyethnic carnival as a contested cultural performance. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 5, 1982, 23-41.
56. CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 126, L File, minutes of meeting held December 16, 1929. See also Province, November 27, 1929; Sun, February 20, 1930; Province, January 11, 1931; Colonist, February 25, 1931; Province, July 29, 1939.
57. Colonist, November 29, 1929.
58. See C. Hope, British Columbia's racial problem: part one. Maclean's, February 1, 1930, 3-4, 62-4; C. Hope, and W. Earle, The Oriental threat. Maclean's, May 1, 1933, 12, 54-55; see also the letters to the editor of Earl Nelson on the enfranchisement issue Colonist, September 29, October 12, 1935; Sun, July 1, 1936; Colonist, October 4, 1936.
60. Province, April 20, 1938.


62. For the protests, see CVA. Van. City, In Corresp., Vol. 74, C File. Yang Shu Wen to Mayor, April 24, 1919; PABC. Premier's Correspondence, 1919-27, File 75. In Box 8, Chinese Canadian project. See British Columbia. Statutes. 1923, 14 Geo. V, chap.76.


64. Province, December 23, 1931.


66. ibid., November 6, 1935, p.682.

67. CVA. Mayor's Correspondence, Vol. 37. Foster to W. King, Dep. Minister of Trade and Industry, Edmonton, July 18, 1938.

68. ibid.

69. ibid.


71. ibid.

72. ibid., Foster to Mayor Miller, February 5, 1937.

73. ibid., Foster to Mayor Miller, September 3, 1937.

74. Chinese Times, February 8, 1937.

75. CVA. Mayor's Correspondence, Vol. 26. Minutes of meeting held April 9, 1937 re white waitresses employed in Chinese restaurants.

76 ibid., Murphy to Mayor Miller, May 6, 1937.

77. ibid., Foster to Mayor Miller, March 6, 1937. In the letter, Foster requested the cooperation of the Licence Department, asking that it "make an example" through cancelling the licence of one of the cafes that was acting in defiance of the "agreement." Miller replied, assuring Foster that he had turned over the request to the Licence Inspector "asking him to take the necessary action." ibid., Mayor Miller to Foster, March 9, 1937.

78. Orr to Foster, September 7, 1937.

79. Sun, September 14, 1937.
80. ibid., September 16, 1937.
81. Sun, September 16, 17, 18, 22, 1937.
82. Sun, August 16, 1938.
83. ibid., September 18, 1937.
84. ibid., September 17, 1937.
85. ibid.
86. Province, October 12, 1937.
88. CVA. Mayor's Correspondence, Vol. 26, Murphy to Orr, September 29, 1937.
90. Province, October 12, 1937.
92. Sun, August 17, 1938.
93. T. Brook, Chinese-Canadians in the Depression, op. cit., p.2.
94. Province, September 10, 1936; Sun, July 20, 1937; ibid., February 8, 1938.
95. Chinese Times, February 9, 1936.
96. ibid., July 10, 1937.
97. CVA. Special Committee Files. Restaurant conditions, 1939.
99. ibid., Vol. 37, June 29, 1936, p.412.
100. ibid., Vol. 38, February 28, 1938, p.725.
102. CVA. Special Committee Files, No. 15, 1939. Living quarters in rear of stores.
103. Halford Wilson Papers, op. cit., R. Barton to Wilson, August 29, 1940.

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104. ibid., Barton to Wilson, October 1, 1940.

105. See footnote 104.


110. Province, October 18, 1938.

111. Sun, November 23, 1938.


115. Province, April 27, 1939.

116. ibid., March 2, 1937.

117. Province, November 3, 1936. See also Colonist, November 3, 1936.

118. ibid., October 24, 1936.


120. ibid., February 4, 1941.

121. For a review of the large geography literature on residential exclusion practices in urban America, see D. Ley, A social geography of the city. (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), pp.264-74.


123. CVA. Van. City, Council Minutes, Vol. 41, May 27, 1940, p.369. See correspondence from these organizations in Special Committee Files, No. 12, 1940, Legislation.

124. Province, February 4, 1941.


126. Sun, February 4, 1941. CVA. Special Committee Files, 1941. Oriental penetration into better class residential districts.

127. Sun, February 4, 1941.
128. Province, February 4, 1941.

129. ibid., February 5, 1941.

130. Sun, February 4, 1941.


133. Province, November 7, 1941.

134. ibid., July 2, 1943.

135. ibid., October 18, 1944.

136. ibid., March 16, 1945.

137. Province, August 27, 29, 1940. Attorney-General Wismer said, "The object of the order-in-council is to disarm our enemies no matter what their nationality, and also to preserve law and order. Under the latter head, it has been thought desirable to refuse registration of guns to Japanese and Chinese."

138. Province, October 2, 1940.


141. Province, December 12, 1941.

142. Chinese Times, June 25, 1941.


144. CVA. Mayor's Correspondence, Vol. 56, 1943, Chinese relief. Later, Cornett was presented with a miniature Chinese dragon by the Consul-General for China as a symbol of friendship between Canada and China. Sun, September 8, 1945.

145. Province, November 23, 1943.

146. Sun, November 8, 1945. CCF Parks Board commissioner, Mr. A. Webster challenged the City to "reconcile an act of racial discrimination on the part of a public body in Vancouver with the principles of Canadian democracy in defence of which we are engaged in the present war. Sun, April 10, 1943.

147. Sun, February 16, 1938.
148. On this issue, see Chinese Times, July 6, 7, 8, 15, 1943; Sun, July 6, 8, 1943; Province, August 2, 1943.


150. For a discussion of the events leading up to enfranchisement, see C. Lee, The road to enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia. B.C. Studies, 30, 1976, 44-76.

151. ibid., p.70,73.


153. W. Hurd, Racial origins and nativity of the Canadian people. Census of Canada, Vol. XIII, 1931, Monographs. (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1942). In a statement that has some contemporary relevance for studies whose methodological base is only census categories, Hurd wrote:

"The census ... merely follows popular usage in employing the terms 'English stock,' 'French stock,' 'Italian stock' etc., both to suggest original geographical habitat and to describe the sum total of the biological characteristics which distinguish such groups from others. Such usage is familiar to the public in general, and only when our origin classifications follow such lines can they be collected by a census, be understood by the people or have any significance from the practical standpoint of the development of a Canadian nation." p.568.


155. RG 76, Vol. 122, File 23636, Part 6, Memorandum for Mr. Robertson, November 17, 1942.

156. ibid., Part 6, Minutes of meeting held re Chinese immigration, December 6, 1943; ibid., Part 7, Keenleyside memorandum for file re Chinese immigration.

157. ibid., Part 7, Minutes of a meeting held in the office of the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, May 2, 1947.

158. ibid., Document titled "Possible numbers as a result of the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act, and prospects for actual arrivals."

163. J. Gibbon, The Canadian mosaic: the making of a northern nation. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1938). Gibbon's was a study of the "European racial groupings" in Canada - their history and folkways. It was an important early statement of Canada's mosaic ideology. Each chapter discusses a different race and includes a sketch of the face and dress of "the Welsh-Canadian type," "the Norwegian-Canadian type," the "Ukrainian-Canadian type" and so on.
164. D.H.C. February 11, 1947, p.321. See also the speeches of Mr. M. Coldwell, Mr. D. Ross and Mr. B. McKay.
165. S. Andracki, Immigration of Orientals into Canada, op. cit., p.211.
166. Repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act was accompanied by repeal of the order-in-council of 1931 which had made Canadian citizenship for Chinese upon renunciation of Chinese citizenship.
168. Sun, May 1, 1943.
172. I. Light, From vice-district to tourist attraction, op. cit., p.391.
173. Marwyn Samuels, personal communication.
175. ibid.
176. Sun, May 1, 1943.
Chapter Six

THE LEGACY OF A DEFENCELESS PAST: REBUILDING THE SLUM

By the end of the Second World War, a racially defined and constructed neighbourhood in the city of Vancouver had been consolidated as a socio-spatial fact with its own history and emergent processes. Incoming relatives from China and Hong Kong gravitated to the area where their sponsors had made their lives, where their own language (if not most dialects) was the medium of social exchange, their familiar diet was catered for, and where access to a historically etched market for Chinese housing and employment in Vancouver was easy. With Chinatown having been labelled as "theirs" for so many decades, many Chinese felt it to be such, although probably for different reasons than those who had so defined it.

Notwithstanding the forces for growth from within, Chinatown was by no means left to charter its own course for the balance of its career. Earlier definitions of identity and place continued to influence neighbourhood policies in the late 1950s and 1960s. Indeed as this chapter will discuss, the City and Federal Governments of Canada set out to actually rebuild Chinatown during this period on the basis of their own classifications of that place and in defiance of resident perceptions. Few periods in the history of Vancouver's Chinatown demonstrate so explicitly the power relation that had always underpinned the European classification of identity and place. To date we have argued that in defining the "Chinese and "Chinatown," white Europeans defined themselves and built and justified their own cultural hegemony. By the 1950s, the power of definition over Chinatown served the
interests of white Europeans in a more explicit manner. Of course external projections upon the area were guided more by urban planning ideologies than by the racial mythology we have traced to date, a mythology that meanwhile underwent some change in content, as we shall see in the first part of the chapter. But decisions regarding the actual implementation of government projects - in particular, their locations - will be seen to have been guided by inherited ideas about race and place. The empirical thrust of this chapter therefore concerns the extension of past definitions of identity and place into government policy in the post-war era. The attempts of the City to juggle the tourist definition in commercial Chinatown with a new "slum" definition in nearby residential Chinatown will be discussed in order to further illuminate the role of external ideas and practices in the making of Vancouver's Chinatown.

One of the intriguing aspects in the history of white European cultural hegemony is the way in which it comes to secure the consent of those subordinated to it. What becomes clear from a diachronic analysis such as this study has attempted, is that socially sanctioned categorizations of identity and place "act back" across time as part of a secondary process. Those historically subject to classification may project that ascription in the political arena in order to realize interests of their own. That is, the "Chinese" themselves are equally vulnerable to the prevailing culture of racial representations. Whatever else they may subjectively feel about their ethnic identity, they may project the fictitious homogeneity out of which the racial classification was built, use dominant collective images and ideologically represent them as positive themes, in part to offset the history of negative stereotyping. The literature on the "ethnic revival"
has tended to understate the significance of this secondary process, uncritically mystifying "ethnic" affirmation as a seemingly autonomous phenomenon.2 In the 1960s, one way in which some residents of Chinatown attempted to defend their properties from demolition was to propound their "Chineseness" through the medium of tourist Chinatown just as they had done for their own reasons in the Jubilee celebrations of 1936. This projection was in part, a lever to organize resistance against the other, more threatening, definition of residential Chinatown as a "slum." A more complex relationship between Vancouver's Chinatown and the Canadian state therefore developed in the 1960s as the federal and city levels of government attempted to unilaterally impose their own agendas on a community that, in the knick of time, was to find some valuable new advocates.

I. Ending Statutory "Race:" Removing the Racial Category to the Regulations

While there was much support inside the House of Commons and at hearings of the Senate Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour from 1946 to 1953 for a more liberal policy towards immigration, and for the removal of all explicit discriminatory obstacles to the inflow of immigrants, there was never any doubt in the post-war period that selectivity from particular non-traditional immigration sources should continue to be exercised. "Any suggestion of discrimination based upon either race or religion," the committee said in 1948, "should be scrupulously avoided both in the Act and its administration, the limitation of Asiatic immigration being based, of course, on the problems of absorption."3 By this was meant that all Canadian citizens should be entitled to equal sponsoring privileges, but there could be no
question of absorbing independent immigration from "Asian" sources. That privilege would continue to be reserved for British subjects, and citizens of Ireland, France and the United States. The task was to remove explicit discrimination that might betray, in the words of Hon. L.B. Pearson in 1950, "that it is we and not the Russians who stand for national liberation, economic progress and social justice," while ensuring no "fundamental alteration" to the "present character of the Canadian population," as Prime Minister Mackenzie King had put it in 1947.

For 20 years following the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act, successive administrations fulfilled King's prescription through regulations that allowed them to circumvent Parliament. Orders-in-council were effective in that they allowed the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to make short-order rules as to the "suitability" of sets of immigrants. In this way, although "race" was exorcised from the statutes, it was by no means erased from the practices of Canadian government. Indeed just as the legally impotent City Council in Vancouver had once sought ways of controlling the life chances of Chinese-origin residents through indirect measures, officials of Canada's federal administrations during the 1950s showed themselves to be adept at averting the spirit of post-war international diplomacy.

Although the structure of special legislation for specifically Chinese immigration ended in 1947, the category "Asiatic" or "Asian" into which "Chinese" became subsumed in immigration policy, guaranteed that the history of separate treatment would continue. As Hawkins notes, "Asia" was essentially a negative category, defined "as almost everything in the Eastern Hemisphere outside Europe." During the first
decade after the Act was repealed, the only Chinese immigrants who were allowed to enter Canada were certain categories of the kin of those sponsors who were citizens of Canada. With the specific exception of "Asian" immigrants, provision existed for all others, even "enemy aliens" from Germany after 1950, to enter as the relatives of both Canadian citizens and legal residents.

The sponsorship system thereby ensured a major bias continued in favour of the national groups already predominant in Canada. The Chinese Benevolent Association presented some forthright protests against the bias in 1950 and 1951, but the Immigration Act of 1952 continued to restrict the definition of relatives of "Asians" to Canadian citizens' wives and their children under 18 years. The member of Parliament for Kamloops, Mr. E. Fulton saw it this way in April 1953: "We want to take our country as we have it now and we want to develop it, we do not want to change it. These limitations, that we must not bring in people faster than we can absorb them, in either a physical or cultural sense, are I think agreed upon by everyone in the House." Fulton captured the spirit of the House of Commons throughout the 1950s, and the contradiction between the implementation of that consensus and the new rhetoric of rights for all without regard for race and creed - was not considered an unhappy tension. Of discrimination there should be none, many members preached, but selectivity of new immigrants was simply common sense. The Hon. J. Pickersgill, Liberal Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, even used this rationale in 1955: "Selectivity is not based on race and it is not based upon creed," he said. "It is based upon a conception of adaptability to the kind of society we have tried to build in this country for 300 years." And as we know," he remarked the following year, "it is easier to transplant
into soil which is similar to that from which you take the plant."

What was the contemporary by-product of a carefully engineered history of immigration recruitment and regulation, was for Pickersgill in the 1950s a "natural" endowment of Canadian social life that justified practices geared to its maintenance. Meanwhile, Chinese residents, anxious at the plight of refugees from China after 1949 would have to be satisfied with such minor concessions as the raising of the age of entry for unmarried children of citizens to 21 years. From 1957, fiancées of Chinese men who had lived in Canada for two years would be allowed to join their fiancés upon the posting of a $1,000 cash bond.

In 1958, Diefenbaker's new Conservative government decided to indicate solidarity with the growing new liberal climate in Canada by extending to both legal residents and Canadian citizens from Asia, the right to bring relatives to Canada. It was an important victory for Mr. Foon Sien who made repeated visits to Ottawa from 1950, and all those concerned with immigration in the House had little choice but to welcome it. The concession was somewhat weakened, however, by an earlier order-in-council that employed a new geographical principle to restrict the categories of relatives "Asians" could sponsor. In spirit, not much had changed. One member summarized the opinion of the House during Diefenbaker's administration when he said in 1958: "We believe that all men are born equal regardless of race or creed. But we also believe that our immigration department must be careful to regulate admissions so as not to upset the balance of our social life." By 1960, Immigration Minister E. Fairclough stated that "a system of selection which is fair and just, which will bring to Canada those settlers whom we need and who can become settled in our communities..."
without dislocation to our way of life or hardship to the immigrants themselves, is a government prerogative."¹⁸

In 1952, Mr. A. Stewart of Winnipeg North criticized the government for using the word "race" in its immigration legislation and census records on the grounds that "it is a word which has very little scientific validity."¹⁹ The content of Stewart's argument was ignored but his charges contributed to the insecurity which many members were feeling with the term "race." It is difficult to pinpoint how the term "ethnic" entered the official lexicon - its usage in the House of Commons was sparse and confused in the 1950s and early 1960s and no member attempted to clarify the term before using it. Its very ambiguity seemed to be its greatest asset. But one member signalled a shift in language in 1953 when he called Chinese "ethnically difficult of absorption."²⁰ Another in 1955 interpreted King's statement of 1947 to mean "immigration shouldn't be the cause of an undue change in the ethnical balance of the two main groups of this country."²¹ In most of its usages in the House, the term "ethnic" or "ethnical" (Wilfred Laurier's old term) tended to be another term for "race" or "racial" or "stock." One member said in 1955, "Canada must have some process of selection on an ethnical basis but not obvious discrimination towards Canadian citizens of Chinese origin."²² The same member observed that "several members have picked up the word 'ethnical' and used it instead of 'fundamental character' or racial derivation."²³ The member for Winnipeg South referred to the "basic ethnic divisions in this country" in a speech about the "fundamental racial position" of the two "great basic stocks who originated this country."²⁴ Another member tried to be more precise in 1955. "The selectivity we should be practising, is on the basis of cultural factors or ethnic factors if you wish," said Mr.
R. Dinsdale, "and I use the word as applying in a sense somewhat broader than race." For Dinsdale, "the word 'ethnic' means more than race; it refers to a way of life, a system of values."  

What is clear from such speeches is that the putatively constant biological dimension of "difference" was not being jettisoned by the members but rather incorporated into a seemingly more embracing term. Yet the old term "race" had always connoted both a biological and a "way of life" dimension. "Chinese" slept twelve to a room, to recall one of the earliest charges against them. As Dinsdale wanted to use the term "ethnic" then, it was not altogether different from the old terminology. Biological determinism had become far less rigid and explicit but the assumption that combined differences of a cultural and biological nature were constant attributes of a category seemed to remain secure in the new climate of attitudes. A softer form of determinism was being assimilated into a new cultural relativism that would be more respectful of contributions to Canada's "national tapestry," as Prime Minister St. Laurent called it in 1953. "It is because our forefathers had the wisdom to recognize that it was not going to be necessary in this Canadian nation to pour all the elements into the same mould that we have a Canadian nation," said St. Laurent. The member for Middlesex East pointed out in 1955, "The Chinese are very law-abiding and . . . they have never been known to be on relief" while in 1958, another member said:

"In Fort William, we have several hundred people of Chinese extraction, and they are the most industrious and law abiding citizens. . . . If we broaden the ethnic origins by immigration from any or all countries it will not harm us. On the contrary, it will be beneficial. Canada's transition to a multiracial society can only make for new strength and stability."  

The term "ethnic" also became adjectival shorthand for non-white
European. Hon. E. Fairclough assured the House in 1959 regarding impending amendments to the Immigration Act: "When the proposals are drafted it is my intention to consult with the representatives of the various ethnic groups and with the ethnic press, which is an important line of communication to those of ethnic origin." It appears that only some members of Canadian society - the non-British and French origin - were bestowed with ethnic status, a point to which we shall return in Chapter Seven.

Canada's social fabric was being no more tightly spun in the 1950s and 1960s than in the Canadian visa office in Hong Kong. While a full-scale immigration promotion campaign was being conducted in Europe and the United States, often with the lure of assisted passage, a single office in Hong Kong was established to process what had become an enormous backlog of applicants by the mid 1950s. Whereas the Hungarian upheaval held the promise for Canada of considerable manpower, the Hong Kong refugee situation triggered only defensive impulses in Ottawa. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Hon. R. Tremblay, said in 1964 that, "We must look at immigration from Hong Kong in ordinary immigration terms rather than as a special refugee problem." Furthermore, while processing of prospective immigrants from Europe and the United States involved a superficial medical examination, for the immediate family members of Canadian citizens in Hong Kong, processing was an exceedingly protracted affair. It was conducted by officials in both Canada and Hong Kong, who delved into the background of applicants, their professed family relationships, the financial status of their sponsors in Canada, their medical condition and their age. Verification of age was conducted by the dubious method of X-ray examination of a
candidate's bone structure\textsuperscript{32} - the findings of which were then forwarded to Ottawa for review. It was not unusual for processing of Hong Kong applicants to take up to three or four years, by which time applicants had often surpassed the eligible age of entry. And in the event that a sponsorship application failed, sometimes years after being made, there was no requirement that an explanation be given, or that appeal provisions be extended.

Some members of the House made the connection between these onerous and discriminatory regulations and the problem of Chinese illegal immigration that surfaced in the late 1950s. "The act itself should be changed so that it would not be necessary for these infractions to take place," submitted Mr. Peters in 1960.\textsuperscript{33} Still, the discovery of an operation in Hong Kong that sold false identities - mostly fictitious family slots - for entry to Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the United States and South America, prompted one of the largest searches in Canadian history.\textsuperscript{34} Unsubstantiated allegations by the RCMP that up to 11,000 Chinese entered Canada illegally after the war, and sensational treatment of the issue by the press, provoked and intimidated Chinese communities across Canada for five years from 1959 to 1963. As long as the Conservative administration did not clarify the police allegations, the Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver charged, the man-hunt created "the misleading impression that there is a community-wide conspiracy to land immigrants illegally and use them for slave labour. . . . While we recognize the right of the government to ferret out and to apprehend anyone engaged in an international ring of smugglers," a brief to Prime Minister Diefenbaker said, "we are alarmed at the wholesale besmirching of an entire group of minority Canadian citizens."\textsuperscript{35} Such accusations did not stop 12 RCMP and two Hong Kong
officers from sweeping unannounced through the Vancouver home of Mr. Foon Sien in July 1961. They also raided another CBA official's house, the Chinese Benevolent Association itself at 108 Pender Street, and five fraternal organizations, seizing filing cabinets, membership records, ledgers, correspondence and other documents. In the House, news of this harassment gave ammunition to members of the Opposition. Pickersgill used the argument of the CBA and said it was unfair to cast a "cloud of suspicion" over the entire Chinese population in Canada. His concern seemed well justified, given a controversial article in 1962 about "the laws that rule behind Canada's bamboo curtain," where lurks, the article claimed, "a criminal oligarchy with an immigration policy of its own."

Happily or unhappily, unequal selection of the relatives of people who were Canadian citizens was becoming exceedingly difficult to defend and to disguise from Parliament. By the early 1960s, the House of Commons had grown noticeably more uncomfortable, if not with the injustices themselves, then with their transparency and inconsistency with new legislation in 1960 that professed to protect individual rights and freedoms in Canada "without regard for race or creed." Almost by default then, and in an economic context of growing manpower needs, Mrs. Fairclough's ministry introduced immigration legislation in 1962 that removed almost all of the vestiges of a racially-conscious immigration policy. The new Act provided for the entry of unsponsored or independent immigrants of all origins with specific skills. What remained, as the Opposition was quick to point out, was the provision in the Immigration Act that granted authority to the governor-in-council to limit the admission of persons by "ethnic group," "nationality," "geographic area
of origin" and on account of "peculiar customs, habits, and modes of life."

Between 1962 and 1964 the Pearson administration received repeated exhortations to remove the inconsistency between its rhetoric and practice on immigration matters. Finally, in 1967, 20 years after the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act, "legislative authority to discriminate on ethnic, or to put it bluntly, on racial grounds," as one member said, was removed. Requirements for independent entry were standardized through a point system, an immigration appeal board was established and the sponsoring privileges of all citizens of Canada were finally equalized.

In 1967, for the first time in its history, the population of Vancouver's "Chinatown" was not to be artificially controlled, nor stigmatized by legislation that categorized its residents as outsiders on arbitrary grounds. The process of coming to terms with an outgroup in a white European society had finally been resolved, at least officially, through a recognition that as an instrument of explicit domination, "race" had lost its once unambiguous force. The removal of statutory race in 1967 did not, however, eradicate the consequences of its history to date. As we have seen, the process of racial categorization had been institutionalized with each passing government practice and a whole symbolic and spatial order had been built around it. Indeed while officials and politicians in Ottawa were dismantling the mechanisms for immigration discrimination, other government employees, both federal and civic, had been exercising control over Vancouver's "Chinatown" in a way that grew out of earlier practices and perceptions of that place and its residents. Some of the consequences of former rounds of "racial" classification had, at least in part, become the context and
justification for new definitions of place, with attendant planning proposals that would affect Chinatown on a scale perhaps unprecedented in its 70-year history.

II. New Surgery for Commissioner Chapleau's "Ulcer"

In the immediate post-war period, Canadian cities underwent a period of rapid demographic and economic growth. Competition for downtown land intensified in the early 1950s and deteriorating inner cities, increasingly bereft of a middle class tax base, became civic liabilities. Left as they were to poor families, single persons, new immigrants with meagre resources, and people who faced discrimination in their housing choices, Canada's inner cities joined their American counterparts as special candidates for government attention.

The assumption that social pathologies and environmental conditions were functionally related and that problems of the former could be eradicated by improvements to the latter, was not a new idea in the 1950s. During the Depression in the 1930s, the first major attempts at social change by means of alterations to urban living conditions had been undertaken in Canada.44 But by the 1950s, the problem of a deteriorating inner-city housing stock had become relevant to policymakers not simply for its actual or perceived relationship to social ills, but also because of the larger strategic goals of civic bureaucracies.45 Foremost among these goals was the "rationalization" of urban land uses, in particular the "upgrading" of areas that were defined as "revenue sinks," to use the vocabulary of the day, and the planning of facilities to increase downtown accessibility.

It is also apparent from the debates of the House of Commons that in an era of fervent anti-communism, "slums" were thought to be a
dangerous challenge to the capitalist distributive system, an 
"indictment of our society in the midst of plenty," as one member 
claimed in 1955.46 They were seen as a justification for the 
intervention of government in the provision of housing for those by­
passed by the free workings of the market. "The abolition of slums and 
the putting of people into proper housing will obliterate any thought of 
communism," Mr. A. Ferguson advised the St. Laurent government in 
1953.47 Besides, without remedial treatment, "blight" would spread and 
infect other areas - or so it was thought. Indeed the concept of "slum 
clearance," rooted as it was in medical analogies,48 held that nothing 
short of surgical extraction of the tumorous growth and its replacement 
by brand new tissue, would arrest the disease. In a bold, dawning age of 
modernization and "progress" in the "free world," blight could be 
reversed, the "ghettos" of inflexible eras dissolved or "assimilated" 
and the benefits of unprecedented economic growth enjoyed by all.

It was in this context that a major program of government 
sponsored "urban renewal" was initiated in Canada. It owed much to 
prededents in the United States which had been designed since 1949 to 
expand the supply of low-rental public housing and to wrestle with the 
problems of deterioration and congestion in urban centres.49 In Canada, 
provision for slum clearance had been available to municipalities 
since 1938, but it was only in 1954 that cost-sharing provisions became 
attractive to them. In that year, the National Housing Act was amended 
to allow a federal contribution of 50 per cent to the cost of housing 
acquisition, slum clearance and public housing redevelopment projects, 
the remainder to be split between the province and the municipality.50

Although largely residential at the time, the area immediately to
the east of Vancouver's Chinatown had been zoned "light industrial" in the 1931 Zoning Bylaw for the city, allowing for the construction of factories and warehouses up to six storeys high. This classification of the area was obviously not without consequences for the mostly Chinese residents because in subsequent years, property owners in Strathcona had been unable to get mortgage money or bank loans for repairs and renewal of their properties. The upshot was that by the end of the war, much of the housing stock of this area with its single houses, rooming houses, apartments and cabins was in some degree of disrepair.

The objective condition of the area was not as important, however, as the new construction that those with the power of definition decided to place upon the district. For L. Marsh, who wrote a report (Rebuilding a Neighbourhood) in 1948 in conjunction with civic officials and Ottawa's Central Mortgage and Housing Commission (CMHC), the area was in a state of "chronic deterioration." It was not "the worst slum area in the city," Marsh reported - "there are worse pockets of derelict, unhealthy or overcrowded housing-blocks" - but the area had become "a kind of zoning ganglion of mixed uses, badly in need of rationalization." The main impetus for identifying Strathcona however, was its "critical town planning importance," the area being "well located in relation to the industrial waterfront and the downtown commercial and business districts." Furthermore, the area was costing the City in public services nearly twice the tax revenue derived from it, Marsh computed. Clearly, the classification of Strathcona as a "slum" was being guided by agendas other than the objective status of its housing. This would not be so significant but for the fact that the diagnosis of "blight" in the 1950s and 1960s carried the prescription of nothing short of full-scale surgery - without the consent of the
In 1956, the newly established Technical Planning Board of the City of Vancouver stated:

"That part of Pender Street between Carrall Street and Main Street forms the most important part of Chinatown. Chinatown is an area which is improving in quality. In fact, it rates more highly than most of the normal retail areas, in the amount of money spent on new retail construction and repairs to stores since the war. This particular part of the whole Chinese quarter is the only one which can be said to be a tourist attraction. The remainder of the Chinese quarter to the east of Main Street is at present of significance only to the people who live there."  

If the area east of Main Street was "of significance only to the people who live there," it soon gained another form of significance for the Vancouver Planning Department and the likes of chief civic planner, Mr. G. Sutton Brown. In February 1956, a technical committee of the Building and Planning Committee was struck to study and select, with the aid of a grant from CMHC, "those areas of predominantly residential use which might require redevelopment in the next 20 years."  

Following the recommendations of Rebuilding a neighbourhood, attention was immediately focused upon an area which Marsh had described as "unsavoury" and in need of being "completely reconstructed." The area lay east of Main, south of Burrard Inlet, west of Clark Drive and north of False Creek Flats (see map page 326). Within that area, the Strathcona district had potential for high-density residential use, the Vancouver Redevelopment Study claimed, because unlike the more "derelict" area to the north of Hastings, it had an existing community that could be brought into more productive and improved accommodation. As the study noted, "One of the main reasons for undertaking a programme of redevelopment, is to bring back into more productive use land which should be valuable because of its location, but which is not used to anything like its potential..."
because of the existence of blight.\textsuperscript{58} In fact it was estimated that redevelopment in Strathcona would give "two or three times the tax yield of the existing blighted properties," gains that would conveniently "offset the cost of clearing." The member of Parliament for Vancouver-Kingsway described Vancouver's "principal blighted area, east of Main and north of False Creek" to the House in 1957: "The whole of the area contributes to the toll which we pay in disease, crime, delinquency and vice."\textsuperscript{59}

Although "Area A" (the area designated by the 1957 study for "comprehensive redevelopment") was by no means a "Chinese" preserve, it did during the 1950s contain a substantial proportion of the Chinese-origin residents of Vancouver, in particular "a large proportion of the Chinese family population."\textsuperscript{60} (The other area in the city slated for comprehensive redevelopment had a "significant East Indian colony."\textsuperscript{61}) After the war and repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act, the district of Chinese settlement became more decisively split between the commercial sector west of Main Street and a residential sector east of Main Street, as reunited families sought homes and some men gave up their communal-style hostel accommodations. It was a period of rapid growth for Vancouver's Chinese community relative to earlier years. During the 1950-59 period, the proportion of the total Area A population that was Chinese increased from one third to 48 per cent, while in certain of the blocks closer to commercial Chinatown, the proportion of residents that was of Chinese origin was 70 per cent and growing in 1957.\textsuperscript{62} The area had a "particular attraction to the Chinese because of its proximity to Chinatown and its job opportunities," the redevelopment study of 1957 noted.\textsuperscript{63} Perhaps for this reason, as many as 80 per cent of the family household owners ("a number of whose houses have been carefully kept
up" the study conceded); 78 per cent of the single owners; and 53 per cent of the single-person tenants of "District Two" in Area A (roughly equivalent to residential Chinatown) told a City commissioned survey in 1957 that they had no desire to move from their present accommodation.64

While there might be difficulty with arguing that the City earmarked residential Chinatown for clearance out of some kind of racial targeting, it was certainly the case, as we shall see, that the City showed no hesitation in defying the expressed preferences of the residents. In February 1958, the Vancouver City Council approved in principle the recommendations of the 1957 report, complete with an operational strategy for rebuilding the district of Chinese settlement, as many of its North American counterparts were likewise being transformed.65 As with Commissioner Chapleau's "ulcer" of 1885, which was diagnosed and treated before the disease had even been detected in Vancouver, Chinatown's diagnosis as a "slum" was to be justified and realized through the surgery itself. In Strathcona, where a "collar of blight" was said "to prejudice the healthy development of the downtown area itself,"66 applications for building and redevelopment permits began to be rejected after 1958, all property values were frozen and residents, discouraged by City staff from improving their homes, waited for the day they would be told to leave homes "which we never knew were part of a 'slum,'" Mrs. S. Wong said some years later.67

Chinese homeowners in Strathcona, initially cooperative with the idea of having improved public servies, lost little time organizing themselves when they discovered that improvement was to entail nothing short of demolition of their homes and relocation in high density public housing. Within three days of being acquainted with the first five-year
plan for Strathcona, a Chinatown Property Owners Association of 300 members was established and a delegation, headed by Foon Sien, visited City Hall to protest the scope of the plan and the City's choice of the area adjacent to commercial Chinatown for its first redevelopment project. They returned with their fears somewhat allayed by the verbal assurance that the 1957 study was merely "preliminary." A week later, however, Council rezoned 90 acres of Area A from light industrial to residential as a first step towards the study's implementation. The CTPOA was more wary the following April therefore, when "the bad member of Council," Alderman H. Wilson, and Mr. Sutton Brown visited the Chinese Benevolent Association armed with blueprints of the Acquisition and Clearance study for Project One. Confiscation of property would leave those who remained in the area "only tenants," association spokesmen protested, while discrimination restricted home ownership possibilities elsewhere in the city. As Foon Sien had said in 1956, "There are still some areas in Vancouver where we could not buy property if we tried ... so we don't try." Alderman Wilson again gave his blithe assurance that the plans were "not complete."

Within seven months, the report for acquisition and clearance in Strathcona was approved by Council and authority granted to the City's engineers to "redevelop" the 32-block neighbourhood bounded by Gore Avenue, Raymur Avenue, Hastings and Union Streets in March 1960. The entire area was earmarked for clearance in stages (see map over for stages One and Two). The first stage of the redevelopment of Area A would involve the construction of low-rental, high-density public housing between Campbell and Raymur Avenues, and Hastings and Union Streets (the Raymur Park complex); clearance of Block 86 (immediately north of MacLean Park) for public housing with the possibility of some
CITY OF VANCOUVER REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT
IDENTIFICATION PLAN

SCALE 1" = 400'  NORTH

PROJECT NO. 2

Fig. 17 Source: City of Vancouver. Redevelopment project 2, 1963
private development that conformed to the over-all plan; and clearance of Block 83 bounded by Keefer and Georgia Streets, and Hawks and Heatley Avenues, as a replacement park for the Maclean Park site. That site was to be used as the first "housing bank" to accommodate people displaced by Project One and would be called the Maclean Park complex. By stage three, it was expected Strathcona would be entirely rebuilt.

Opposition to the City of Vancouver's acquisitive interests soon swelled in Chinatown and Foon Sien anticipated that, although Project One was not as threatening to Chinatown as later stages might be, it would still displace "at least a few hundred Chinese. ... We are not opposed to the plan as a whole," he said, "we just don't want it to take in all of Chinatown. It would mean the end of Chinatown except for the stores. The program may be a good thing for integration ... but many of our people don't speak English and some are too old to learn."73

But for Mayor T. Alsbury, the stores were sufficient and the rest - that is, the residents - perfectly dispensable:

"I have nothing but commendation for their moral and community life ... but our 20-year redevelopment plan must proceed. Other areas and other citizens will be affected beneficially. Redevelopment removes the high cost of blight, ill health, delinquency and other social expenses. Redeveloped areas become revenue instead of deficit and rehoused citizens get wholesome, healthy homes. In the case of Chinatown, I hope the City and the Chinese community can work together to retain its unique character, but in the interests of a planned city, the redevelopment must go ahead."74

"With its appealing restaurant neon signs," wrote Beautiful B.C. Magazine in 1961, "Chinatown is a treasure of Oriental culture" that "contributes an exotic flavour to Canada's Oriental gateway."75 This, it seems, was the only "Chinatown" the City was prepared to recognize favourably in the early 1960s. The rest of Chinatown had become, for those who classified it from without, a "slum." Alderman Wilson had
similarly informed the CTPOA in 1958 that the City favoured retaining Chinatown's "unique cultural flavor" but that progress was "inevitable."  

Vancouver residents of Chinese origin had never been inclined to passively accept the encroachments of the state upon their life chances and the new public-interest logic that singled out their homes for destruction against their wishes was yet another call to action in a long history of provocations. Of course not all of them saw the issue the same way. The Chinatown News, voice of the local-born population, shared the view of the Vancouver Redevelopment Study that relocation should "discourage the formation of ethnic enclaves." The News encouraged its readers to "join the ranks of the suburbanites" and "hasten the assimilation process." Others were more attached to their home. In October 1960, in one of the strongest delegations that Chinatown had ever mustered, a contingent of 50 representatives and lawyers from the CTPOA and other Chinese organizations including the CBA, pleaded its case before Council. A CTPOA brief (also presented to the Royal Commission on Expropriation Laws and Procedures the following year) urged the retention of private housing in the "35 blocks in China Valley, around the Vancouver Chinatown, an area termed Area A ... home to 9,000 Chinese:

"We want to point out the danger to the Chinese Community and the probable disastrous social and economic effects of failing to take every conceivable care to ensure its wellbeing. ... Chinese are under a disability as to property ownership and social acceptance generally. Only limited numbers of skilled jobs and white collar positions are available. The disruption of this group could lead to widespread disaster and a very real social problem. ... The Chinese population of the City is almost entirely concentrated within Area "A" and there is in Vancouver an estimated 14,000 Chinese people. ... Any disruption of Chinatown and a material outflow of Chinese population to another area inevitably means the destruction of the Chinese merchants. Directly affected by the operations now
contemplated by the City of Vancouver are 176 businesses. . . . There are now also 68 fraternal associations . . . four Chinese language schools . . . six churches. . . .

The expropriation and clearing planned by the City will be a great disruptive force socially. . . . [Stability] is not provided by rented accommodation, no matter how good. . . . The private development contemplated would only be available to large investors and [where] private ownership is permitted, there is no guarantee it will be given to [dislocated] Chinese.

It is fair to say that all the Chinese whose property will be expropriated are extraordinarily apprehensive as to the price they may receive for their property. . . . The City, by setting aside this area for redevelopment and marketing it practically as a slum have made properties in the area at the present time almost unsaleable. This has also been reflected in a lowering of assessments which are sometimes used by expert valuers as evidence of the value of property. It is pointed out that this all works to the advantage of the City of Vancouver. . . .

Vancouver's Chinatown has been an asset, it is submitted, and is some place different for Occidentals to go and spend a pleasant evening. Inroads upon the economic life of the Chinese community will have a serious effect upon this and instead of becoming a showplace as in (say) San Francisco, the area will decline.80

The appeal to Chinatown's "International Flavour," as the brief worded it, was valuable leverage for Chinese merchants and spokesmen. It afforded them some degree of influence over those with the power to impose or impress definitions of reality that for the Chinese, clearly held consequences that extended well beyond mere concern for the volume of Occidental tourists.

The influence of the tourist definition was minimal at this time however. The City had acquired a new leverage of its own that provided the justification for the new classification of Chinatown. This was the language of progress, born of a period of rapid economic and urban development and powerful growth coalitions. A Province editorial used this "public interest" logic in August 1961 to dismiss the protest from Chinatown:

"Slum clearance is going ahead . . . and the Chinese community should be cooperating in the process. They should be arranging to house elderly survivors of a past era in the fine new housing that is to be provided. Chinatown can be preserved. But only if the Chinese themselves help to make it a better, more modern and finer
Chinatown. Slum clearance is Chinatown's opportunity."81
In an optimistic age in the industrial West, with its modern high-rises and urban "renewal," the residents, it seemed, merely misunderstood their own best interests. Mr. D. Jung (whose election to the House of Commons in 1951 signalled the entry of "Chinese" in Canada to professional roles in the post-war period), equally endorsed the public interest ideology. "It would be a shame," he said in December 1960, "to hold back something from which the whole city stands to gain."82 Council was so convinced of the plan's "natural" virtue that, having heard the Chinatown brief on October 4, 1960, it decided at the same meeting to hold a special Council meeting on the second stage of the Strathcona project.83 Director of Planning, Mr. G. Fountain could not have summarized the City's position more concisely: "I can appreciate their fears," Fountain assured the CTPOA early in the new year when expropriation began in Areas A-1, A-2 and A-3:

"I know that if I heard that a big, impersonal City was going to pull my house down I'd be very upset. . . . But we're sure the Chinese will be very surprised when they find they can have modern Western accommodation at prices they can afford. . . . I'm sure that once the plan gets going and the first group moves into the new accommodation and appreciates how nice it is, it will be a revelation. It is true their mode of life will change, but it can't be helped. We're not spending public money where it isn't necessary."84

The project for a second stage of redevelopment in Strathcona earmarked for demolition blocks that were in more intensive residential use by Chinese than those identified for Project One.85 "Area A-6" - blocks 87 and 88 and home to approximately 570 people - was to be converted into public housing for the Maclean Park complex, while a private row-house development for senior citizens was planned for blocks 72 and 73. An extension to the Lord Strathcona school on block 75 was also planned that would displace approximately 200 residents.86
The report on stage two of the redevelopment scheme was circulated by the City to over 20 interested organizations in 1962 but only residents of Chinese-origin balked at it. Especially indignant was the CTPOA which submitted: "The completion of [Project Two] would cut off any future expansion of Chinatown and strangle the Chinese business activities." Not only that but in denying individual ownership, the City was "regulating the life of the people residing in Area A" in a manner that violated "the principle of democracy and individual freedom." The Chinese Benevolent Association advised that Project Two be deferred until an assessment could be made of the impact of the first stage. Another 17 Chinatown organizations opposed the proposal on the grounds it included five blocks so close to commercial Chinatown. The Christ Church of China objected that Chinatown would be "dismembered" and "our congregation . . . scattered."

Despite these opinions, a new consultative committee the City appointed to liaise with the aggrieved parties, recommended that Council approve the "carefully considered and balanced" proposals for Project Two. Mr. Foon Sien, a member of the committee, was not to be coopted however, and in January 1963, before resigning in protest from his post, he pointed out to Council that the intention to disperse the Chinese district was not as far removed from the forced evacuation of "Little Tokyo" during World War Two as the City would care to admit. Even elderly, poor single men preferred furnished housekeeping rooms in private accommodation, he pointed out, as evidenced by the fact that many Chinese had already moved away from the recently completed Maclean Park complex.

The day after the controversial meeting, Mayor William Rathie
offered Chinese architects the power to design a private development for Area A-3 (Block 86). "Submit your own plans for Chinatown development if you don't like the City's. The best people to redevelop the area are those most affected."90 (What he neglected to point out were the stringent land disposal and density requirements set out by CMHC.) Realtors and Chinese Benevolent Association members Dean and Faye Leung acted quickly on the offer and while their Vancouver Chinatown Development Association (VCDA) drafted their own version of "Chinatown," Council approved Redevelopment Project Two in principle.91 By April 1963, the Leungs had completed their plan for presentation to Council. Unknown to them, the plan did not conform to CMHC specifications for the project, but its "Oriental city" of 72 individual family units - complete with "moongate windows, pagoda roofs and landscapes of bamboo, Chinese maples, Japanese cherries and tea gardens" - conformed well to one of the City's conceptions of the district. "It will provide Vancouver with a marvellous tourist attraction," Mrs. Leung promised. "We would also hope to get more land for a big tourist mall complete with fountains and temples to display eastern culture."92

A rival indigenous project branded the Leungs' scheme as "outright commercialism." Mr. G. Eng said, "my scheme is based strictly on rehabilitation and there aren't any pagodas."93 The Chinatown News also warned against a "Chinese village" as a counterproductive move that would "build a wall around ourselves," while one Chinatown businessman said, "We don't want to be like the Stanley Park Zoo with buses going through our backyards."94 With the support of the Greater Vancouver Visitors and Convention Bureau and the provincial Minister of Recreation and Culture, however, the Leungs won Council over in July 1963.95

This attempt by the "Chinese" to manipulate landscape form in the
image of the City's representations was not received as favourably by the senior level of government. Despite the efforts of member of Parliament for Vancouver East, Mr. H. Winch, to convince CMHC of the virtue of a project with an "Oriental touch" for "the wonderful people who reside in the four to six blocks east of Main Street," the crown corporation was unmoved. "The land had been cleared at considerable public expense," said the Regional Officer of CMHC,

"and a redevelopment plan has been prepared which provided the framework for the development of the Maclean Park project. The development of Block 86 should be consistent with the broad principles established by this original concept. If, in accordance with the original plan, the City were to request additional public housing on this land to supplement the Maclean Park project, the Corporation would be glad to consider such a request."

Importantly, the attempt by the Chinese themselves at commercializing the "Chinatown" landscape (for their own interests) was an ineffective strategy so long as it conflicted with the agenda of more powerful authorities. The projection of "Chineseness" by those defined in terms of it, could clearly "act back" only when, and as far, as dominant interests would have it. In 1936, such a projection had conformed to those external interests. But in the early 1960s, despite Mayor Rathie's contention that "they" knew what was best for themselves, the logic of progress was inviolate, the plan of 1957 an inflexible end in itself.

While the City's proposal for a second stage of redevelopment east of Main Street was under review by the Provincial and Federal Governments, the City considered a site for the "Oriental Village" more convenient to the Canadian government's over-all plan for the district. In 1964, the City Planning Department drafted a plan to improve Vancouver's Chinatown, "the second largest in North America." The plan included the area west of Main Street and set out to "show how this area
can be improved, its character strengthened and its tourist potential enhanced." Explicitly excluded from the improvement plan was the shopping area east of Main Street that was patronized by local residents. Redevelopment would re-route heavy traffic from Pender to Keefer Street, it would turn one section into a "park-like Oriental bazaar" and it would establish a pedestrian mall on Pender Street between Carrall and Main Streets. At one entrance to the mall, a 60-foot "neon-dragon" was to be built and at the other, an "Oriental gateway."

The Planning Department report also suggested that the "disarray of .. signs should be ordered to reduce their conflict with the riotous gaiety of the neon signs which should not be restricted."99

City Council found much merit in the plan to transform Chinatown from, in the words of the press, "a somewhat drab district into a sparkling area for both tourists and Vancouver residents"100 and in March 1964, it recommended more research on the report of the Planning Director.101 The Town Planning Commission and the civic bureau of the Vancouver Board of Trade also endorsed the idea of rejuvenation on the grounds that it would have "economic value to the city, both from the entertainment and tourist point of view."102 A writer for the Vancouver Visitor's Bureau supported the plans for rebuilding "the flourishing area along Oriental lines."103 So did the Chinatown News encourage "a major rebuilding job" in the business district. "We need more tourists," said an editorial in May 1964:

"One way to attract them is to keep this area growing. This can only be achieved by a major renovating and rebuilding job. Most of the structures were erected more than half a century ago. ... They lack cultural and aesthetic appeal. Architecturally they are neither East nor West - only a caricature of the Orient. With a new generation of architects sprouting up in our community ... these young professionals should be able to produce some blueprints that will truly reflect the architectural splendour of the Orient."104
If the Chinatown News was eager to cater to the images of society's defining elites, Chinatown merchants themselves were far less prepared to extend legitimacy to the idea of "Little China." Planning Director, Mr. W. Graham learned from a Chinese spokesman at a meeting of the Board of Trade in March 1964 that the merchants were especially unreceptive because of "fears that City Council has been trying to drive Chinese out of their residential area." One Chinatown merchant supported the idea of improvement "but first of all you have to bring people back into the area." Although the Chinese Benevolent Association agreed to form a committee in April to work with the Planning Department, the idea appears to have slid from the civic agenda as the exigencies of a more imposing plan for the commercial district (which will be discussed in the following section) began to occupy the planning bureaucracy.

The merchants' fears for their nearby clientele were realized in December of that year when the City began to acquire property under stage two of the redevelopment project. One Keefer Street home-owner had spoken out that there were many like her who wished to stay on "as home-owners and not as tiny units in a government sponsored project. Many of us do not believe we are underprivileged and in need of a government subsidy," Mrs. S. Wong said. Regardless, clearance proceeded apace through 1965 and 1966 taking with it the resolve of the CTPOA. An estimated 1,600 persons had been displaced by Project One, only some of whom were Chinese, but 1,730 were displaced by Project Two, the majority being Chinese. Despite considerable turnover in the complexes, including the new Raymur Park complex for 370 tenants, demand exceeded supply. The City's response was to prepare a proposal in January 1965, for a third and still more ambitious redevelopment project that would complete the vision of the 1957 study for Strathcona. By January
1966, home-owners in Areas A-7 and A-6 had taken to the desperate strategy of refusing to sell their homes to the City without the assurance of alternative property in the same area. Many of their predecessors had been forced to leave the area (without relocation assistance) because public accommodation was not available when their properties were acquired. House price settlements were increasingly interpreted as signs of callousness on the part of a City trying to cheat owners of their valuable inner-city land. Displaced families reported anger, frustration and considerable disruption to their lives and friendship networks. The property of the Christ Church of China, which resisted any settlement at all, was finally expropriated without the offer of another site. "The church has no architectural value," said Alderman H. Rankin in 1967, "and it is holding up 300 units of public housing." 

The decision of the City of Vancouver to implement a massive and untried public venture in Chinatown in defiance of the preferences of the Chinese relied upon the long-standing tendency of external agents to perceive Chinatown's residents as typifications - essentially as objects for the projects of others. West of Main Street, the City flirted with the idea of the "Little Corner of the Far East" at the same time as, east of Main, it imposed its blight classification. Needless to say, it was a crude juggling act. Both conceptions and practices suggest that "Chinatown" continued through the 1950s and 1960s to reflect less the career of those who lived there, and more the authority of those with the power to define Chinatown and, literally, to construct it.
III. The Carrall Street Freeway

If officials of the City of Vancouver could rest easy that, despite the opposition of the people of residential "Chinatown," they were providing them with new, modern living conditions, no such defence could have been mounted in 1967 for subordinating residents' interests to the City's new strategic goals. In that year, plans were disclosed for erecting an elevated eight-lane freeway through the western wing of commercial "Chinatown." It was a decision that distinguished again the unbroken power relation between "we" and "they," self and Other, that had underpinned the history of identity and neighbourhood definition to that time. Having tried over the years to bring Chinatown into conformity with its own ideological imperatives, the City now felt justified in physically appropriating it and bringing it into rehabilitated use for the rest of the city. It was less a vindictive act of racial targeting than an expression of the taken-for-grantedness of the ideology of separation among municipal politicians and officials who believed Chinatown could (and should) be administered according to their own will. "We had been assured that while the City officials knew best about housing for the Chinese people, they would not interfere with the Chinese commercial district," Foon Sien remarked bitterly in December 1967. That same month, Mr. J. Lee, a Chinatown lawyer remarked: "Someone has decided that Chinatown is expendable."

The story of the Chinatown freeway began in the early 1950s when, in conjunction with the redevelopment plans for the East End, the City's civil servants began to tackle the concerns of downtown congestion and circulation. Engineers, planners and other new specialists argued that another crossing from Vancouver to the North Shore was necessary to
to alleviate problems of access to the downtown area. The Committee on Burrard Inlet Crossings adopted that mandate but concluded that the study of a crossing could not be divorced from transportation planning for the entire Burrard Peninsula. Within six years, a Metropolitan Highway Planning report recommended a new First Narrows crossing to Vancouver that would be integrated with a downtown-oriented network of facilities. Here it echoed planning consensus throughout North America as policy-makers sought to eliminate blight, stimulate investment in central business districts and provide transportation infrastructure necessary to keep urban cores "viable."

Although never formally adopted by Council, the report became the working document for formulating transportation plans for Vancouver until 1972. Moreover its recommendations became incorporated into related plans for redevelopment in Strathcona. (In "Area-A," the 1959 plan for acquisition and clearance designated boundaries for redevelopment that respected proposals for an East-West freeway in the vicinity of the Prior/Union corridor.) The appearance on the civic scene of millionaire Mayor William Rathie gave the freeway idea an enthusiastic and influential advocate. In an attempt to implement the idea, Rathie hired a company to analyse downtown revitalization and its relationship to transportation linkages. Using as its point of departure the earlier reports approved by Council, the consultants presented an updated version of an earlier system that would increase the accessibility to the downtown via an East-West freeway, a North-South freeway and a new Georgia Viaduct. By 1964, another report linked all these pieces into a continuous freeway route (from the North Shore through the downtown peninsula to a waterfront freeway that linked the Trans-Canada highway via a North-South and an East-West facility.)
mandate of the **Vancouver Transportation Study** consultants in 1966 was simply to take all the pieces in the jigsaw and create explicit routes. Severely circumscribed by Planning Department stipulations for route placements, the consultants drafted a freeway system that replicated almost exactly the study's terms of reference. That is, as advised by the City, the system took in a waterfront freeway from a Brockton Point crossing along Abbott Street, a North-South link "in the vicinity of Carrall and Main Streets" to the Georgia interchange, that would provide linkage to an East-West freeway in the Venables-Prior corridor. Either of the North-South choices would of course dissect Chinatown. With what little discretion they had, the consultants opted for a Carrall Street alignment.

It was not as if in the fervour to implement planning theory, transportation planners and consultants simply overlooked Chinatown's existence. On the contrary, the **Vancouver Transportation Study** acknowledged the presence "of one of the largest integrated Chinese communities in the Western Hemisphere."117 It pointed out:

"The commercial Chinatown portion of the Old City is one of Vancouver's landmarks and an important tourist attraction. Commercial Chinatown is confined almost entirely in an oblong centred on Pender Street and bounded by Hastings Street, Gore Avenue, Keefer Street and Carrall Street. Residential Chinatown includes this area but extends particularly eastward of this core. The portion of Chinatown of particular interest to tourists is the two blocks of Pender Street between Carrall and Main Streets."118

The observations of the architectural sub-consultant cited in the study also indicate full awareness of the damage a freeway would wreak upon Chinatown:

"Whether a freeway facility could be successfully integrated within this old section of downtown Vancouver depends on whether (a) certain of its subtle features are dispensible and (b) the City and senior levels of government are prepared to spend an amount substantially in excess of the cost of the freeway facility itself
... for a timely effectuation of its intent of redevelopment within this area."119

In other words, if the City was still inclined towards its earlier plan for revitalizing Chinatown, it might be possible for the City to have its "Little China" and its freeway too. The precedent for this, according to the sub-consultant, could be found in "the process of adapting the freeway to Project 200 and vice versa."120 In fact, Project 200, an eight-block commercial development, was yet to be built. The development-oriented City had actually devised the freeway system with Project 200 in mind, and to invoke it as a reason for integrating a rearranged Chinatown into the freeway plans, indicates the degree to which some planners felt Chinatown could be manipulated for the advantage of the City.

The decision-making behind the Carrall Street choice attests further to this. The possibility of tunnelling the North-South freeway was dismissed on simple cost criteria. Also it would involve tunnelling the waterfront freeway, which would preclude access possibilities to downtown and to Project 200. Locations west of Carrall Street, including an alignment along Carrall Street itself, were ruled out because they would "involve relatively more intensive downtown land uses and more valuable property, as well as interference with Project 200."121 An alignment east of Columbia to Main Street was thought to present alignment difficulties and to be equally intrusive to "present and projected land uses." Locations east of Gore Street were impractical. "The City's Planning Director has stated his belief," the study noted, "that location of any portion of a freeway or its ramps within the Strathcona redevelopment project and its required clearances would involve loss to the City of further financial support to the project by
the senior levels of government." The redevelopment scheme, inspired and executed as it was without regard for the expressed protests of residents had now become a justification, in part, to appropriate the rest of Chinatown. That area, in particular its western border, was the "least disruptive and most feasible" alignment for the North-South connection, the engineering consultants advised. Not only that but the route offered the greatest access from the proposed waterfront freeway to the proposed Project 200 development. City Council and its Non-Partisan Association majority, a major instigator of post-war land use change in Vancouver, found little fault with the choice of its expert advisers and gave official support for the Carrall Street route on June 1, 1967. In so doing, it unlocked the plans of the civic bureaucracy whose mission it had been since the early 1950s to superimpose, in the public interest, an entire traffic network upon the city of Vancouver, down not simply routes of maximum efficiency, but also of least resistance.

IV. Chinatown as a Liberal Cause Célèbre

i) Diverting the Path of Progress

When, finally, in mid-1967 the merchants of Chinatown were made privy to the City's plans for Carrall Street and the unit block East Pender Street, the "long-divided, fragmented and quarrelsome community" as the Chinatown News described Vancouver's Chinese, was galvanized by fear and indignation. Council had even approved, just weeks before the freeway decision was disclosed, the construction by Chinatown interests of a $150,000 centennial pagoda at Pender and Carrall Street, the site suggested for such a purpose in the 1964 improvement plan.
obviously hoped the Chinese would agree that the 30-foot pillars of an eight-lane freeway were compatible with the redevelopment of tourist Chinatown, especially any improvements they cared to pay for themselves.

As it turned out, the news of a Chinatown freeway was greeted with hostility not only by Chinese but also by some new-found allies who had by this time discovered an interest of their own in Chinatown. For members of an influential Vancouver architectural firm, Birmingham and Wood, the freeway threatened to violate the City's "heritage" and "character" as embodied in Chinatown and other districts in the "Old City." They began a campaign to save Chinatown from destruction, their first initiative being to mobilize a protest among Chinatown leaders, merchants and property owners for a public hearing before Council. "We should be attempting to improve Chinatown, rather than destroy it," said one architect from the firm, while another, Dr. B. Wood, predicted: "If the freeway comes about, it will destroy Vancouver's largest tourist attraction and ancient historic landmarks. The project is 10 to 20 years away but as long as a shadow of it is there, the Chinese community won't attempt to improve Chinatown." In protesting the freeway decision, the firm claimed it could also speak for civic organizations such as the Downtown Business Association, the Business Owners and Managers Association, the Townsite Committee, the Community Planning Association, the Community Arts Council and the Visitors Bureau.

In mid-June, the Chinese Benevolent Association was invited to a meeting of Council that had been called to enable freeway study officials to provide more information on the Chinatown section of the freeway complex. Quickly it became apparent that it was not simply the CBA that needed more information but also a number of aldermen, some of
whom queried for the first time why other locations had not even been considered. Despite Mayor Campbell's attempt to convince the Chinatown leaders and some newly sceptical councillors that the freeway would be an asset to the district - it would remove through traffic and bring more local business traffic, he argued - Council supported Alderman Rankin's motion that further action on the freeway be postponed until the opinions of all interested groups had been solicited.129 Nor was the Chinese party convinced by the Mayor's suggestion that the underside of the Chinatown freeway need not become a "forest of concrete stilts as in Seattle," but could be turned into an arcade of shops. Far from impressed, they informed Council that the centennial pagoda would be shelved until the offer was to be treated seriously.

Council was sufficiently disturbed at the unpopularity of the freeway decision among the 17 delegations (some non-Chinese) to a public meeting in July that it instructed the freeway consultants to study alternative alignments, such as one along Gore Avenue (the eastern border of Chinatown).130 Sensing that a new wave of interest in Chinatown was surfacing, the CBA delegation submitted a plea for preservation in the appropriate terms:

"Chinatown is a tradition, a landmark and a major tourist attraction of the City of Vancouver and has been almost since the birth of the City. . . . Thousands of dollars are spent annually promoting the tourist business in Vancouver and in promoting the city as a Convention City. Chinatown has always been on the agenda of visiting delegates. Vancouver's Chinatown has potentials of being the largest Chinatown in North America. Unlike the Chinatowns in New York and San Francisco, we have no import restriction. These potentials can be developed with the encouragement from the City Council."131

The CBA's generous and selective recollection of Chinatown's history, ignoring as it did the considerably negative experience of the area "almost since the birth of the City," is an apt example of
categorization "acting back," in this case at the behest of those categorized. In order to realise their own interests, the CBA picked up the social definition through which the Chinese had long been subordinated, projecting it in order to win Council's "encouragement."

Assured they would be invited to the Council meeting at which the future of the North-South freeway would be discussed, Chinatown leaders were outraged to later learn of Council's decision to retain the Carrall Street alignment. "It's not only the question of the freeway", charged CTPOA representative Mr. H. Fan, "but the fact that Council acted in bad faith by not allowing a hearing."132 Chinatown lawyer, Mr. J. Lee, saw the affront as symptomatic of the entire handling of the freeway decision:

"We oppose the freeway plan for our own interests, yet our greatest complaint is the way in which City Council has gone about the whole business. . . . If the best experts had been free to decide where the freeway should go, and they had settled on Chinatown, we would have had to accept it. But the experts were so sharply restricted that they were virtually forced into recommending Carrall Street and Chinatown."133

Foon Sien was equally annoyed and did not mince words at a luncheon hosted by Mayor Campbell in Chinatown on October 23. Indeed he saw it as "the latest abuse in 81 years of discrimination against Vancouver's Chinatown:"

"When in 1957 the City labelled our residential area blighted, we admitted that some improvement was justified, but more than 500 Chinese protested the scope of the plan. City Hall ignored us of course and went ruthlessly on. Now some 15 blocks of predominantly Chinese homes have been destroyed. . . . The City boasted it was providing low-income housing. But only some old people who had no choice became tenants in it. Most did not want the stigma of living in subsidized, civic housing and they wanted to be property owners, not just tenants. City officials smiled at our protests and said this would 'make a better Chinatown.' . . . Now, lo and behold they announce a freeway to cut 250 feet into the west side of Chinatown. . . . Whatever is left in the shadow of the concrete will soon wither away."134
The Leungs, meanwhile, claimed the City's unilateral action heralded Chinatown's slide into dereliction. "They tried to rebuild the Chinatowns of Los Angeles and Toronto after chopping them up in the name of progress ... but it didn't work," they warned.135

Many influential people in Vancouver in the late 1960s not only agreed with the Chinatown protest, but were eager to express themselves. Important among them was the member of the Provincial Legislature for Vancouver East, Mr. R. Williams, who charged that the freeway decision was only the most recent expression of the City's tendency to preclude Chinese from policy-making that directly affected their future.136 Other such instances, he recalled, were the decisions to turn Pender Street into a truck route in the 1950s and to clear without consultation much of the residential area so heavily populated by Chinese. Fifty University of British Columbia architecture students felt moved to march through Pender Street in October bearing placards which read "Is Sutton-Brown God?" Others protested outside the hotel where Federal Transport Minister Mr. P. Hellyer held a press conference the same month. A group of geography, planning and architecture students also met with Mayor Campbell to remind him of the consequences of supporting a link that was predicated upon a whole network. The Town Planning Commission, the Vancouver chapter of the Architectural Institute and Dr. W. Hardwick, a geography professor, criticized Council's subordination to the dictates of public servants of the likes of City Engineer, Mr. R. Martin.137 Martin defended the Carrall Street route in November 1967 in terms that indicated that old notions of Chinatown lived on in the consciousness of those with the power to implement their ideas of place. "Most ladies wouldn't, nor do they walk down Carrall at night," he said. "The street isn't any Champs Elysees; it needs rebuilding."138
Other protesters referred to Chinatown's "value" to Vancouver. Mr. L. Killam, one of the architects from Birmingham and Wood, warned: "It will be a tragic blunder if the City demolishes half of Chinatown for a freeway."\(^{139}\) A UBC architecture professor, one of several faculty to speak out, said: "Chinatown is one of the great things we have in this city."\(^{140}\) This was also the position of the Civic Unity Association, the Community Arts Council and the general manager of the Greater Vancouver Visitors and Convention Bureau who asked: "What's a few million dollars more in costs compared with destroying Chinatown - one of our leading tourist attractions?"\(^{141}\) The support of the Board of Trade was also important and, in a brief later in the year, it declared: "We have every sympathy with the Chinese community and believe that the character of the area should be improved with as little interference as possible."\(^{142}\) A *Province* news story remarked that, "As a tourist attraction, Chinatown probably ranks second only to Stanley Park, and so contributes greatly to Vancouver's fame abroad. With its restaurants, stores and nightclubs, it adds entertainment spice for resident and visitor alike. . . . Few Vancouverites are unfamiliar with the colour and romance of Chinatown."\(^{143}\)

The new vision of Chinatown as a civic asset - a refinement of the 1930s tourist image - was being forged by an influential liberal reform lobby of academics, lawyers and community workers for whom Chinatown was a vehicle to discredit uncritical boosterism in urban planning and to mount an alternative political agenda. Through these eyes, Chinatown had become an oasis of difference in an otherwise uniform downtown. It was a place of character in an environment levelled by policies aimed at converting the city to a place of production. It

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was a symbol of local struggle against land-use change sponsored by ruling elites. The perception promised greater justice for the Chinese — indeed it was to serve the interests of the Chinese as no other intervention on their behalf ever had.

But the emerging conception of "China Town," though more conciliatory to the Chinese, nonetheless contained its own broader ideology of place and identity, as Chapter Seven will take up. By the late 1960s, this new definition had become sufficiently persuasive as to actually permit a reversal in the fortunes of Vancouver's Chinatown. The Chinatown freeway became politically suicidal for the NPA, as two tumultuous public meetings late in 1967 demonstrated, and early in the new year, Council voted to rescind it. Only two aldermen refused to capitulate to what was by now a solid change in public attitudes towards Chinatown. Even Alderman H. Wilson remarked: "I can see their complaints now, it would wipe out Chinatown." Later in the year, Mayor Campbell promised: "We are not out to carve Chinatown in half, in quarters, or bissect or dissect it;" an elevated freeway over Carrall Street "would be like a knife cutting through the area." Certainly, it was as if a knife had pared away generations of disdain for Chinatown — but at the core, the dominant society's ongoing ideology of difference continued to be a significant constant in Chinatown's career.

ii) The Fight Against Blight

For the residents of Strathcona, the decision to rescind the Chinatown freeway proposal demonstrated that the pro-growth coalitions of free market politicians, planning-oriented technocrats and entrepreneurial interests could be challenged, and even overcome. Similar development coalitions had also fractured throughout North
America under the pressure of a political culture of urban unrest and social critique. Encouraged by the reformist turn, the remaining Strathcona residents prepared themselves for the third stage of "comprehensive redevelopment" with new awareness, incentive and political clout.

In October 1968, the City of Vancouver submitted its plan for scheme three of redevelopment in Strathcona to the upper levels of government for approval. The objective was to clear and rebuild the 15 remaining blocks of Strathcona with a number of "super-block" public housing and other complexes. The scheme was expected to affect "about 3,000 people, most of them Chinese."147 (In 1967, the year the point system was introduced in the federal immigration policy, the proportion of the area that was of Chinese origin was over 70 per cent, while 78 per cent of the families in Strathcona were "Asiatic" in 1966.148) For the Chinese, the proposal inspired "outright hostility."149 An indignant Foon Sien asked an NPA audience at a civic campaign dinner in December 1968, after hearing their platitudes about Chinatown beautification: "How can there be a Chinatown without Chinese in it, when you take away our homes by expropriation?"150 But the Strathcona Area Council's committee on redevelopment and relocation - an organization of mostly non-resident professionals established in 1965 to liaise with the City on neighbourhood issues - was sufficiently impressed by the stage three proposal to "congratulate City Council and the various departments of the City working on urban renewal, on the excellent proposal to revitalize the Strathcona area."151 Needless to say, the residents required a voice of their own.

It is not the intention here to discuss the campaign undertaken by the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA) to
provide that voice. The organization was established and run predominantly by residents who were committed to salvaging the dwellings of those who remained in Strathcona in 1968. SPOTA's activities and perceptions of Chinatown could form part of a separate study of how the Chinese themselves have managed the classifications of identity and place that this study has traced. Essentially, however, SPOTA emerged out of a desire on the part of some politically active Chinese to gain greater control, after decades of unilateral intervention by the levels of government, over decisions that affected them. At the same time, some local-born "Chinese" in Vancouver also hoped to raise their own profile in their community, whose power elite had become too insular to resist large scale public interventions. SPOTA also emerged out of a new mood in Ottawa following the election of Pierre E. Trudeau's Liberal Government in April, 1968. The slum clearance/public housing wisdom came under its first real public scrutiny and it was in December 1968, after the Federal Minister of Transport and his Housing Task Force had visited Vancouver, that Strathcona property owners were first inspired to join forces.

Across Canada, the Transport Minister, Hon. P. Hellyer, listened to residents relate their experiences of urban renewal. In Strathcona he found further evidence that, for all the advantages clearance programs had for municipalities seeking to alter their assessment ratios, the residents themselves "seemed to know little more than that they were living in an 'urban renewal area' and that this designation should not be interpreted as a compliment to their neighbourhood." In Strathcona, Hellyer described "the Chinese as having a rather exotic, vigorous and cohesive community" while elsewhere in Canada he
observed other Chinatowns had been special targets of urban renewal. Soon after his return to Ottawa, Hellyer recommended a federal freeze on all renewal projects in Canada, including Project Three for Strathcona in Vancouver. The Federal Government, having spent approximately $50 million on clearance schemes from 1960 to 1968, saw much merit in Hellyer's advice for the Canadian inner city, and supported a moratorium on spending.156

Redevelopment Project Three was never brought out of the "deep freeze." SPOTA cultivated a close relationship with the senior levels of government, especially the favourably disposed Hellyer, as leverage against a most uncooperative civic administration. It formulated an alternative redevelopment proposal for Strathcona for which it consistently lobbied all the levels of government. The case for "rehabilitation" of homes was also in the interest of the City, SPOTA tried to argue in one of its many briefs to the governments:

"Vancouver City Council and the Vancouver citizens at large have urged that Chinatown be preserved and developed as a business and tourist attraction. These same people must realize that Chinatown cannot continue to exist if there is no residential Chinese community nearby. The present urban renewal scheme for Strathcona is likely to destroy the Chinese residential community and in turn will seriously affect Chinatown as a city asset."157

The City of Vancouver had consistently ignored the link between east and west of Main Street and it was only when, in another striking swing of fortunes for Chinatown in the late 1960s, Hellyer's successor pointed out that the Federal Government had reassessed the logic of progress in Strathcona, that the City was forced to take cognizance of the mutuality of commercial and residential Chinatown. "Ottawa is not interested in participating in the City's Strathcona urban renewal scheme," Hon. R. Andras told Planning Department officials in August 1969, "unless the people affected - predominantly Chinese families - and the three levels
of government have a full part in the planning."\textsuperscript{158} In the same month he told the press: "Since an ethnic group is involved, particular problems arise with the redevelopment and in consultation with the municipal and provincial authorities, we have agreed to rethink the approach."\textsuperscript{159}

In the following years, the Strathcona Working Committee implemented a rehabilitation project in 20 city blocks east of Gore Avenue that was notable for being the first cost-sharing arrangement for neighbourhood upgrading in Canada.\textsuperscript{160} The experimental project included major public works improvements and housing rehabilitation. A grant-loan system offered owners a federal contribution of 50 per cent, a provincial contribution of 25 per cent and a city contribution of 25 per cent toward interest free loans (repayable over five years) for rehabilitation costs (to a maximum of $3,000). Sixty-two percent of the owners of single detached homes in Strathcona participated in the program and by its end in 1975, house prices in Strathcona had increased from 55 per cent of the average sale price in Vancouver in 1969 to 80 per cent in 1974. The reversal in the fortunes of Chinatown was also signalled by a "return" of some younger, local-born "Chinese" to residential Chinatown. Social worker Mr. J. Lau, said: "Now it seems they have something they can be proud of. They will stay in the area because it is going to be upgraded."\textsuperscript{161}

Conclusion

By the late 1960s, there developed a kind of mutually supportive symbiosis between Chinatown and the various levels of the Canadian state that was more outwardly congenial in terms of the life chances of the Chinese. Undoubtedly, there had been a change in the dynamic between
Chinatown and the state. As we saw first in the redevelopment of Strathcona, and then in the successful fight against the freeway proposal, the Chinese were mobilized into action to preserve their neighbourhood in an unparalleled display of shared purpose. Their response had been to the forcefulness of a post-war planning imperative that attempted to do more with Chinatown than set its boundaries and regulate its behaviour. The new pro-development consensus had it that Chinatown needed to be assimilated into the grand plan for post-war Vancouver. Although not predicated upon racial ideology per se, the selection of Chinatown for such a massive, untried public intervention distinguished the unbroken power relation between Chinatown and the Canadian state that we have been tracing. That the state's plan effectively called for the obliteration of the neighbourhood was both a demonstration of the European assessment of Chinatown as expendable, and a rallying point for Chinese who, we saw, attempted to counter the threatening slum classification with appeals to the tourist definition of Chinatown.

But as the Leung's scheme for Block 86 demonstrated, there were limits to the appeal to "Chineseness" for those who lacked the power of definition. Indeed it was only when a new image of "Chinatown" was appropriated by a powerful, non-Chinese reform lobby in the late 1960s which heralded a new external interest in Chinatown, that such appeals to the "Chineseness" of Chinatown proved sufficiently convincing to subvert the post-war ideology of progress. The emerging civic asset perception of Chinatown was not altogether new of course. Indeed, as has been the rule throughout the career of Chinatown's social definition, it was an outgrowth of a prior image, a re-working of a historically established one.
In a context of rising liberalism, Chinatown had found new allies for its projection of itself through the nexus that had so long separated it from the host society - the nexus of difference. But for the brief appeal of the tourist definition in 1936, the 1960s heralded an era when the Chinese would come to be accepted for their difference. In this climate, as Chapter Seven will set out, definitions of identity and place found a new footing in the Federal Government policy of "Multiculturalism." White hegemony in Canada was to find a new means of re-creating itself through the projection of an ideology which, in professing to include the racial "Other," would in practice and rhetoric affirm their "Otherness." A City-commissioned Restoration Report described Chinatown with these words in 1969: "The (Pender) Community now seems ready to unfold into yet another cycle in its evolution within the multiracial fabric of Vancouver."162
NOTES

1. Two Canadian sociologists have observed that, "It was not until very recently, with the emergence of Pan-Indian or Canadian Indian consciousness, that the various peoples categorized as Indians by outsiders began to believe themselves to be of common ancestry and to categorize themselves as ethnically alike on the basis of that belief." D. Hughes, and E. Kallen, The anatomy of racism, op. cit., p.87. Prager argues that in America, the "manipulation of cultural symbols of blackness" by blacks is widespread and testimony in itself of the enduring power of racism in that country. J. Prager, American racial ideology as collective representation, op. cit., p.109. See also P. Berger Invitation to sociology: a humanistic perspective. (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), p.157.

2. In the Canadian literature, a number of edited collections have singled out the cultural aspects of ethnic communities to the neglect of economic, political and historical contexts. See for example, P. Migus, ed., Sounds Canadian: languages and cultures in multi-ethnic society. (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1975). One that has attempted to correct that problem is J. Dahlie and T. Fernando, Ethnicity, power and politics in Canada. (Toronto: Metheun, 1981). Some of the monographs in the Generations series commissioned by the Department of Secretary of State have characterized ethnic communities as standard-bearers of a native culture. See for example, B. Abdu-Laban, An olive branch on the family tree. (Toronto: 1980) which explains the economic success of Arabs in Canada by the "Levantine ethic." For the United States context, see for example, A. Greeley, Ethnicity in American life. (New York: John Wiley, 1974). See also note 37, Chapter One.


6. She writes, "In the minds of the Canadian Liberal Government in 1947, Asia meant almost everything in the Eastern Hemisphere outside Europe. Its north-west frontier ran along the southern border of the Soviet Union and the Black Sea and round the eastern and southern coasts of the Mediterranean. All Turkey and lands to the south, including Egypt, were in Asia. Only the Armenians managed to slip out of the Asian net." By 1956, this net had been adjusted to exclude Turkey, Egypt and Israel. Canada and immigration, op. cit., p.94.


11. ibid., August 8, 1956, p.7219.


16. Following a court case that went against the government in 1956, the wording of the regulations was changed to exclude a direct reference to "Asians." Instead, a geographic principle was used that allowed Pickersgill to boast, "People are no longer penalized because of their race." D.H.C. June 9, 1960, p.4713. The new principle can be seen from the wording of the 1956 order-in-council. According to that regulation, a person who was a citizen of a country other than the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, France, the United States, all countries of continental Europe, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Central America and South America - could enter Canada if he/she was the husband, wife or unmarried child under 21, the father where he was over 65, or the mother where she was over 60 of a Canadian citizen. Canada. Gazette Part II, Vol.90. SOR/ 56-180. In Box 8, Chinese Canadian project.


18. ibid., June 9, 1960, p.4712.


23. ibid., February 17, 1955, p.1290.

24. ibid., p.1271.
25. ibid., February 17, 1955, p.1290.
27. ibid., August 8, 1956, p.7222.
28. ibid., August 2, 1958, p.4027; see also March 5, 1959, p.1645.
29. ibid., April 22, 1959, p.2937.
32. The X-ray procedure was often criticized in the House for its questionable validity. "The old age pension branch can't tell the age of a man by X-raying his bones," said one member in 1953. D.H.C. April 24, 1953, p.4355.
34. On the illegal movement, see F. Hawkins, Canada and immigration, op. cit., 131-4; E. Wickberg, et al, From China to Canada, op. cit., 213-7.
39. In 1960, an Act for the Recognition and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was passed by the House that enshrined the "right of individuals to protection of the law without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, religion or sex." See discussion in E. Kallen, Ethnicity and human rights in Canada, op. cit., chap.2.
43. See F. Hawkins, Canada and immigration, op. cit., chap.6.


47. ibid., April 24, 1953, p.4390.


49. For a discussion of some of the geographical literature on the urban renewal in America and Canada see Ley, D. A social geography of the city, op. cit., chap.8,9.


53. ibid., pp.iii, 2.

54. ibid., p.vii.

55. ibid., p.ix.


58. ibid., p.111.


60. L. Marsh, Rebuilding a neighbourhood, op. cit., p.viii.

61. ibid., p.65; W. Hardwick, Vancouver, op. cit., p.115. The bias of urban renewal projects toward racially defined areas in Canada is also suggested by the study D. Clairmont and D. Magill, Africville. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974). In American cities, the term "slum" had "distinctly racist overtones" during the period of urban renewal. R. Mollenkopf, The post-war politics of urban development, op. cit., p.256.


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63. ibid., p.49.


66. City of Vancouver. Vancouver redevelopment study, op. cit., p.84.


70. Wong, Foon Sien. Personal papers. op. cit., Box 3, CBC interview with Foon Sien, 1956. In 1951, a couple of Chinese-origin were declined entry to a City-owned suite in the West End. The New Citizen, April 24, 1951. In 1958, a Chinese family was denied an apartment in the West End. Sun, December 12, 1958. In 1962, the Vancouver Real Estate Board still honoured article 32 of its code of ethics which read: "A member should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighbourhood, a character, or occupancy or any individual whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighbourhood." Sun, February 24, 1962. By 1967, Foon Sien claimed that resistance to Chinese home purchases had passed in all but "one or two areas." Province, May 27, 1967.

71. Province, April 6, 1959.

73. Province, September 15, 1960.
74. ibid., September 26, 1960.
75. Beautiful B.C. Magazine, 3, 2, Fall 1961, 27-33. See also Sun, May 30, 1962 for a similar feature on Chinatown's "exotic flavour."
76. Sun, April 6, 1959.
77. City of Vancouver. Vancouver redevelopment study, op. cit., p.49.
79. ibid., Vol. 8, No. 4, October 18, 1960.
86. Numbers to be displaced are reported in Sun, January 19, 1963. Project two also included Area-5, north of Hastings Street, outside Strathcona.
87. The responses of the Chinese organizations and the counter-responses of Mr. Fountain are included in the appendices to Technical Planning Board. Redevelopment project, No. 2, 1963.
91. Province, February 8, 1963.
93. ibid., April 29, 1963.


97. City of Vancouver. Redevelopment Project No. 1, Area A-3, op. cit., Regional officer to W. Graham, January 17, 1964 (emphasis added), Appendix H. See rest of file for correspondence surrounding the protracted negotiations between the City, the VCDA and CMHC offices in Ottawa and Victoria over the proposal.

98. City of Vancouver. Planning Department, Chinatown, Vancouver: design proposal for improvement. 1964.

99. ibid., p.15.

100. Province, November 14, 1964.


108. H. Lai, Integration of physical planning and social planning, op. cit., p.97.


110. In the Maclean Park complex, provision existed for only 300 persons and in 1963, requests were made by Chinese to the Chinatown News for assistance in securing a space in view of the competition for suites. Chinatown News, Vol. 10, No. 15, April 18, 1963.

111. Sun, January 20, 1966.

112. See R. Nann, Urban renewal and relocation of Chinese community families. (Ottawa: Department of Secretary of State, 1970).

114. Both quotes are taken from **Province**, December 2, 1967.

115. The details of the background to the Chinatown freeway are taken from S. Pendakur, *Cities, citizens and freeways* (Vancouver: V.S. Pendakur, 1972).


118. *ibid.*, p.42.

119. *ibid.*, p.43.

120. *ibid.*, p.49.

121. *ibid.*, p.46.

122. *ibid.*, p.47.

123. *ibid*.


128. *ibid*.


130. Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Quade and Douglas Inc., *Vancouver transportation study*, op. cit., p.52.


132. **Sun**, October 18, 1967.


134. *ibid*.

135. *ibid*.


137. A detailed discussion of these protests is provided by V. Sendakur, *Cities, citizens and freeways*, op. cit., chap.4.
139. ibid., October 18, 1967.
140. ibid., October 19, 1967.
141. ibid., October 18, 1967.
144. S. Pendakur, Cities, citizens and freeways, op. cit., p.73.
146. Sun, November 22, 1968.
147. ibid., November 25, 1967.
148. L. Bell, Urban renewal scheme 3 - Strathcona. Research Department, United Community Services, July 1966, p.2.
150. Sun, December 5, 1968.
152. See CVA. Additional Manuscript 734, Spota Files.
158. Province, August 8, 1969.

160. The details of the Strathcona rehabilitation project are taken from Wong, S. Urban redevelopment and rehabilitation in the Strathcona area, op. cit., pp.261-68.


Chapter Seven

CHINATOWN AS AN "ETHNIC NEIGHBOURHOOD:" INVOKING THE BENIGN MYTH

"Thousands have come through this court from nearly all countries. None are more industrious, fastidious and courteous as those from China. They have enriched this nation with their culture and their moral lives and their compassion for the widow, orphan, the infirm and the aged."

- Vancouver Citizenship Court Judge Oreck, 1970

"We believe that as a national policy we should foster uniqueness and take advantage of it for the benefit of the whole society... It is very important that we begin to portray ourselves for what we are, a multicultural, multiracial society with each group having made a valuable and important contribution."

- Minister for Multiculturalism, Mr. A. Cafik, 1977

"The more things change, the more things stay the same."

- Lewis Carroll, The Annotated Alice, 1960

Although traces of a positive assessment of "ethnic diversity" in Canada can be found in speeches in the House of Commons in the early 1950s as we saw in Chapter Six, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that enthusiasm for the distinctiveness of Canada's "ethnic groups" was loudly acclaimed in the House and elsewhere. It was precisely this diversity, not only ethnic but regional, which held the key to the nation's elusive identity - or so it was often, nervously, offered. Following the lead of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which held hearings from 1963 to 1968 and which had as a small part of its mandate, the investigation of "the cultural contribution of the ethnic groups" with a view to recommending measures to safeguard that contribution, many members throughout the 1970s spoke out in praise of the value of the "immigrants" or the "ethnic groups" to the uniquely Canadian "kaleidoscope." That which was once the fearful...
embodiment of alien and inferior "stock" had become, it was perceived, "an inestimable enrichment that Canadians cannot afford to lose," to cite the words of the Royal Commission.¹ As the member for Hamilton-Wentworth asked in February 1972, "Has any man in this Chamber ever met a Chinese he did not like? I submit that they enrich our humour, culture and dignity and I hope we have more of them."²

This chapter explores a new context of nationalist ideology and language promulgated by the Liberal government and its administration during the 1970s. This context is important in that it facilitated a radically new form of neighbourhood definition and targeting by all three levels of the Canadian state in the 1970s. According to a new state vision of Multicultural Canada, Chinatown was to be celebrated and protected for the uniqueness it was acclaimed to embody as one of Vancouver's key "ethnic neighbourhoods." Chinatown had become a local preserve and cultural expression of "difference," to be respected and valued for the contribution it was perceived to make to the uniquely Canadian ideal of "Unity through Diversity." That is, without regard for the history of its making, political figures of the 1970s at all levels of government saw in Chinatown an "ethnic" contribution that could not be left to the forces of assimilation and homogenization. It had itself become a powerful symbol of the new Canada, the land where the Chinese were "separate but equal," free . . . to be Chinese.

This contemporary conceptualization completes our interpretation of "Chinatown" from the vantage point of those in command of the power of definition. This study has argued that Chinatown has been a place which, through the course of its own making, has reflected and informed the larger social process of racial classification in Canada. Far from a
value-neutral term, we have seen that the classification "Chinese," like
the idea of "Chinatown," is a cultural ascription that belongs to
the dominant "white" European society. Of course "Chinatown" and
"Chinese" have not just been European classifications - they could be
studied from many vantage points - but for the purposes of this study
they have been viewed as influential and enduring filters through which
Europeans have screened people of Chinese-origin and the Pender Street
district. Both ideas of identity and place have been assigned and
institutionalized by powerful institutions in Canada, regardless of the
self-definition of Chinese-origin people and their own perceptions of
Chinatown. Some "Chinese" have, at times, willingly appropriated
and projected the collective representations of white European Canada
for their own cultural and material interests. As will be seen, this is
no more apparent than in the 1970s when, in the rush for the spoils of
Multiculturalism and other public rewards at the neighbourhood level,
there was much to recommend the public projection of "difference."

Along with Porter and others (for example, Steinberg on the
American context), I would argue that the new state rhetoric of "ethnic
diversity" is based on assumptions that are a carry-over from the time
when, as Chapter Three demonstrated, particular (unflattering) qualities
were considered inherent to a national type and part of the hereditary
process.³ Come the 1970s, there is evidence to suggest in government
rhetoric that Chinese were to be incorporated for their perceived
"Chineseness" just as once they were so excluded. Perceptions of an
essential Chineseness were still very much alive, as was the underlying
racial frame of reference. In the case of Judge Oreck's uncritical
cultural relativism, "Chinese" were now praised for certain attributes -
their "industry," "fastidiousness," "courtesy," "morality" and
"compassion." The "masked negativity of positive stereotypes" such as these, Wong claims, has underpinned the "middleman minority" theory formulated in the American context, where Chinese (and Japanese) Americans have been seen as a collective "model minority" with "high adaptive capacity" and "commercial acumen." More subtle in its phraseology, but no less revealing, is the notion of the "cultural contributions" for which Canada's "ethno-cultural groups" and "their" neighbourhods will be seen to have been celebrated in Canada's well-intentioned policy of Multiculturalism in the 1970s.

That cultural differences exist and have an existential reality can hardly be disputed. Brotz's argument to the contrary - that "there is no diversity at all," that "Canada's ethnic groups, as in the United States, stand for exactly the same thing which is a bourgeois way of life" - seems an overstatement. However cultural differences cannot be mystified as something constant and ahistorical as was argued in Chapter One. There will be a considerable difference between the values and outlook of a "Chinese" in South Africa, a "Chinese" in Hong Kong, a second generation "Chinese" in San Francisco in 1860, a "Chinese" in mainland China in 1980 and a third generation "Chinese" in Vancouver, in 1920. Djao writes that an "erroneous assumption" is often made in the ethnic studies literature "that Asian immigrants or their immigrant ancestors brought with them a certain cultural baggage marked 'traditional' and that these immigrants and their descendants are still digging into that chest... for values and lifeways." As Djao's argument suggests, cultural formation overseas for all immigrants (which includes white Europeans) is a selective, contextual and dynamic process where different individuals synthesize different elements and practices.
of new, old and subcultural traditions and often in combinations that depend on the exigencies and structural foundations of the new setting. (This question of felt cultural differences in overseas contexts and the separate question again, of how emblems such as language are used by a category of people to subjectively define an ethnic identity, are ones for separate treatment.)

What is of interest in this chapter, is the subtle tendency for perceived or actual cultural differences to be imputed a priori to the "Others" in state policy and incorporated uncritically into dominant ideologies of "difference." The risk inherent in this may be especially pronounced for age-old categories, such as "Chinese" and other racially defined minorities, where there is a history of racial classification and outsider status that can be compounded. The government policy of Multiculturalism trades heavily and openly in this language of (cultural and implicitly racial) "difference." While the complexity of the cultural, economic and political aspirations of Canada's two "charter groups" was officially recognized in the 1960s and 1970s, the rest of Canadian society became defined in terms of their separate "cultural contributions" to Canada. It has been the "Others" who have been courted for the unique qualities, artifacts and cultural expressions - the "difference" - that "they," by definition it has been assumed, bring to Canadian society.

Mr. S. Leggatt, member for New Westminster, gave voice to this in his statement to the House in June 1973:

"It is interesting to note that on the west coast we have the second largest Chinatown in North America. They [the Chinese] have made a unique and valuable contribution. Thank God they have not melted themselves into some sort of amorphous North America. They continue to contribute in many interesting ways to the mosaic and originality of this country."
Clearly it is the optimistic and melodious ideal of diversity itself that is the benchmark for new constructions of old outsiders. Porter in fact argues, "that such diversity is more enjoyed by the beholder - whatever Olympus he might be viewing it from - than any of the actors within their enclaves."8

As this chapter sets out to demonstrate, it is the Canadian state that in large part provides the Olympus from which public perceptions of difference are carried into the 1970s. In fact it is the state that chooses the "cultural contributions" of the Chinese, including Chinatown itself, that it wants to endorse as evidence that the nation is, as it says, "Multicultural." This state control will be seen to be as clear in instances of government courting in the 1970s, as it is in those where, as of old, the state attempts to harass Chinatown because of its perceived "Chineseness." In short, it is the reification of some essential "Chineseness" that underpins both the pro-active and reactive reflexes of the Canadian state in the 1970s.

Despite considerable changes in public attitudes across the century that have brought radical improvements to the life chances of Chinese-origin people in Canada, the social process of place and identity categorization that is the subject of this study remained securely intact through the 1970s. It was the ongoing ideology of "difference" that provided the implicit basis and context for positive planning measures in Vancouver's Chinatown and it was the state that legitimimized that ideology, recreating a subtle white European cultural domination within the limits of liberalism. And as long as the underlying racial frame of reference endured, various constructions, positive and negative, continued to be placed upon the category in the late 1970s by those more securely woven into the Canadian tapestry.
I. **State Policy and the Consolidation of a Concrete "Chinese" Turf**

The Canadian state has exercised considerable control over the demographic history of Vancouver's Chinatown. Starting with the head tax system of immigration control, the federal level of government was instrumental in setting the conditions for the development of a "Chinese" territory in Vancouver's East End. The points system of 1967 did not by any means signify the end of expressed concerns in the House for the composition of Canada's population, but as we saw in Chapter Six, the Canadian government finally conceded the means to implement these concerns through discriminatory policies in that year. As a direct result, Canada's Chinese-origin communities swelled in the late 1960s and in the 1970s. In the four years, 1967-70, 28,440 immigrants from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan entered Canada, more than half the number that had arrived in the preceding 22 years, 1946-1967.9

The majority of Chinese-origin immigrants to Canada after 1967 came directly from Hong Kong, where many had acquired English-language education and lived a decade or more in an urban environment not altogether alien to the industrial "West."10 (After 1949, direct immigration from mainland China had ceased and it was not resumed until 1974, when Prime Minister Trudeau arranged for the reunification of a certain number of families in Canada.11) There were various other points of origin for the immigration of the 1970s. Indeed with the changes in immigration policy, the term "Chinese" in Canada came to signify an ever-increasing range of heritages earned in such diverse points of origin as Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, the West Indies, Vietnam, Britain, South Africa and
Singapore. We may ask with some justification it seems: how "Chinese" is "Chinese," and how long is a "Chinese" "Chinese?" An observer of Toronto's "Chinatown" in 1971 remarked: "Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Pakistan and even Trinidad have little in common save a culture many of them have left behind by two or three generations."13

From 1961 to 1971, the population of Vancouver that was of Chinese-origin increased from 15,223 to 30,640, consolidating the marked physical growth of commercial and residential Chinatown that had occurred since the Second World War.14 In absolute terms, the number of blocks of Strathcona with an occupancy ratio of more than 75 per cent Chinese grew considerably in the short period from 1960 to 1969, despite the dispersal effects of the urban renewal program and the out-movement of younger, local-born residents in that decade.15 Strathcona was especially attractive to low-income, non-English speaking Chinese immigrants because of the employment opportunities of Chinatown's sub-economy. However, by no means all or even the majority of post-war immigrants opted to reside in this area for, although it housed over 50 per cent of the Chinese-origin population of Vancouver in 1961,16 this proportion declined rapidly from that time and by 1976, Ng estimates that of a population of 60,000 in the city, only 10 per cent resided in Chinatown and its immediate vicinity.17 The conditions for spatial concentration waned in the 1970s. The sex ratio of the Chinese-origin population of Canada came at last to approximate the national average; as many as 77 per cent were in command of the English language in 1971;18 there was a generally high level of educational and professional achievement among the independent new immigrants; and informal pressure against Chinese-origin residence in neighbourhoods outside Strathcona
became a thing of the past.

The residential base of Strathcona was nevertheless strengthened in the 1970s by the efforts of the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association and other organizations, such as the Shon Yee association. To this end, they received the support of both the City and Provincial governments, who were by this time keen to boost housing in the area for the local Chinese-origin residents, particularly the elderly. A shift in planning ideology was distinguished in 1973, when the City rescinded an earlier and vehemently contested decision to build a firehall on the block bounded by Pender, Keefer, Jackson and Gore Streets - a block previously acquired by the City under urban renewal - and to donate the site for the construction of non-profit family and senior citizen's housing. Civic awareness of the links between the residential and the commercial districts was also apparent in a report of the Director of Planning to the Standing Committee of Council on the status of the Chinatown Planning Program in April, 1976. Among many other goals, he emphasized the importance of correcting the housing loss for Chinatown. Since then, SPOTA has successfully negotiated with the City and Provincial Governments to coordinate this objective and by 1980 there was some evidence of a middle class "return" to Chinatown.

The rush of immigration after 1967 exacerbated the premium on space in commercial Chinatown. Already in December 1967, the physical constraints on expansion there had prompted lawyer Mr. H. Fan to write to Council:

"In the short street blocks on Pender Street East, there are 115 business establishments. There are: 13 Chinese supermarkets, 11 grocery stores, 7 butchers, 4 chicken houses, 2 fish shops, 12 restaurants, 11 tea shops, 9 gift shops, 4 banks, 3 law offices, 6 real estate offices, 4 barber shops and 27 businesses such as taxis, hotels, travel agencies, and newspaper offices, and in the
upstairs of these 115 shops, there are 75 associations, including the Chinese Benevolent Association, the Veteran's club, the farmers' co-op, the unions, and 3 musical societies. Not anywhere in any city in Canada do we have so many business establishments in such a concentrated area of three street blocks, and thus they are unable to serve Vancouver because of the lack of space. . . . The Chinese merchants have spent $750,000 in the past five years to improve the appearance, and re-model their facilities, but there is no space to expand.

With such a premium on space, "Chinatown" became a significant field of investment from the late 1960s, not unlike the turn of the century when property purchase in the area was first being consolidated. New immigration regulations encouraged small and large entrepreneurs from Hong Kong to look to Canada and the United States as a means of escaping unstable conditions for investment. In 1968, for example, 8,000 Hong Kong residents entered Canada, half of whom were in the skilled or professional category, bearing an average of $29,000 on entry compared to the $4,000 to $7,000 brought by immigrants from England, Germany and France. Questions about the future of Hong Kong after the expiration of Britain's lease from China in 1997 also caused entrepreneurs to divert capital to North America. In Vancouver, the result was inflated land and building values in Chinatown and astronomical rents by the early 1970s. By 1976, Chinatown had become so competitive an environment that tenants were being asked for rents as high as those of downtown shopping malls.

Clearly, the morphology of land use in Vancouver's Chinatown (and doubtless also in its North American counterparts) was under considerable change. No longer simply a commercial district serving a nearby residential community and non-Chinese tourists, "Chinatown" was becoming a prosperous investment, service and marketing centre. Chinese and non-Chinese visitors from throughout the Lower Mainland provided a large clientele for the district's growing number of
specialized restaurants, while the unparalleled variety of imported foodstuffs and specialty items that Chinatown stores began to offer in the 1970s also attracted many suburbanites back to the busy district for weekend shopping.

Vancouver's newly salvaged Chinatown owed much to the immigration and other practices of the Canadian state for its demographic revitalization in the 1970s. As an immigrant gatekeeper, the government continued to be a key actor providing the conditions for the existence of a territory of concentrated Chinese settlement. The Canadian state was equally important, however, for its instigative role in transforming the definition of this place in the 1970s. Since the freeway victory, Chinatown had become a civic asset for its difference in the eyes of Vancouver society and it was this perception that will be seen to have prompted special government programs to preserve and nurture that status. "Chinatown" was to be revitalized around an old classification in a new guise - one that cannot be understood without reference to the larger context of state ideology regarding the "Others."

II. **"All Canadians Are Not Alike:" The Mosaic Ideology as Government Policy**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the grievance of one of Canada's "charter groups" who had shared, but shared unequally, in the fruits of white European cultural domination throughout that country's history, surfaced in dissent that seemed to challenge the nation's unity. Prime Minister Pearson appreciated that some means of acknowledging the heightened consciousness of French Canada would have to be found and it was at his initiative that a Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism was launched in 1963. It is not the
intention to provide a discussion of the complex origins of the crisis in Canadian unity that precipitated this investigation into the balance of power between Anglo-origin and French-origin Canadians, nor to elaborate on the outcome of the inquiry. It is sufficient to note that the commission's final recommendations outlined sweeping measures for linguistic and cultural partnership and equality that helped intercept, at least for the time, the political reassertion of Quebec.

Quite separate from this political struggle for preeminence within "white" European Canada was the commission's investigation of what were called, pointedly, "the others." Within the (non-negotiable) framework of white European domination, the "ethnic question" was to be resolved through an investigation into "the contribution of the ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution."26 It was this inquiry that formed the basis for the policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" that was proclaimed by Prime Minister P. Trudeau in the House of Commons in October 1971. With this announcement was born a new official definition of Canadian society and one that the state directly initiated.

The announcement of the Royal Commission in 1963 raised a flurry of protest among some articulate men of Ukrainian and Jewish-origin who were well connected to the Ontario Liberal elite.27 Particularly outspoken in the House was Senator P. Yuzyk of Alberta who spearheaded an agitation for the inclusion of Canadians of all origins in the commission's inquiry. Prime Minister Pearson needed little persuading, however, believing as he said in 1963 that "the only way in which we can maintain unity in Canada is by recognizing and glorying in our
diversity."28 Three years later he said: "Our unity must recognize the duality of our origin and the multiracial character of our social and cultural development."29 Indeed the demand was happily met by a Federal Government searching for ways of incorporating a growing electorate of non-Anglo/non-Francophone citizens within the framework of a "white" Canada. To accept, was after all fully consistent with the increasingly explicit nationalist ideology whose controlling metaphor was the "mosaic," as distinct from the "melting pot" to the south.

The mosaic metaphor had its origins in the notion that Canada consisted of two societies both of which were committed to preserving a white European civilization in Canada, but it began to be floated more widely with the growth of liberalism in the 1930s (Chapter Five), and more explicitly still by the 1960s (Chapter Six). By then, with biological difference subsumed under the rhetoric of cultural relativism, the architects of the mosaic metaphor had made room in it for non-whites. In so doing they became more confident of the integrity of the "grand design consisting of many different elements, each of which retains its own character and quality while simultaneously contributing to the realization of the design as a whole."30 Needless to say, it was an appealing theme for those architects, obfuscating as it did their differential power and privilege in a colourful image of harmony and equality.

The notion of each population as separate but equal to all of the others was belied by the assumptions of the Royal Commission. Unlike the two dominant white societies, who were conceptualized for the purposes of the commission as competing structural wholes - politically, economically and culturally - the residual "third force" became "ethnic groups" whose "cultural distinctiveness should find a climate of respect
and encouragement to survive . . . within these two societies."31 The mythical non-ethnic/ethnic, "founding people"/"immigrant" distinctions had found new ground and credibility. It was as if, in the words of Peter "there [was] such a thing as a Canadian society which exist[ed] more or less independent of ethnic groups and toward whose development ethnic groups [were] encouraged to make their various contributions."32

With the objective of "studying the contribution of various other cultures to the life of the country," the Royal Commission held a hearing in Vancouver's Chinatown in June 1965 with three Canadians of Chinese origin, one of whom was the editor of the Chinatown News.33 It is important to recall from Chapter Six that in the early 1960s, editorials in that paper appealed to its readers to abandon the "ghetto" and integrate as quickly as possible into the life of the larger society. By 1964, the first reflection on "the tragedy of the younger generation's loss of culture" appeared in the paper34 and a year later, the three spokesmen before the commission were requesting recognition of the Chinese language as well as the two official languages. Come 1966, the editors were making a strong appeal for the recognition of linguistic and cultural heritage: "No less a person than Prime Minister Pearson has reminded us," the News said, "that the greatness and the glory of this country comes from the fact that we are being moulded from 30, 40 or 50 racial fabrics."35 It is apparent that these shifts in editorial opinion of the Chinatown News followed changes in the rhetoric of the wider society. Indeed it can be argued, as Moodley has done, that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, claims of the kind the three spokesmen articulated to the commissioners were as much an outcome as a cause of the prevailing mosaic rhetoric.36 By 1969, on the eve of his
election victory, Pierre Trudeau floated the new version of the racial frame of reference with conviction. "People of European descent have a great deal of value to learn from those of Oriental origins," he told a throng of people on Pender Street. "We don't want the people of Canada to assimilate. We don't want to eliminate cultural differences - we want everyone to get along in one united Canada."37

In October 1971, the Trudeau government announced a policy of Multiculturalism that institutionalized the concept of the mosaic. It represented, in the words of Kallen, "the contemporary Canadian version of the myth of the mosaic" with "more clarity and national legitimation."38 Multiculturalism was a self-conscious attempt to, in the words of the Prime Minister, "support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for us all."39 Furthermore, by encouraging minorities to be minorities and "Chinese" to express themselves as "Chinese," the policy "will help break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies." Trudeau had an inventive rationale for this curious assertion:

"National unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow a respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of Multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence."

Yet the history of British- and French-origin people in Canada, for example, had demonstrated precisely the opposite tendency; confidence in the integrity of the in-group more a source of ethnocentrism than "sharing."40 "We are free to be ourselves," proclaimed Trudeau, "but this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued
actively." Chinese, it seemed, were free to be that which had for many decades been defined by the dominant society as the embodiment of an alien stock; indeed they would be encouraged, through a program of grants and advertising in the "ethnic" press, to promote themselves as "Chinese."

The tradition of a we/they classification in Canada had assumed a radical new language of positive difference. By 1972, a policy of Multiculturalism to foster the "collective will to exist" of Canada's "ethnic groups" was fully operational. Six programs were developed to implement the policy under the administration of the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State. They included a grants program for "multicultural encounters," a program of "ethnic histories," development of "a Canadian ethnic studies" program and a program promoting among "all Canadians an awareness of the cultural heritage of all of Canada's ethnic groups." The National Museum of Man for example, would receive funds for "the purchase of artifacts representing Canada's ethnic diversity" while the National Film Board would expand its production of films "about the contributions and problems of our various ethnic groups." Advertising in the "ethnic press" of the kind undertaken in the Chinatown News from 1973 would promote "ethnic awareness." One such advertisement of the Multiculturalism directorate in February 1979 proclaimed "All Canadians Are Not Alike. Vive la Différence!"

Although there were many acerbic exchanges in the House during the 1970s over operational details of the policy, in particular its scant budget and its manipulation for election purposes, its objectives and spirit received unambiguous support in government circles throughout the decade. On the announcement of the policy in the House, the
Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. R. Stanfield, expressed his
effectuation that "this declaration by the government of the principle of
preserving and enhancing the many cultural traditions which exist within
our country will be most welcome." The following year, when Trudeau
appointed a minister to implement the policy, he said: "There is no
uniformity, no flatness to Canadians. Canada is richer five million
times through the presence here of that many people whose cultural
heritage is other than British or French. We dare not attempt to imagine
how bland Canada would be . . . were these people not part of our
society." 45

Other speeches, long on rhetoric, praised the official definition
of Canadian society. In February 1977, for example, the year in which a
"Cultural Enrichment Program" was initiated, the member for Hamilton
West remarked: "No Canadian race, no melting pot, no fashioning all into
one mould but rather, we are pursuing the attainment of an identity
which is based on intelligence, tolerance and decent neighbourly
attitudes: We are in the midst of the great Canadian experiment." The
new Multiculturalism Minister, Mr. N. Cafik, spoke of the experiment in
October of that year as:

"an example to other nations as to how best to live together in a
bilingual, multicultural and multiracial society. . . . Our
granting funds . . . enables cultural groups to work and to
interface together, to share their backgrounds and traditions with
all the community in which they live. In that way that which is
theirs will become that which is ours, and all of us will benefit
as a result. . . . Our national unity problem shall disappear when
Francophones, Anglophones, our native peoples and our ethnocultural
groups fully realize that we are all better off . . . if we are
living in a spirit of understanding, tolerance and good will. . . .
The impact of the directorate of multiculturalism is broader than
grants of money; it is as broad as the government itself." 47

A strong advocate of the policy, Cafik informed the House of expanded
programs during 1978 "to encourage cultural pluralism among the ethno-
cultural groups" and "to ensure that multiculturalism and its objectives are taken into account by the government at all levels."48 By 1980, the Governor General upheld the commitment of the Liberal government "to the full development of Canada's two major linguistic communities and to the enhancement of our mosaic of cultures" in this "country that regards diversity as an asset not a liability."49

Canada's policy of multiculturalism was intended to be integrated at every level of government spending in the 1970s. A variety of means were to be brought to bear to indicate a public commitment to the new "multicultural fact of Canada." Important among them were special programs and dispensations for what policy-makers (and some social scientists) have uncritically called "ethnic neighbourhoods."50 I say uncritically because the adjective "ethnic" is often used without consistency, to apply in Vancouver, for example, to Chinatown but not Shaughnessy, the long-time home of British-origin residents (until recently when people of Chinese and other origin have moved in). It is to these government-inspired projects, which represent a radically new form of neighbourhood targeting of Vancouver's Chinatown, that this chapter now turns.

III. Chinatown as an "Ethnic Neighbourhood"

A. Safeguarding the "Cultural Contribution:" Civic and Provincial Initiatives

By the 1970s, the earlier interest shown by the City of Vancouver in revitalizing Chinatown escalated into a full-scale effort to "beautify" and "preserve" the district. "The Chinese community is the only truly ethnic group within the study area," a City-commissioned
Restoration Report observed of the Old Granville Townsite heritage area in 1969, while Chinatown was an area "the general urban population finds both agreeable and enriching." It is apparent that Chinatown had assumed a new status in the eyes of its beholders, one that incorporated the earlier tourist image into a new sense of the neighbourhood's integrity and idiosyncracy - its "character and personality," as the Province put it in 1969. The more crass "Oriental" motif first courted in the 1930s was being assimilated into a more nuanced sense of Chinatown's "ethnic" quality.

Like other visions, the idea of Chinatown in the 1970s belonged to the cultural projections and interests of white European Canada. More specifically, the rhetoric of "ethnic diversity" articulated at the federal level became one of the cornerstones of the ideology of the "liveable city" at the local level. But such an interpretation of place was not unilaterally imposed upon an uncritical Chinese community. We will see that eventually the new concept of "Chinatown" secured the participation of some Chinese themselves as they came to recognize interests of their own in the implementation of the dominant external view. Some of their receptivity has been economically-based, geared to the tourist trade; for others, government courting of Chinatown has sparked a pride in Chinese identity and experience in Canada against the history of negative stereotyping. Whatever the motivation, the acceptance by some residents of Chinese-origin of dominant categorizations of identity and place has been testimony to the hegemony of white appellations and part of their contemporary reproduction.

In order to encourage "the imaginative re-use of existing, but declining neighbourhoods," the Restoration Report recommended the preservation of the "historic areas" of Gastown, Chinatown and Hastings.
Street. They form "an indelible series of images for Vancouver," the report noted, and "can contribute to the quality and richness of city life." For Chinatown, the task was to maintain, not "betray" through "decoration," "the charm of an honestly evolved area." To this end, the report put forward a series of recommendations that included: an interim six-month hold on any demolition permit; appropriate zoning by-laws; protective and historic legislation; a formula of tax relief to encourage restoration; a low-rental, long-term lease of the City-owned land at the Pender-Keefer diversion for a Chinese community centre; and finally, the protection of pedestrian mobility. The report also advised the City to consider allowing Chinatown to expand in a southwards direction.

The Restoration Report required the City to develop "possible techniques for protecting Vancouver's historic area," the Director of Planning, Mr. W. Graham, said in a report to Council in June 1970. The most promising strategy, he submitted, was for the City to rezone Chinatown (and Gastown) so as to preserve its land-use character. But while rezoning "could ensure the development and maintenance of desirable uses, [it] would not prevent unwanted demolitions and alterations from occurring," the report stated. That control could only be secured by "declaring Chinatown and Gastown as historic precincts through the Provincial Historic Monuments Act," Graham advised, a strategy for which there were many precedents in North America. Such zoning had become a popular form of control in many American cities "to prevent wilful destruction of the cultural value inherent in the existence of historic structures," the report said. Elsewhere, however, the higher assessments which accompanied increased tourism and real
estate values had encouraged uses incompatible with the historic designation, Graham warned. How then to change Chinatown without "endangering the area's essential character" was the challenge facing the City.

In early December 1970, the initiative to preserve Vancouver's Chinatown through protective legislation received unambiguous support from provincial officials in Victoria. Not only was a willingness expressed by the Provincial Secretary and the Minister for Municipal Affairs to designate the historic site, but assurance of provincial financial assistance was also received. The initiative to give Chinatown a new official sanction also gained the favour of Cabinet and on February 2, 1971, an order-in-council designated Chinatown a "Historic Site" under the Provincial Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act. According to this new legislation, the Province became vested with control over all major changes, demolitions or renovations to buildings in Vancouver's Chinatown. Also, a Historic Area Advisory Board was established to consider administrative matters bearing on the preservation of Chinatown. The new form of external control was not lost on the Chinatown News which noted the following year that "our preservation and restoration regulations require the Planning Department approval for all facelifting work done to buildings in Chinatown before a single penny can be spent."57

Enabling legislation to preserve Chinatown, while a victory for planners, was not considered such a triumph among those who were expected to bear a considerable part of the cost. This was apparent in the ultimatum of the Director of Planning "To Owners and Merchants in Chinatown" on November 1, 1972:

"In 1964 the City Planning Department presented a beautification
proposal to the Chinese community but there was not sufficient interest for the proposal to proceed. 

... If Chinatown is to benefit from the City assistance contained in the Five Year Plan it is important that discussions with the community are started as soon as possible so that the necessary community support for whatever proposal is finally developed, can be assured. If the community support is not evident it is possible that the funds presently set aside for Chinatown may be used elsewhere where the interest is greater.\(^{58}\)

At a Chinatown meeting organized by Planning Director Graham shortly after for the presentation of City proposals to the merchants, the property owners remained unmoved. In fact when Mr. M. Egan of the Planning Department suggested that the merchants bear two-thirds of the cost of beautification, "the audience burst into laughter," reported the Chinatown News. "We might be pardoned for our ill-timed sense of humour," wrote the News on November 18, 1972. "Fact is the cost is so unrealistic that there is little chance the community would buy either of these proposals."\(^{59}\)

The Chinatown Property Owners and Merchants Association (CTPOMA) - an organization of merchants interested in the tourist trade of Chinatown - was established early in 1973 to muster support from the other merchants and to liaise with the City over planning matters.\(^{60}\) It put the concerns of its constituency to the City bluntly. For the merchants, it was parking space, not beautification that was the pressing concern of Chinatown. But the City did not share this priority and thus, as part of a strategy to ensure it was the City's concept of Chinatown that was implemented, the Deputy Director of Planning, Mr. W. Pickstone, wrote to Mr. Egan on March 27, 1973: "I believe that the approach should be that we would consider recommending to Council the purchase of property for parking, but only tying it to some kind of undertaking by the Chinatown Property Owners and Merchants Association.
to carry out a beautification project."61 CTPOMA's suggestion to use the $100,000 available for Chinatown beautification to build "continuous free-standing canopies along the three-block length of Pender Street" met with an equally cool response.62 In the words of the new Chinatown Planner, Mr. M. Kemble, the association's canopy designs had "little regard to the variety of actual building facade conditions that exist on Pender Street and which give the street its charm and visual interest."63 The canopy idea was quashed, parking space made conditional and Chinatown's facade was secured, unencumbered, for visitors and for the City's visual enhancement program. For whom was there a "Chinatown?" the merchants might well have reflected.

Mr. Kemble's three alternative schemes for Chinatown's beautification revolved around a theme of street improvements that would eliminate "the gap in activity" and "meld together" the two areas east and west of Main Street.64 In 1964 (to recall Chapter Six), the City had only been concerned with "tourist" Chinatown to the west of Main. However by the 1970s, the "less attractive" local community shopping area was seen to give an "organic" quality to the whole. Chinatown was, an "ethnic neighbourhood," as the planners described it - "a people and an atmosphere" - where "individual charm was the keynote" and "where some of the City's most attractive buildings are to be found."65 Kemble's proposals recognized this new conceptualization by fusing east and west of Main on Pender Street with various combinations of street improvement, tree planting, sidewalk paving, parking facilities and street furniture.

At a presentation in Chinatown in November 1973, the CTPOMA registered some approval for the second scheme costing $400,000, including a $100,000 contribution from the City toward land acquisition.
for a parking facility.66 (The third, least expensive scheme, suggested "retaining the existing parking situation.") Scheme two's parking contribution was dependent upon the initiation of a joint street improvement by June 1974, Kemble advised Mr. Fan, chairman of the merchant's association. "If a project for Chinatown has not been initiated by this time," Kemble warned, "consideration will be given to re-allocating beautification funds presently committed for the Chinatown area to other projects and priorities."67 Come June, no such commitment had been forthcoming from the merchants, who reiterated they were "basically interested in parking improvements and only secondly in street improvements."68 The City did not shelve the project as it had threatened, however, and Kemble and others set about the task of scaling down their aspirations for the district's beautification.

Far from directing its attention elsewhere when it did not get the merchants on side, the City pursued its vision of "Chinatown" still more actively. In 1974, the City Charter was amended to give the City power to designate heritage buildings or areas, and in preparation for bestowing this special status on Chinatown, a set of proposed sign guidelines was devised.69 "Vancouver's Chinatown has a unique ethnic and visual character," the guidelines for the area stated:

"These guidelines are intended to ensure the preservation and encouragement of some of the environmental aspects which contribute to its present attractiveness and distinctiveness. . . . Much of the character of Chinatown, in fact, is directly attributable to the multitude of complex, decorative signs. Signing policies in this area should, therefore, be more tolerant of the number, size and placement of all signs except in the case of those structures deemed of the highest historic and aesthetic significance. All new signing in this area should, however, incorporate Chinese motifs, symbols and forms rather than the stereotyped sign types which dominate other commercial areas. . . . The use of neon tubing for illumination purposes should be emphasized. . . . Signs must reflect the traditional motifs and ethnic character of Chinatown."70
In April 1974, a University of B.C. environmental psychology professor praised the sign guidelines and "the incentives for neon [which] suggest a cute return to the good old Thirties when Chinatown prospered sufficiently to afford neon and argon. . . . In sum, the Chinatown guide smacks of Depression-days decorative sentimentality."71 The Chinatown News did not share the professor's enthusiasm for the new guidelines. "Does it mean that owners of structures with 'highest historic and aesthetic significance' will not be able to select the signs of their own choice. And who is to rule which building has the highest significance? While sign guidelines do not rate top priority for Chinatown, they should not be overlooked by the CTPOMA," the News said.72

The sign guidelines were clearly a most significant part of the City's effort to make Vancouver's Chinatown more legible as a "Chinese" turf. Equally important was the City initiative to devise its own legislation "that will make it easier to maintain the character of the area," Mr. Pickstone told the Technical Planning Board on June 21, 1974. "The Zoning By-law," he said, "is intended to give the City authority to control building changes and building additions in the context of the Historic Area."73 The new zoning schedule was "designed to recognize the area's unique ethnic quality and to ensure the protection, restoration and maintenance of Chinatown's historical, architectural and cultural character," to quote from the preamble to the schedule.74 It also recognized new physical perimeters of "Chinatown" (see map over). They were an expansion of the former provincial boundaries, including as they did the south-east section of Strathcona to Union Street "for its ethnic as well as architectural history." In the words of Ms. N. Oliver of the
Heritage Advisory Board: "The whole designation was judged on a general feeling of 'character' which pervaded the area." 75

Council required no more specific a rationale for accepting the recommendation of the Board and at a special Council public hearing on July 9, 1974, it unanimously agreed to proceed with amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law to establish the new district known as HA-1 Chinatown Historic Area District. 76 A Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee was also established to serve in an advisory capacity to the City Planning Department and to help "preserve and protect the heritage and character of the Chinatown area." 77

It is apparent that 1974 saw an important new definition ascribed to Vancouver's Chinatown. Perceived in terms of its "ethnic" quality and its historical integrity, Chinatown had been identified for special status according to the perceptions, beliefs and interests of the larger society. As we have seen, it was the City that not only continuously conferred its idea of "Chinatown" on the area, but had the power to institutionalize it. Just as the City had officially recognized "Chinatown" as an entity for the medical health officer rounds in the 1890s, so in the 1970s "Chinatown" was perceived and officially labelled in terms of some essential distinctiveness. Through rezoning, the City even drew the physical contours of the area and further objectified the remarkably enduring idea of the "East" in the "West" - a construction that we have seen has consistently involved the use of place and geographical boundaries to confirm cultural and political ones.

Given the deeper continuity of the racial frame of reference, it is perhaps not surprising to find remnants of prior characterizations of "Chinatown" carried forward within more recent constructs. According to Mr. H. Goldberg, a Main Street merchant and CTPOMA member, the vision of
the 1970s was not as removed from the crass tourist image of earlier days as it perhaps pretended to be. "It is my view," he said in a letter to the Planning Department in September 1974, the month in which the new Zoning By-law was enacted by Council:

"... that the City hall powers that be are trying to force new or rebuilding type construction to conform to copies of tourist photos of temples in Asia. In other words construction cannot proceed unless it would be a museumized version with artificial red posts and vertical window stripes. Most of the commercial buildings in downtown Hong Kong, Kowloon, Teipeh and Singapore are not built in the old temple style, but rather in their own forms and fronts that lend themselves to the ready view of the products or merchandise that is offered to the visitors and passers by. . . We were supplied with a new sign guidelines brochure which contained two photos of old Chinatown scenes showing garbage cans and horse drawn wagons. Are we to presume that they are trying to force us in Chinatown to revert to grubby buildings and horse wagons?"78

Whatever the validity of Mr. Goldberg's interpretation of the City's agenda, it is clear that the vision of Chinatown that was being promoted in the 1970s was not his own. Local merchants were, however, able to identify interests of their own in this new classification of place and did not protest this form of state presence in Chinatown. CTPOMA chairman, Mr. T. Mah, pointed out, "the defined boundary of Chinatown will give us some elbow space for expansion of business activities."79

Responsibility devolved to the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee, formed in July 1975, to rally, where other organizations had failed, the necessary local support for the much delayed beautification project. The committee, in consultation with the Director of Planning, was vested with considerable discretionary power over matters of landscape form in the new district. Outlined in the new zoning schedule, for example, were specifications for which development permits would be issued: buildings had to meet specified height limitations; alterations to exteriors required the approval of the Director and the committee;
and where painting was to be done, "colours traditional of the Chinatown area should be considered." In the instance of a dispute over a permit, applicants could appeal to Council, whose decision was final. The question of who was to sit on the committee was a contested one, the City initially insisting upon a non-Chinese majority. But by July of the following year, when CHAPC was formally approved by Council, it was comprised of eight Chinatown figures and one each from the Architectural Institute, the Community Arts Council and the University of British Columbia.

Unlike Gastown (the other Historic Area), where only a small number of property owners had to be convinced of the wisdom of change, approximately 75 owners on Pender Street had to be mobilized to support the revitalization effort. It was no small task for CHAPC, given that the community had been on the receiving end of so many externally inspired plans. In late November 1976 when the new improvement guidelines of the "Chinatown Work Program" were unveiled at a meeting of CHAPC, the Chinatown News, an ardent supporter of tourist promotion schemes for Chinatown, lamented:

"City planners Don Hickley and Mike Kemble possess such boundless patience even Job would envy. For the umpteenth time they have come up with an imaginative set of plans designed to upgrade the physical appearance of Chinatown. Unfortunately, whenever financial commitment is involved, prospects of having Chinatown property owners accepting the proposals are exceedingly dim." Kemble's new "streetscape improvement project" provided a set of options "to add the desired atmosphere to the ethnic character of the area." However the reaction of all 36 people who turned out for the meeting, (of whom only five were property owners) "was far from enthusiastic," wrote the News. By New Year, when a more modest set of proposals had been devised, this time in consultation with CHAPC, a concerned CHAPC
chairman, Mr. H. Con, admonished: "The options contain many realistic proposals. If merchants and property owners still manifest indifference and disinterest, I doubt whether City planners would come up with any more plans to improve this area for a long, long time." The revised "streetscape improvement project" put out by the Planning Department in February 1977, again offered three options: "basic improvements" at a cost of $300,000 (a third to be paid by the merchants); "limited improvements" for $400,000 (the merchants to pay 30 per cent); and "moderate improvements" (a third to be paid by merchants). To promote the revised scheme, CHAPC undertook an active campaign among the merchants of Pender Street.

Their efforts, as with those of the relentless Kemble and others of the Planning Department, were finally rewarded in the spring of 1977. The Pender Street merchants finally saw their way to committing $300,000 toward the streetscape project, largely in the interests of an upgraded business district and tourism. Armed with this new offer, City planners formulated a version of the aforementioned "moderate improvements" proposal and by October 1977, a plan that involved the unit, 100- and 200- blocks of Pender Street had been approved in principle by Council. The project envisioned a special sidewalk and cross-walk treatment, new stone curbing, a mid-block crossing in the 100-block, the planting of some trees native to China, sidewalk furniture, brass bilingual street name signs from Hong Kong and special "lantern-like" street lighting at street corners. The estimated cost of the streetscape project was $700,000, of which the owners would pay a third in taxes over 15 years and the City, $200,000.

Support from the Province for the streetscape project was not the
routine matter City planners hoped it would be. Despite the guarantee of provincial assistance the civic mission to Victoria had secured in 1971, the delay in the project had provided for a quite different political climate by 1977. In March 1978, the Ministry of Recreation and Conservation declined an application from the City for provincial participation under the provisions of the Heritage Conservation Act on the grounds that the proposal involved "civic beautification and not heritage conservation." However upon the advice of the Director of Planning, the City re-submitted its application for at least 20 per cent of the cost in July of that year. "This is particularly appropriate" said the Director of Planning, "as this improvement project affects perhaps the most important Provincially designated heritage area in the City." The Vancouver Advisory Committee also supported the City's re-application after an appeal from Mr. Kemble in which he cited the importance of Chinatown as a tourist attraction. CHAPC also insisted that Chinatown be "de-designated" and developed as owners alone would have it, if the Province refused to commit money to its Historic Site.

By late 1978, with an election pending, the Provincial Government began to see its own opportunity in the Chinatown Streetscape project. The Social Credit government was especially seduced by Chinatown's tourist potential. Also it was eager to support Chinatown in a way that distanced it from the "Chinatown" project (to be discussed in the next section) that was inspired by the previous left-wing Provincial Government. The upshot was a substantial provincial offer of $200,000 toward the $700,000 Streetscape Project that Deputy Premier, the Hon. Grace McCarthy — personal friend to some entrepreneurs in Chinatown — presented to Mayor Volrich and CHAPC chairman, Mr. G. Yipp, at a
Chinatown reception on November 30, 1978.92

The Chinatown landscape of the 1970s was a carefully managed one. Planning Department professionals had an especially important input, in consultation with both CHAPC and the utility-oriented Engineering Department. Often, the latter overruled the Planning Department's proposals for decorative details on simple cost criteria. At other times, the City engineer would offer a compromise, such as his agreeing to paint Chinatown's street lighting poles "tile red" in keeping with "the ethnic character of the area and the traditional Chinese use of red," but not the traffic signs and street furniture as well.93 The Planning Department prevailed in February 1979, however, when - against the wishes of the Engineering Department - Council agreed to retain the old incandescent lamps for Chinatown as, in the words of the Director of Planning, "a concession to Chinatown's unique quality."94

A year later, in February 1980, amidst the festivities of the Chinese New Year, the Chinatown Streetscape Project was opened by the Hon. G. McCarthy and Mayor Volrich.95 It was a symbolic occasion that signalled the magnitude of historical change in the reception of Chinese-origin residents in Canada. But lest one misconstrue the novelty of that event, it is important to underline the community's links to the past, and to emphasize the distinct contribution that an enduring ideology of difference has made to the perpetuation and toleration of old lines of classification and separation in Canada. As the empirical record of Chinatown's beautification project clearly demonstrates, the celebrated "Chinatown" of the contemporary era has been, like its nineteenth century counterpart, a product of external definition and
institutional practice. It certainly required the participation of Chinatown, unlike earlier years, but the involvement of the "Chinese" must be understood in part, as I have argued, in the context of government solicitations. This participation realized certain interests for the Chinese but it cannot be said that the state presence in Chinatown in the 1970s was inspired to meet those interests. Rather, as an "ethnic neighbourhood" that embodied the experience of the East in Canada, Chinatown had become a symbol for the Liberal Government of the new Multicultural Canada - an oasis of "difference" in a mass, technological society. For white European Canada and its urban planners, Chinatown's essential "Chineseness" had become its asset and this idea continued to have effects at the local level that in turn remade the vision and reality of a neighbourhood and a people apart. Accordingly it can be said that the ceremony of February, 1980 was as revealing of white European cultural conceptions - their endurance and ongoing material effect - as it was of the strength of either attitudinal change in Canada or some autonomous ethnic will to exist.

B. Facilitating the "Cultural Contribution:" The Chinese Cultural Centre and Garden

One of the main responsibilities of Canada's Multiculturalism Directorate after 1972 was "to encourage and assist . . . the full realization of the multicultural nature of Canadian society through programs which promote the preservation and sharing of cultural heritages." The presence of the Federal Government in Vancouver's Chinatown during the 1970s cannot be divorced from that abiding intent. Although the involvement of the directorate itself in Chinatown was limited, substantial capital works projects undertaken in the district
were clearly predicated on Ottawa's new definition of the Canadian reality. Other levels of government also took up the challenge to facilitate the expression of "difference" in Canada. In the case of Vancouver's Chinese Cultural Centre and Garden complex, all three levels of government combined to render visible that guiding quest.

As early as 1968, Mayor Campbell urged "the Chinese community to take the initiative in enlisting City support for a community centre in Chinatown."97 In an election speech the following August, New Democratic Party member, Mr. E. Barnes, also promised government support for a Chinese Cultural Centre of the kind the Restoration Report recommended for Chinatown in the same year.98 Similarly encouraging was the new Premier, Mr. D. Barrett, at a Wong Association reception in Chinatown in October 1972.99 Other dignitaries at the reception endorsed the idea, including Attorney-General A. Macdonald, Federal Urban Affairs Minister and SPOTA ally, Mr. R. Basford. The regional liaison officer of the Department of the Secretary of State went further in a letter that was read at the reception:

... Such assurance (from three levels of government) does not come often and I urge your association and other Chinese organizations to give some serious thought to such an offer. ... I am writing to see if the Wong Benevolent Association would act as chairman of the ad hoc committee on a Chinese Cultural Centre if such a meeting were to be called in the near future."

So enthusiastic were the official figures, recalled architect Mr. J. Wai that "in the euphoria of the Cantonese banquet, the three levels of government publicly pledged to pay what someone later calculated to be 160 per cent of the projected cost of the centre."100

Soon after the reception, an exploratory meeting of 150 people representing 43 organizations in Chinatown and Mr. B. Marshall of the Citizenship Department of the Secretary of State, was convened at the
Wong Benevolent Association quarters at 123-A Pender Street. The meeting resolved to form a Chinese Cultural Centre Building Committee and it elected a 21-member board to negotiate with government officials. The project would require a cohesive community effort, it was noted—a challenge of no small order as the Chinatown News remarked:

"The gulf has remained as wide as ever. What is needed is something to bring us together—a catalyst for community action. That something may be the Chinese Cultural Centre. It is fairly obvious that if we want something done for our community, we'd do well to compose our differences. The time has come for a massive coalition to get the centre built. We have the functional resources in the community. And the three levels of government have already pledged their support. But we need to coalesce and move toward a unified goal... Chinatown merchants and property owners should be eager to participate too... It is to their interest and profitability to bring the Centre plan to fruition."102

Just as the collective action of socially and historically defined minorities takes place in response to the liabilities imposed by the larger society, so must mobilization in the recent period be located within the context of the policy and spoils of "Multiculturalism."103 "I will urge the government to give utmost consideration to a request," Mr. S. Haidasz, Minister of State for Multiculturalism, told the Chinese Cultural Centre Building Committee in March 1973, before an application had even been lodged.104

As it turned out, extremely persistent lobbying by a core of interested "Chinese" was necessary to actually see the project implemented. The project boosted the political power of certain figures within Chinatown who also saw in it some material and status benefit for Chinatown and the larger Chinese-origin community. They became keen advocates, as indeed they needed to be to see government promises translated into concrete. What follows are some details of the state's attempt to implement its own agenda in Chinatown through the Cultural
Centre project – an agenda quite different, though ultimately compatible, as we shall see, with that of spokesmen for Chinatown themselves. As part of the new definition of Chinatown as an asset-for-its-difference, the Cultural Centre project would, in conjunction with the beautification effort, consolidate the Chinese motif of Chinatown and further institutionalize the idea of an autonomous "Chinese" turf.

The attention of the Chinese Cultural Centre Building Committee and some interested members of the Historic Area Advisory Board focused first upon the challenge of locating a site for the proposed project. At a lunch in Chinatown in early June 1973, chairman Mr. G. Wong informed Mayor A. Phillips and some councillors that the site at the corner of Pender and Carrall Streets was the most appropriate for the Cultural Centre (see map page 379). However as long as the Engineering Department's scheme "G" for the Quebec-Columbia connector was destined to link up with the site, the City was not prepared to commit itself. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Chinese Cultural Centre site committee was among the most outspoken of six delegations to protest the Quebec-Columbia connector at a public meeting at City Hall on June 12, 1973, claiming "the six-lane connector . . . effectively reduces the chosen location for the cultural centre complex to a tiny triangular plot." (Other organizations, such as SPOTA, expressed sheer astonishment that the new, professedly reform-oriented Council appeared to be repeating the assault of 1967). Presented with other persuasive protests, including one from the Director of Planning who also warned "the connector may seriously limit expansion of Chinatown in a western and south-western direction," Council voted unanimously not only to rescind the scheme, but also to "set up a planning process to deal with the planning of the north-east side of False Creek and the link with the
Chinese community. In this important decision, one that signalled the last gasp of the freeway era, Council effectively freed the site at the corner of Pender and Carrall Streets. The challenge remained to link the actual project to the free site.

To this end, discussions began between planners, engineers, B.C. Hydro (owner of land to the south of Keefer Street), the Chinese Cultural Centre site committee and many others regarding means by which the Pender/Keefer diversion could be closed or re-routed, the CPR tracks and rail yard to the south of Keefer removed and the triangle of land at Carrall and Pender consolidated into one developable entity for the proposed complex (see map). It was no small engineering task and consumed hours of deliberation and negotiation for officials and site committee members at City Hall and in Victoria from 1973 through 1978. An important breakthrough occurred in 1975 when Council approved the Downtown plan which recommended the construction of a new by-pass road system south of Chinatown. Such a route would put greater pedestrian emphasis on Chinatown, enable the Pender-Keefer diversion to be closed and the City-owned land adjacent to it to be consolidated into one site (with an estimated market value in 1975 of more than $3 million).

While site negotiations were being conducted, the Director of Planning and the Chinese Cultural Centre Committee attempted to convince Council to grant the land at Pender and Carrall Street to the Cultural Centre project. For one thing, it would reinforce the beautification effort, the director reported to Council in May 1974 and again in June 1976:

"There is a need for new development on the western edge of Chinatown to act as a 'pull' for increasing pedestrian retail
shopping activity in the blocks west of Main Street. The Cultural Centre location would be very beneficial to the existing Chinatown commercial area by strengthening the weak areas that presently exist. Pender Street, from Carrall to Gore, must be preserved and strengthened as an intense and lively pedestrian shopping area, for both the local Chinese community, visitors and tourists."

The Community Arts Council endorsed these arguments in July 1976, claiming "we firmly believe that the proposed centre would serve as a catalyst for an exciting rebirth of Chinatown as one of our city's major attractions." CHAPC also saw an opportunity in the "liveable city" rhetoric: "The CCC project and related garden/park development will provide an impetus and the first step towards changing the entire area back to an exciting focus for Chinatown and Vancouver."

The various lobbies for the Chinese Cultural Centre were justly rewarded when on July 26, 1976, Council unanimously agreed to negotiate a land lease arrangement with the 3,000-member Chinese Cultural Centre organization for the 3.5-acre site at the corner of Carrall and Pender Streets. The long awaited decision was a source of "high jubilation" in Chinatown, being the culmination of a relentless effort by the centre's committee and a concrete commitment by the City to the new vision of Chinatown. "We want to encourage you to preserve and continue the great traditions and customs of the Chinese people," Mayor Volrich said in an election speech in Chinatown soon after the decision.

All was not yet secure for the new project however. With the site resolved, the attention of the Cultural Centre committee turned to the problem of financing the $3.5-million scheme. It was a challenge of significant proportions by 1977, for the 1975 provincial election had returned a conservative government in British Columbia. Interestingly, this introduced a new kind of threat to the project's fruition that came from within the Chinatown community. The manipulation of "Chineseness"
by the state precipitated an internal struggle among competing elites in
the late 1970s for the right to speak as the real "Chinese" on behalf of
Chinatown.117

Encouraged by the legitimacy that the new Social Credit
government gave to conservative interests in Chinatown, a rival
political force to the Cultural Centre organization emerged there in
1977 and set out to recapture power from the Cultural Centre
interests.118 The Chinese-Canadian Activity Centre Society, some members
of whom had links to the Social Credit Cabinet, was established in
February 1977 with the express purpose of building its own cultural
centre in Chinatown. Its main support came from the Chinese Benevolent
Association which had gradually been losing its power base in Chinatown
as younger, Canadian-born citizens had taken on neighbourhood causes and
the provision of welfare services to new immigrants. The Cultural Centre
organization, progressive and oriented to local-born rather than Taiwan
concerns, had filled this political void in Chinatown. By the late
1970s, the organization commanded considerable support from Chinese-
origin people throughout Vancouver, sufficient to mobilize a movement
against the seemingly archaic, elitist and insular Chinese Benevolent
Association.

The alternative cultural centre proposal merely hastened a
growing grievance and provoked CCC activists to set up a Committee to
Democratize the Chinese Benevolent Association.119 Their indignation was
inflamed in August 1977 when the Provincial Government decided to hold a
luncheon in Chinatown for delegates to the National Convention of the
CBA - a convention to which the Multiculturalism Directorate granted
$5,000. A protest demonstration outside the function condemned the CBA
as undemocratic and unrepresentative and urged senior levels of
government to rescind their misplaced support. Meanwhile, the Committee to Democratize the CBA adopted more dramatic measures. Arguing that the CBA had repudiated its own constitution by holding closed elections for eight executive positions, the committee took the CBA to the Supreme Court of British Columbia early in 1978 and in the spring of that year, the CBA was ordered to hold open elections.120

The litigation had the desired effect of discrediting the Chinese-Canadian Activity Centre Society. Come April 1979, when the conservative lobby applied for lease of the City land then under two-year lease to the CCC organization, Mayor Volrich "indicated that he was satisfied with the Cultural Centre group, [which] having in excess of 6,000 members, was fairly representative of the community ... and had sufficient funds, amounting to $900,000 to proceed with Phase 1."121 Soon after, in the spring of 1979, the City formally signed over the site (including some adjacent private land it bought in 1979) to the Chinese Cultural Centre organization.

One of the most significant boosts to the Chinese Cultural Centre complex was the commitment by Ottawa in May 1977 of $1.5 million of Urban Demonstration capital "toward the establishment of a fund for the development of an east end False Creek garden and park.... This project adjacent to Chinatown is expected to conform and enhance that community's architecture and character."122 The garden was expected to conform to the Chinatown landscape and would, in the words of the agreement made on September 12, 1978 between the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs and the City of Vancouver, "aid in the re-establishment of a viable Chinatown and arrest the eastward drift and dispersal of this unique community." In addition it would "provide a public amenity ....
which, besides providing a recreational area for local residents, is seen to become a major tourist attraction.123

The new external conception of Chinatown as an "ethnic neighbourhood" whose distinctiveness was an asset to be courted and protected, was certainly shared by the most senior level of Canadian government. It was also an image that CHAPC and certain members of the Chinese Cultural Centre organization were keen, and knew how, to deliver. One CHAPC member, a geographer, Dr. M. Samuels was especially instrumental in mounting the proposal for "an authentic Chinese garden, conforming to traditional concepts and incorporating traditional elements of Chinese garden design,"124 an idea that met with considerable favour from the City and Ottawa. "We wish our Vancouver 'Chung Shan' Garden to be of world-class calibre and a great asset to our city and to the Chinese community," said Mayor Volrich in a letter to the Consul General for the People's Republic in May 1980.125

The classical garden idea seems to have appealed to all the romantic notions of the "Flowery Kingdom" that had captivated the earliest of Western visitors to China. One local magazine boasted: "The garden will be a mecca for Far Eastern scholars and a tourist showpiece unique in the Western hemisphere."126 To be called the Dr. Sun-Yat Sen Gardens, in honour of a man whose status in China's history was acknowledged by a rare consensus of opinion in Chinatown, the $6 million Garden was to be strictly "traditional," using authentic materials and elements and technical advice from China itself, much like the project undertaken by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. No pagodas, no chinoiserie, no willow patterns, no dragons - this was to be the pure "East" recreated anew in (and for) the "West."

As with all development permit applications in Chinatown, the
winning architectural submission for the Chinese Cultural Centre was reviewed by CHAPC and the Planning Department. Their input is evidence, as is the garden, of the vision the levels of government were trying to achieve through the manipulation of landscape imagery in Chinatown. As for the clients, the Chinese Cultural Centre organization was less concerned with matters of aesthetics and character than with questions of function, space and cost. The ultimate product therefore turned out to be something of a concession - to the cost criteria of the clients, the intentions of the architects and the demands of the City and CHAPC. Of particular concern to Mr. Kemble, as Chinatown planner, was the need to integrate the design of the exterior with the larger Chinatown streetscape. For this reason he was concerned at the lack of "Chinese" architectural features in the application. In particular he was troubled by: the lack of a recessed entrance balcony to the upper wall facing Pender; by the type of roofing surface which should be "a glazed or natural finish type of tile commonly used in China;" by the balcony handrail design facing Pender for which he recommended "the use of traditional, decorative design features to relate [them] to the older character of the adjacent area;" and by the "apparent lack of bright accent colours on the exterior of the building" which would "give the building a more distinctive 'Chinese' character, and . . . relate it more sympathetically to adjacent historic buildings on Pender Street." He also suggested that "stepped gable walls" be incorporated into the entry area because of "their possible association with the form of traditional ancestral halls common to South China" while a Chinese Cultural Centre logo "backlit with neon tubing" might be more "in keeping with the sign guidelines for the Chinatown Historic Area."
All of these recommendations for a stronger "Chinese" motif were incorporated into the final design for Stage One.130

When the Social Credit government had come to power in 1975, the Chinese Cultural Centre project was downgraded by Cabinet. But just as the beautification project had suddenly captured the imagination of the Provincial Government on the verge of the 1979 election, so the Cultural Centre project appeared more worthwhile by that time. "My government has a strong commitment to promote Multiculturalism in British Columbia," said Mr. W. Bennett at a Chinatown function in May 1979, when he presented a cheque for $400,000 toward the construction of Stage One of the Chinese Cultural Centre. "I want to underline the policy of our government to help fund these centres as one of the best opportunities to preserve the cultures that will strengthen our country."131 On September 14, 1980, representatives of all three levels of government and numerous other dignitaries were on hand at the opening of the $900,000 first stage of the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver's Chinatown. Through the nexus of place - the very embodiment, it was perceived, of "difference," of "Chineseness" - the mosaic ideology was being continuously discovered and objectified. "The project reflects the great culture of the Chinese people," Mayor Volrich declared amidst, in the words of the Chinatown News, "a colourful extravaganza of lanterns, lions, unicorn dances, songs and firecrackers."132 If the project reflected that "great culture," it also surely distinguished Chinatown's apprehenders who, through all the rhetoric, ambience and government largesse, ceaselessly invented the "Chineseness" of "Chinatown."
C. The Limits of the "Cultural Contribution:" Medical Health Officer
Bonham's Barbecued Meats

We have witnessed the consistent filtering of the experience of people of Chinese origin in Canada in the perceptions, discourse and practices of government. In the 1970s, the government's sanction of dominant social assumptions about an essential "Chineseness" was no less apparent in instances where it sought out particular symbols of "difference" for public expression, than in those where it attempted to set limits. The "cultural contribution" of the "Chinese" has assuredly been a regulated one.

It was the celebrated barbecued meats issue that most clearly demonstrated that the Canadian government, even more tolerant in the 1970s was not above flexing its regulatory muscle when the expressions of the "peculiar" Chinese were considered less as "contributions" than as threats to "white" Canadians. It also demonstrated the haste with which dormant ideas of Chinatown as a public nuisance could be resurrected and wielded at the whim of those more powerful. The same month as Prime Minister Trudeau visited Chinatown to an ebullient welcome of firecrackers (the use of which he quickly had restricted through an amendment to the Explosives Act), City health authorities in the spirit of selective regulation that had so coloured their work over the decades - sponsored new health regulations aimed specifically at meat merchants in Chinatown.

The new rules called for storing barbecued meats that hung in the windows of Chinatown stores and restaurants at temperatures below 4.4 degrees or above 60 degrees celsius, out of concern for the presence of salmonella. Quite suddenly, in October 1972, the City insisted that Chinatown's meats be stored in specially built glass ovens; the
merchants, maintaining this would "destroy" the flavour and texture demanded by customers," closed off their barbecued meats section and circulated a petition.134

"We are not backing down one bit," said Medical Health Officer, Dr. G. Bonham, in face of 2,000 signatories to the petition. "Our problem has not been that we've been picking on Chinatown merchants," he declared, "rather it has been tolerating them for so long and allowing too much for language problems and customs."135 With the assistance of member for the Legislature, Mr. E. Barnes, the merchants managed to demonstrate to the City Health Department the high turnover of product, and for the time being the issue was shelved.

But dedicated officer Bonham far from forgot the issue. In July, 1973, he stated to the press that the City would close down 14 merchants who were not complying with the regulations, rather than spend money watching over them.136 In response, the merchants' lawyer, Douglas Jung, pointed out that Chinese had been happily cooking and selling barbecued products for over 2,000 years; that his clients had installed equipment and retained the services of a doctor from Biomedical Laboratories Limited, "even though it has not yet been proven that any one of the Chinatown merchants has been guilty of causing food poisoning resulting from improper cooking or handling." Food poisoning could always result "from improper storage on the part of the consumer," Jung argued. He also reminded Bonham that successive City Councils had paid tribute to Chinatown as a "vital part of the City of Vancouver."137 Bonham was unmoved (although charges against the merchants were dropped), and in August 1973, the Health Department introduced further food handling regulations.138

For two years, nothing more was heard of the controversy. Then
in September 1975, five Chinatown stores selling barbecued meats were served with closure notices by Bonham's inspectors for alleged violations of the regulations. Six others shut down in protest and the merchants raised a petition with no less than 8,000 signatures. But their adversaries were soon joined by federal health inspectors who, bearing thermometers, sporadically descended on Chinatown's ducks in the spring of 1977 to check the merchants' conformity to regulations of the newly amended Food and Drug Act.

With a $6-million-a-year industry at stake, the newly founded Committee to Save Chinese Barbecued Products resorted to co-opting the one element of society that could be relied upon to take an anti-bureaucratic stance. On February 22, 1978, media representatives were treated to a "demonstration of Chinese barbecuing techniques... Afterwards, the reporters were invited to taste the products. Needless to say, there were no refusals - or complaints." Nor could there be any pathogenic bacteria, micro-biologist Mr. S. Andersen argued at a news conference. None could possibly survive the firing process used to barbecue the meats. Soon after, a Chinese Cultural Centre Report declared: "Reporters Defy Health By-laws" and it was clear the merchants had won a public relations victory. No action was taken against merchants found in violation of the regulations by the health inspectors and Dr. A. Morrison, head of the Health Protection Branch in Ottawa also publicly acknowledged "the department has no documented cases of food poisoning due to barbecued meat."

By this time, the Committee to Save Chinese Barbecued Products had mobilized sufficient support across Canada to adopt more dramatic strategies against the federal and civic scrutiny. In April 1978, the
committee organized a 55-member delegation, including a chef, to Parliament Hill in Ottawa. To the beat of a lion dance, a parade of "succulent delicacies" was circulated under the noses of scores of members of Parliament, at the parliamentary restaurant. There, they were invited to try for themselves the products Mr. Bonham was so keen to administer out of existence. Trudeau, earlier so shy of the trappings of Chinese "culture," declared his approval of the taste and most MPs "attacked the roasts with relish" and returned for second and third helpings. While two months later, the Federal Government was showing itself to be flexible by shifting the emphasis of its regulations from temperature to microbiological standards the merchants were confident they could meet, Bonham persisted with his inspections of Chinatown. "If the Federal Government change their regulations they are just setting up rules for their branch to follow - it doesn't affect my responsibilities," he said. Mr. S. Andersen, the micro-biologist, denounced Bonham's harassment and within months, the medical health officer had left the Vancouver civic scene for a new posting, and presumably more sanitized conditions, in Victoria.

IV. "Chinese" is "Chinese" (is Non-White): The Enduring Myth of Race

Although it is important to recognize the considerable effort expended at all levels of the Canadian state to remove "race" as a determinant of life chances after the passage of the Bill of Rights in 1961, it is also important to note, as this chapter has argued, that the racial frame of reference persisted into the 1970s. However well intentioned the mosaic ideology, it represented at root a reaffirmation of the century-old moral order of "us" and "them." And as long as the value-laden classification, "Chinese," was given new forms of currency
within the symbolic system of the dominant society, cultural relativism could give way to more classical ascriptions of outsider status.

In August 1974, the Little Mountain Ratepayer's Society took to task a Montreal Trust real estate agent who had been advertising neighbourhood homes for sale in "Oriental papers." His action was inviting, in the society's opinion, the formation of "ghettoes where it will soon be impossible to sell homes to Canadians." A letter from the society's president to the Sun "trots out all the ugly cliches in vogue at the time of the Oriental Exclusion Act," relayed the Chinatown News, calling as the letter did for "residential quotas based on race, backed by municipal and provincial legislation." According to the News, the charge that "Chinese tend to form ghettoes" was growing familiar by the early 1970s. "It's ironic," the editors said of Chinatown itself because "only commercial interests, aided and abetted by well meaning planners, have encouraged the retention of the ghetto."

By the mid-1970s, amidst a downturn in the Canadian economy, a more significant revival of the old baggage attached to the category "Chinese" or "Oriental" appeared in the vocabulary of the House of Commons. In response to the resurgence of racism in Canadian society in the 1970s, a number of members decide to voice their concern for the "changing composition" of Canada's population and the "absorptive capacity" of the country in the face of growing flows of immigration from "Asia." "It would be astonishing," said the Green Paper for Immigration and Population, published in 1975, "if there was no concern about the capacity of our society to adjust to a pace of population change that entails after all as regards international immigration, novel and distinctive features." Stripped of semantics, the words of
the Green Paper revealed the flip side of the "novelty" and "distinctiveness" we have seen officials were keen to court at the local level. Some members were more blunt. "These people [from China and the Indian sub-continent] are coming in so rapidly that they are not fitting into the fabric of Canadian society," said the member for Capilano, Mr. R. Huntington, in December 1974:

"They are locating in ghettos, dozens to a house. Does this give them respect for the Canadian system and our government? . . . If there is one thing we need in our immigration policy it is planned assimilation of other races, people who are foreign to our ideologies and way of life."148

Mr. Huntington was quickly called to order, although not for trading in fictions, but for being "prejudiced," a "racist." He apologized and other members learned to be more discreet.

The Green Paper, which outlined proposed restrictions on immigration to Canada for people of lower socio-economic status and certain categories of sponsored dependents and nominated relatives, rallied protesters across Canada. One such group, the Immigration Policy Action Committee (representing 41 organizations in Vancouver's Chinatown) saw the proposed bill as a disguised attempt to restrict "third world" immigrants in favour of long-established, traditional sets of immigrants to Canada.149 Some government officials, including Mayor A. Phillips of Vancouver, disagreed. To a charge from IMPAC that his address at the University of Winnipeg on March 5, 1975 provided "bigots with a cloak of responsibility," Phillips replied in a letter to the Chinatown News:

"What I suggest is that we cut down on the pace of immigration and that we realize that a community can only assimilate immigrants from a drastically different culture at a particular rate. . . . I want Vancouver to be a liveable, exciting and diverse community. I have pushed for activities such as Folkfest and the Multicultural Centre because I believe our ethnic communities have a great deal to offer to the city. It is in all our interest to keep Vancouver a
good place to live. To achieve that goal, we have to keep our growth under control."150

Similarly veiled arguments were heard in the House during debate over the proposed new Immigration Bill. "Today there is an increasing concern that we are losing, to some extent, the way of life that made our country great," said Mr. W. Scott of Victoria-Haliburton on March 11, 1977. "Perhaps one of the reasons for this change in outlook has been the influence of immigrants whose lifestyle is often foreign to that which has been traditionally Canadian."151 Mr. S. Schumacher of Palliser asked: "Do Honorable Members really think we can accept the introduction of large numbers of culturally different people without changing our way of life?"152 Mr. A. Caoutte of Villeneuve submitted that "we certainly can do without foreigners dictating to us what our immigration policy should be."153 For Mr. F. Philbrook of Halton, the new Immigration Bill was an effective balance between "helping the world with its problems and trying to maintain our way of life,"154 while Mr. G. Ritchie of Dauphin wondered "whether Canadians would support an immigration policy which could make a fundamental change in the nature of the Canadian population."155 For Mr. A. Brewin's motion in July 1977 that the objectives of Multiculturalism be incorporated into the spirit of the Immigration Bill, no support at all was expressed in the House - not even from the Minister of State for Multiculturalism, Mr. Guay. As Mr. Scott said, "Multiculturalism is all right in its place."156

In the summer of 1979, the National Film Board of Canada launched a documentary on Vancouver's Chinatown. As part of the Federal Government's promotion of "Multiculturalism" the Board produced numerous films about "the contribution of the ethno-cultural groups" to
Canadian history and society. The Chinatown film, titled *Bamboo, Lions and Dragons*, took four years to produce and cost the government of Canada $100,000 for what the *Chinatown News* described as a "take-off" of Chinatown. The film conveyed an image of early immigrants as "strange and sinister" and suggested that "it was natural for whites to fear and loathe the settlers ... because there were so many of them," the *News* reported. The film also implied that "exposure to white society has finally transformed Chinese into not-so-perfect but perfectly acceptable copies of white folks." It portrayed a "typical third-generation Chinese-Canadian" as owning "a 40 foot yacht." It implied that "all immigrants from Hong Kong are professionals or merchants." Finally, it warned that "you can't be too careful of the Chinese," because "yellow" China has turned "Red."

At its premiere in the Chinese Benevolent Association headquarters on July 27, 1979, the film was bitterly condemned as "misleading, inaccurate, exploitative, offensive, degrading, an embarrassment, an insult to the Chinese community and a way to perpetuate the worst stereotypes." A committee was formed to protest the film and to agitate against its distribution. In the opinion of Dr. E. Wickberg of the History Department at the University of B.C., the film had "serious historical inaccuracies," while for two other critics, "the film is totally lacking in educational value and completely unacceptable for circulation and presentation to school children and to the general public." An embarrassed National Film Board quickly agreed to halt the film's circulation.

That *Bamboo, Lions and Dragons* could be produced in the late 1970s by a liberal branch of the government of Canada was testimony to, among other things, the power of the myths out of which the
classification "Chinese" had been constructed in Canada. It is apparent from the disparaging film and also the benign efforts to preserve the "Little Orient," that "Chinatown" was still, for its representers, something of a "tribal" frontier. Its indelible "Chineseness" was its preeminent, distinguishing, explanatory trait. Behind the "walls that conceal the real Chinatown," wrote a reporter for the *Sun* in November, 1979 - in a series run by the paper to mark the City's "China Month" - "what counts is the Chinese passion for privacy, so they can kow-tow to prosperity and long life and reserve a place in the Inn of Sixth Happiness."159

In a context of a rising Asian American consciousness, CTV's W5 public affairs segment entitled "Campus Giveaway," televised on September 30, 1979, provoked one of the largest protests of Chinese-origin people ever rallied in Canada. United by a common mission that revealed the weight of a history of racial classification, the Chinese politicized as an ethnic group. The item alleged that "100,000 foreign students," especially "Chinese," were preempting the places of "Canadians" in the country's universities. These "foreigners," like the early "sojourners," were said to be coming to Canada to reap the benefits of its educational facilities, after which, the story went, they returned to their countries of origin with their taxpayer subsidized degrees in hand. "As long as qualified Canadian students can't get into schools," said program host, "the foreign student program has gone too far."160 The school of pharmacy at the University of Toronto, for instance, had denied entry to an aspiring pharmacist from St. Catherines. While the heroine related her plight, cameras roamed a classroom, focusing on "Chinese" faces while "Chinese" music played in
of pharmacy that the student did not have sufficient merit to be admitted into the school. Furthermore, the investigative program overlooked the fact that the pharmacy faculty at the university admitted only Ontario residents; visa or foreign students were barred. Of the five faces singled out by the camera, one student was born in Canada and all the others were Canadian citizens. The president of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada also corrected the grossly inflated original figure of 100,000 "foreigners." 

Slowly the message of the program registered among Chinese-origin residents throughout Canada. Ad hoc committees were formed in all major cities by professionals and activists in Chinese communities. By February 1980, complaints had been filed to provincial and federal human rights bodies and a petition supporting the grievance had been signed by 20,000 people, including more than 7,000 from Vancouver. CTV's apology, which dwelt on the use of inaccurate statistics, served only to inflame the agitation. Indeed, it was only some months later, after further lobbying by the ad-hoc committees, that the real issue - that of mistaking "Chinese" for foreigners - was brought home to the network. So entrenched had racial ideology become that it operated at an unconscious level of Canadian cultural thought. As the epistemology of separation had always legislated, to be "Chinese" was to be non-white, non-Canadian, eternally "they." The day after the national meeting of adhoc committees in Toronto, the network's president issued a public apology that acknowledged the affront the program had unwittingly levelled at the institution of Canadian citizenship and to permanent residents of the country.
Conclusion

The W5 incident, perhaps more than any other, brought to a head the tension between the avowed and the actual - between the avowed policy of "Multiculturalism" and its respect for the Others' "contributions" to Canadian society; and the actual, wherein "race" continued to be a principle around which Canadian society was socially organized. In the wake of the NFB and W5 events, what could "Chinese" come to expect from the collective governing voice of Canada? Not, it seems, a new language for dealing (or not dealing) with the "Chinese;" nor, it would seem a recognition of the "masked negativity of positive stereotypes." It is evident from the debate in the House of Commons on June 16, 1980, that in the cultural understanding of the dominant society, "Chinese" were as preeminently "Chinese" then, as a century before. A qualified approbation may have taken the place of indignation, but the classification and its underpinning East/West divide - assimilated as it was in the ethos of the hegemonic white European culture and objectified through the medium of Chinatown - remained constant. Mr. I. Waddell, member for Vancouver-Kingsway, referring to the people slighted by the film and the students singled out by W5, said "we will hear from these people. I think that the House of Commons should celebrate the energy and talent of these young Canadians." He moved: "That this House recognizes the contribution made to the Canadian mosaic . . . by the people of Chinese background." In support of the motion, Mr. S. Paproski of Edmonton North remarked that the students' achievements "have put the people of Chinese background into the category of one of the most rapidly developing groups of Canadian
citizens,"165 while, reminiscent of Judge Oreck, Mr. G. Taylor of Bow River could not "let the opportunity go by without paying tribute to those Canadians of Chinese origin."

"The attributes of the Chinese people are qualities for which we should all be grateful. I go so far as to say we can all learn from them. They are hard workers; they do not expect handouts from government. They want to contribute to their country and they want a good life for themselves. I congratulate them for that."166

Mr. Waddell's motion was unanimously carried.
NOTES


6. A.Wei Djao, Asian Canadians and the welfare state. Canadian Ethnic Studies, XIV, 2, 1982, p.91. On this theme as it relates to the experience of European communities in the new world, see R. C. Harris, The simplification of Europe overseas, op. cit.; G. Wynne, Ethnic migrations and Atlantic Canada, op. cit. On the subculture that has grown out of the history of subordinate status in Canada for Chinese-origin people, see A. Chan, Neither French nor British: the rise of Asianadian culture, op. cit.


10. E. Wickberg, et al, From China to Canada, op. cit., p.245. Djao writes that "the overall cultural background of the Hong Kong immigrant is not 'traditional' Chinese. The cultural system of Hong Kong is a mixture of British colonial and Chinese influences." Asian Canadians and the welfare state, op. cit., p.92.

11. ibid. See also, D.H.C. October 22, 1974, p.603

12. After 1967, statistics were not kept on "ethnic origin" but rather for "country of former residence" and "country of citizenship." It is therefore difficult to assess the number of people of Chinese-origin entering Canada.


16. ibid., p.72.

17. Ng, The Vancouver Chinese immigrant community, op. cit., p.76.


21. For SPOTA, revitalization of residential Chinatown did not end with the Rehabilitation Project. The non-profit infill housing program was begun in 1973 and the first cooperative project for family living at 730 Union Street was completed in 1975 with financing under the Federal Government's non-profit housing program. Chinatown News, Vol. 21, No. 17, May 18, 1974; Vol. 22, No. 8, December 18, 1974. Phase Two involved eight different Strathcona locations and was financed under the Provincial Government's non-profit housing scheme. ibid., Vol. 23, No. 12, March 3, 1976; Vol. 23, No. 14, 1976; Vol. 23, No. 23, August 18, 1976.


27. Mr. B. Marshall, Regional Office of the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, personal communication.


34. ibid., Vol. 11, No. 13, March 18, 1964.


40. In 1977, a study of attitudes commissioned by the Federal Government revealed the dubious nature of the assumption that respect for others increases directly with respect in one's own heritage. The study demonstrated that the "multicultural assumption" was "clearly not supported." An ethnocentric pattern of attitudes emerged, with "the most positive ingroup attitudes being associated with negative outgroup attitudes." (The study also found that those categories perceived to be racially distinct were the most negatively evaluated.) See J. Berry, R. Kalin, D. Taylor, Multiculturalism and ethnic attitudes in Canada. (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1977).


42. ibid., p.8581-83. For operational details of these programs, see Canada, Department of Secretary of State, annual reports, 1972-80.


45. ibid., February 18, 1972, p.38.

46. ibid., February 17, 1977, p.3145. In the same speech, the member submitted "that our country has been enriched by the beautiful and noble culture of the first Canadians; by the gaiety and passion of
the French Canadians; by the measured dignity of the Anglo-Saxons;
by the stern efficiency of the Teutonic races; by the vivid tones
of the Celts; by the moving processional of 1,000 years by the
Baltic people; by the diligence of the Italian community; by the
beauty of the age-old mystique of Asia and Africa; and the grandeur
and pathos of the Jewish pilgrims."

47. ibid., October 25, 1977, p.240-41.
49. ibid. April 14, 1980, p.6.
50. It is customary for urban geography texts to refer to Chinatown as
an "ethnic" neighbourhood. See for example, J. Short, An
introduction to urban geography. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,
51. City of Vancouver, Planning Department. Restoration Report, op.
cit., 1969, p.5. The report was commissioned after Council approved
a beautification program for the Old City in August 1968.
52. Province, July 11, 1969.
53. For details of the content, implementation and limits of this
ideology in the Canadian urban context, see D. Ley, Liberal
ideology and the post industrial city. Annals, Association of
55. CVA. City of Vancouver. Social Planning 77-D-2, file 17, Director of
Planning report to the Board of Administration, June 12, 1970.
56. ibid., file 18, Board of Administration to Council, March 4, 1971.
58. City of Vancouver, Planning Department. Chinatown Beautification
file, B03.C00. Graham to Owners and Merchants of Chinatown,
November 1, 1972.
60. ibid., Vol. 20, No. 9, January 18, 1973.
61. City of Vancouver, Planning Department. Chinatown Beautification
62. ibid., Minutes of meeting held in Pickstone's office, April 11,
63. ibid., Memorandum from Mike Kemble to file B03.C00 regarding
conversation with Mr. H. Fan, June 20, 1973.
64. ibid., Minutes of meeting held November 22, 1973.

65. ibid. The reference to Chinatown as "depicting a people and a place" is taken from City of Vancouver, Planning Department, Chinatown planning newsletter, 1976, p.5. CVA. Public Document 663.


71. City of Vancouver, Planning Department, Chinatown Beautification file, B03.C01. Seaton to Ellis, April 8, 1974. Seaton's statement regarding Chinatown in the Depression would seem to be based in no more truth than the assumption that neon is a traditional feature of Chinese architecture.


76. ibid., Minutes of special public meeting of Council, July 9, 1974.

77. City of Vancouver. Historic Area Zoning Schedules, op. cit., Schedule "F," appendix C.


82. Mr. M. Kemble, personal communication.


84. ibid., Vol. 24, No. 9, January 18, 1977.


89. ibid., Cited in Manager's report to Council, May 23, 1978.


91. ibid.

92. ibid. McCarthy to Volrich, October 18, 1978. The Federal Minister of State for Urban Affairs, the Hon. A. Ouellet, declined Mayor Volrich's request for matching funds from Ottawa on the grounds that the appropriate federal source - the Community Services Contribution Fund - was distributed according to provincial discretion. ibid., Volrich to Ouellet, December 22, 1978.

93. City of Vancouver, Planning Department, Chinatown Beautification file, B03.C04. Kemble to Curtis, October 2, 1979; Rudberg to Kemble, November 28, 1979. See various exchanges in this file on other decorative fixtures.

94. ibid., Planning and Engineering Department reports to City Manager for Standing Committee of Council on Planning and Development, February 12, 1979. See also the communication of Kemble with the Director of Planning of the City of Melbourne, Australia, regarding the street lighting (and other) features chosen by that city to "orientalize" its Chinatown.


98. Province, August 16, 1969.


103. See the critique of idealist treatments of ethnicity by D. Stasiulis, The political structuring of ethnic community action: a reformulation. Canadian Ethnic Studies, 12, 3, 1980, 19-44.


105. The connector had originally been approved by Council in 1964 to tie in with the waterfront-Chinatown freeway system. By October 1971 when Council voted to continue with Scheme "G" despite the protests of the Planning Department and other lobbies, over $800,000 had been spent on the connector. As late as November 1972, the NPA dominated Council adopted a Board of Administration report recommending scheme "G" which would have compromised the concept of "Chinatown" laid out in the Restoration Report. For relevant City documents on the connector and the protest that surrounded it, see CVA. Add. MSS. 734, SPOTA files, Vol. 15, file 6.


109. ibid., The Chinatown News noted that "communication between City Hall and the Chinese-Canadian community has improved a snippet since the TEAM-dominated Council took office this year." Vol. 20, No. 18, June 3, 1973.

110. See the numerous reports and communication concerning these matters, City of Vancouver, Planning Department. Chinese Cultural Centre file, B03.C25.


112. ibid., Director of Planning to Standing Committee on Civic Development, April 22, 1974; ibid., Manager's report to Standing Committee on Civic Development, June 22, 1976.
113. ibid., Lepage to Mayor and Council, July 5, 1976.

114. ibid., Mah to Mayor and Council, July 22, 1976.


117. On the manipulation of "Chineseness" by the old China-born elite to claim the right to represent the New York Chinatown community to the larger society, to Taiwan and to itself, see B. Wong, Elites and ethnic boundary maintenance: a study of the role of elites in Chinatown, New York City. Urban Anthropology, 6, 1, 1977, 1-22. To the Taiwan government, the elite assume the identity of the "overseas Chinese" (for special concessions), to the local Chinese community they are the "real Chinese" (as opposed to Hong Kong or local-born) and to the larger society they become "Chinese-Americans" (for political and economic interests).


122. ibid., Terms of reference for Federal grant. Cited in Manager's report to Council, April 7, 1978.

123. ibid., Copy of agreement made September 12, 1978. See also Ouellet to Volrich, April 20, 1978.

124. At CHAPC's June 14, 1978 meeting, it was decided to respond to the original Federal mandate for a park consistent in design to Chinatown, with a classical garden. See B03.C26. Kemble to Chee, June 27, 1978.

125. City of Vancouver. Planning Department, Chinese Cultural Centre file, B03. C27. Volrich to Yi Zhu, May 6, 1980. For further details on the garden project see other documents in the file.

127. The firm of James Cheng/Romses, Kwan Associates Architects was awarded the contract by an independent jury for a design that is said to have been inspired after Peking's Imperial Palace. Chinese Cultural Centre Reports, Vol. 3, No. 2, March, 1978.

128. Mr. Mike Kemble, personal communication.


130. Mr. Mike Kemble, personal communication.


133. ibid., Vol. 20, No. 3, October 3, 1972; see also Vol. 20, No. 5, November 3, 1972.

134. ibid., Vol. 20, No.4, October 18, 1972.


137. ibid.


139. ibid., Vol. 23, No. 1, September 3, 1975.


141. For further details of the media event, see Chinatown News, Vol. 25, No. 11, February 18, 1978; Province, February 23, 1978; Sun, February 23, 1978.


144. ibid., Vol. 25, No. 15, April 18, 1978.


150. ibid., Vol. 22, No. 15, April 18, 1975.


152. ibid., March 21, 1977, p.4186.


154. ibid., p.3944.


161. For a detailed discussion of the incident, see A. Chan, Gold Mountain, op. cit. pp.161-86. under the title of "Fools Gold."


163. For discussions of the contemporary culture of race in other "white" societies, see C. Husband, ed. "Race" in Britain: continuity and change. (London: Hutchinson, 1982); J. Prager, American racial ideology as collective representation, op. cit.


166. ibid., p.2149.
CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to present a case for the importance of cultural processes in shaping a system of inequality and separation based on the ideology of "race" in a post-colonial society. It is important to argue such a case because as mentioned in Chapter One, the study of race relations in British Columbia (and elsewhere) has been dominated by idealist (the white racism thesis) and structuralist perspectives that give insufficient recognition to the power of cultural understandings of "race" to structure social life in past and present contexts.

As an extension of this broader argument, the thesis has attempted to develop through empirical study a perspective upon social and spatial categories that has not been prominent in the geographical literature on race relations. Particular emphasis has been given to the race definition process and, by way of a contribution to the recent rediscovery of interest in place in human geography, the presence of "Chinatown" as a historically evolving social entity in the making of that process. In conceptualizing "Chinatown" and "Chinese" as Western constructs, I have attempted to show that ideas such as "race" are significant social forces which, as they become inscribed in practice and grounded in material social life, make their own distinct and enduring contribution to the structuring of the social order.

The study has had as its point of departure the viewpoint that racial classifications are social or cultural products whose construction and transmission cannot be taken for granted. They are not simple or unproblematic reflections of objectively given biological and cultural constants, but social categorizations defined by the
significance attached to certain physical criteria. This argument is made on the grounds that, although human populations do differ in the distribution of their genes, scientists are not agreed that this provides an unambiguous biological basis for the classification of the world's population groups. I also argued, following a growing literature in ethnic studies, that while human reality is genuinely divided into different cultures, ancestral culture is not itself a sui generis constant. There is considerable evidence by now that cultural transfer overseas is a complex and unpredictable process involving both change and continuity. Ethnic identity can of course be strong in the absence of binding ancestral traditions, but the important point for this study is that there is no necessary one-to-one relationship between self-definitions of ethnic identity and the identities (classifications) conferred from without and thus the emic and the etic dimensions of ethnic identity must be distinguished analytically.

Following from these assumptions, the thesis has attempted to free the study of Chinatown from recourse to constants - placing race, ethnicity and culture in "motion" as it were. Some readers might prefer to give greater emphasis to an underlying genetic component, but regardless of different views on this, the key question for social sciences is the construction people put upon that component.

There does seem a place for more direct reference to the biological myth, however, given that the prejudice and discrimination framework which has dominated work in the field of race relations has, in emphasizing attitudes and behaviour toward the different "races," tended to reify "race." The more recent focus on institutional racism has corrected the behaviourist bias of the prejudice framework to some extent, but still, insufficient attention has been paid in the race
relations literature to the larger cultural and ideational matrix out of which our categories are constructed and attitudes shaped. The readiness to dismiss the race question as a problem of the white psyche, somehow beyond rationality, seems to have impeded breakthroughs to more incisive formulations that would grapple with causes, rather than effects, such as prejudice and discrimination. In part, perhaps, this void has provided the conditions for a new sociobiology in the social science of race relations that has drawn from evolutionary principles and invoked once again the lingering spectre of primordial explanations in the field.1

The explanatory significance of the cultural realm is suggested by the viewpoint presented in this study that racial categories are collective representations that belong to their apprehenders. Strauss suggested the relevance of this epistemological vantage point in 1959 when he said: "The nature or essence of an object does not reside mysteriously within the object itself but is dependent upon how it is defined by the namer... Justification lies in the perspective, not in the things."2 Such a view suggests that racial classifications can be conceptualized as social artifacts or symbolic resources which form part of the outlook or culture of a society. They are part of a frame of reference or symbolic screen through which the human world is ordered and organized - a perspective that clearly runs counter to ecological treatments of "race" that devalue or dismiss the socially constructed nature of our external world.

Symbolic interactionists and others following Weber's interpretive sociology have long been concerned with the "moral orders" that are constituted through intersubjective rules and meanings.
Suttles, for one, has examined the "definition of the situation" in inner city Chicago where categories of ingroup and outgroup are negotiated in the competition for territory. As many social scientists have observed, that tradition has contributed in no small measure to restoring subjective meanings to functionalist approaches to problem of social order. Symbolic interactionists have less frequently gone a step further, however, to locate meaning complexes within their constitutive historical and material contexts. To that extent they are open to the charge of idealism, as Cosgrove has argued in his critique of explanations of the Renaissance ideal city that appeal to a "free-floating" Renaissance weltanschauung. Socially-based insider and outsider processes do not explain why certain kinds of groups/categories become reference groups in certain kinds of societies. They do not account for why "race" has been selected as an idiom of exclusion and inclusion. Yet there is nothing predetermined about such reference groups, they are not somehow fixed "in advance," nor is their relative power - and thus they must be situated within their constitutive historical and cultural contexts. Fredrickson argues against imputing such inevitability in his comparison of the evolution of race relations in South Africa and the United States. "White supremacy," he claims, "is no seed planted by the first settlers that was destined to grow at a steady rate into a particular kind of tree. On the contrary, I have found it more plausible to regard it as a fluid, variable and open ended process."

The Concept of Hegemony

If racial classifications are cultural phenomena, they are assuredly also historical products. One of the points of departure of
this study was the rise to power of a hegemonic white European "we" from the beginnings of colonialism in the sixteenth century. It was a struggle for preeminence that both relied upon, and gave strength to, prior distinctions of civilized and uncivilized, Master and slave, Christian and heathen (as argued in Chapter Two). In the case of "Orientals," a discourse or field of study emerged from classical times among European travellers, poets, scholars and so on that interpreted "them" as a prelude to domination over "them." By the nineteenth century, race theorists fastened upon these prior typifications, calibrating them, entrenching them in a radically deterministic theory and justifying the exercise of European authority in colonial contexts. Biological assumptions became cross-fertilized with medieval stereotypes. The intellectual context prepared British Columbians, as it had other Pacific Coast residents, for the likes of the "heathen Chinee" and his disease and vice-ridden "China town." It is in the context of that long rise to cultural hegemony of a white European "historical bloc" that the racial category "Chinese" or "Oriental" must be situated because out of the quest for power the classification acquired its complex range of meanings.

The term "historical bloc" belongs to the social and political theory of Antonio Gramsci whose work offers some fertile conceptual tools for social scientists concerned with the relationship between culture and power. By way of suggestion for further theoretically informed research in the field of race relations, some brief comments on Gramsci's insights might be useful.

As a number of social scientists have observed, the importance of Gramsci was his critique of economism in Marxist writings and his
incisive grappling with the efficacy of the cultural and political spheres. Perhaps his most significant contribution lay with his non-reductionist interpretation of ideology and politics, a product of his rejection of economistic readings of Marx where the economic base ultimately determines the superstructural levels. For Gramsci no simple deduction of ideology from deeper production forces was appropriate because in organizing human action and practice, ideology assumes a complex material basis. He did not conceptualize it as a separate level or as causally secondary but as an operative and lived reality, as real as the economy itself. "For Gramsci," writes Lears, "mental life is more than a pale reflection of more basic developments in material life. The link between the two realms is not linear causality but circular interaction within an organic whole." Gramsci remained faithful to the Marxist point of departure that capitalism is a contradictory and historically limited system of production based on the exploitation of wage labour and that the working class has a historic revolutionary role, but he distanced himself from the determinism of the base-superstructure model of explanation.

Gramsci's most important concept is the notion of hegemony which implies the creation of a weltanschauung or comprehensive world view and political program by a historical sector that succeeds in diffusing its concept of reality throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations. Hegemony is the attainment of a higher cultural unity that welds together social groups - not because they are blindly indoctrinated or coercively ruled, but because they give their consent. This they extend as they come to interpret their own interests and acquire consciousness of themselves in the unifying discourse. They may also relinquish that support should a more persuasive counter-hegemony
be forged. A successful hegemonic sector then is one which manages to create a collective national popular will and, through careful management strategies, to continuously refine, sustain and nationalize itself. When it secures political office, Gramsci argues, the dominant sector has monopoly of the critical means for elaborating, disseminating and legitimizing its ideology and its cultural and economic control. The sphere of politics is therefore organically linked with the cultural realm.

Gramsci broke with economistic interpretations of the state envisaged as an apparatus acting out a structurally determined role on behalf of a ruling class, and other limited notions of the state as government. Specifically, he argued that the state was "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules."10 As such, the state is the principal embodiment of the power relations that are diffused throughout a society. It is not separate from civil society but part of it, legitimizing the rules and framework within which a social and economic order is built.

Although some interpreters of Gramsci prefer to see the ideological struggle as one ultimately between Marx's two "fundamental classes" defined through the production process, others have developed a less narrow construction of the notion of "ruling class."11 Lears, for example, argues that Gramsci's work is relevant to a variety of intellectual traditions, including Marxist. According to his reading and elaboration upon Gramsci, any "historical bloc" that has amassed both cultural and economic solidarity is potentially hegemonic. It may be
bound by religious or other ideological ties as well as economic interest. Debate over Gramsci's own theoretical pedigree is perhaps less helpful than the directions his ideas offer to broader interpretation. To this end, his notion of "historical bloc" seems fertile because it focuses attention on historically emergent relations and groups (such as, but not only, the social classes defined in the course of industrialization), rather than theoretically derived or abstract categories. The emphasis on hegemonic blocs as historical phenomena whose "momentum" and "inner logic" derives from none other than the active and structured conduct of human agents in particular contexts is helpful in order to avoid what Williams has called the "totalizing tendency of the concept" where hegemony is abstracted as a system from the contexts and experiences in which it is embedded.  

Some of the concepts of Gramsci (and his interpreters such as Williams) seem pertinent to the race question understood in a broad sense as a process of cultural domination and incorporation of racially defined Others. The study of racial ideology and its institutionalization certainly confirms Williams point that "cultural tradition and practice" should be "seen as they are . . . without the characteristic straining to fit them (directly as reflection, indirectly as mediation) to other and determining manifest economic and political relationships." Yet they can still be elements of a hegemony, as Williams maintains. Indeed it would seem that racial ideology has been a critical unifying principle in the making of a hegemonic white European "historical bloc." The race idea has been a historically specific form of discourse which facilitated and justified an influential arbitrary separation of an insider (white European) and an outsider (the various racial Others) from the nineteenth century in many New World contexts.
In the British Dominion of Canada, we saw that race theory united a "white" social category comprised of all classes who inherited and came to actively participate in the culture of "race." For some, this world view offered economic and political gain; workers imbibed it against their long-term class interests; others embraced it out of simple cultural conformity; and the large majority seem to have indulged it more or less forcefully and consciously - for the privilege it afforded, and definition it gave to an insider community. And as we have seen, racial ideology has continued to command a following, not as a colonial legacy that has failed to fade away, but through daily regeneration in the perceptions of "white" Canadians and the practices of their policy-makers.

The state has not been a separate "level" in this hegemonic ethnic unity but, as we have seen, part of its entire complex - protecting it, buttressing it through legal measures, disseminating it and refining its form over the decades. It has been the "private apparatus" of a socially based hegemony, to use Gramsci's words, centrally implicated in the structuring of Canada's symbolic order.

The sensitivity of Gramsci and others (such as Williams) to the historically contingent interpenetration of the political, economic and cultural dimensions of society appears to offer a fertile alternative to materialist and idealist perspectives as they have been practised in the study of race relations in British Columbia. It opens up the possibility of studying the structuring and intersection of these dimensions in recognition of the important contribution of each to the making of a social and spatial order. One influential scholar in the general field of race relations argued against the unhelpful oppositions of idealism
and materialism nearly 20 years ago in his statement that "the
historical task is ... to relate satisfactorily the psychological,
'material' and other aspects of a society to each other in such a way as
to present reality as integrated social process."14

This study has not attempted so ambitious a task as the
demonstration of how each of these dimensions converge in the making of
white European hegemony in Canada. For one thing, it has not
investigated the control that white Europeans—skilled and unskilled
labourers and retailers, no less than owners of capital—exercised at
different stages of the industrialization process over the division of
labour and the contribution of a "split labour market" to the economic
consolidation of "white" dominance.15 The race definition process clearly
penetrates, and is independently reinforced by the capitalist economic
system. Indeed not the least challenging of research to be done on the
operation of cultural domination in capitalist societies is the
demonstration of the interaction between the symbolic processes this
study has emphasized, and economic processes, in shaping colour-based
stratification in those societies.

We noted that there were limits to the strategies of the divided
Canadian polity, that the hegemony of the white European category was no
absolute domination but was continuously achieved and refined within
limits set by the constitutional framework of the British North America
Act. There has been no straight line linking political will, public
pressure and government practices in Canadian "race relations." In that
sense, the thesis brings further evidence to the recent claim that the
state should be conceptualized as a multilevelled series of practical
arenas rather than as a theoretical monolith.16 In particular, the study
has shown that an important differentiation must be drawn between the
political and the legal spheres and it has raised questions about the relationship of the courts to the state. The division of legal competence among the levels of the Canadian state may in part account for the relatively veiled strategies that the dominant sector adopted in the pre-1947 era compared to other Dominion settings such as the colonies of Australia before Federation. These indirect strategies were discussed in Chapter Three when I described the selective harassment of Chinatown by Vancouver's municipal authorities; in Chapter Four when I examined the extension of the public nuisance definition into the 1920s; and in Chapter Five when Chief Constable Foster's concern for "white" women and Alderman Wilson's commitment to the Darwinist order combined in efforts to keep Chinese in their properly appointed place.

We also saw that the rise of liberalism in Canada after the Second World War set limits upon the earlier style of hegemonic control through discrimination, and demanded new management strategies to incorporate those who might otherwise challenge the old definition of Canadian society as "white." The uniquely Canadian mosaic ideology that was institutionalized in the policy of Multiculturalism has been put to considerable service in recent years in this more subtle exercise of power. Not that the mosaic motif has been conspiratorially floated by white Canadians to silently exclude outsiders while promising their inclusion. The processes of hegemonic control are infinitely more complex and subtle than that, with past practices and their institutionalized effects always contained in the present. As we saw in Chapters Six and Seven, residents of Chinese-origin in Vancouver, have as part of a secondary process, sometimes willingly appropriated and projected the dominant collective conception of them as "Chinese" and
their territory as "Chinatown." Such was particularly the case in the 1930s when Chinese merchants promoted the tourist definition in part to fight the adversity of the Depression, in the 1960s when Chinese (and eventually some reform allies) again mobilized the perception of Chinatown as a civic asset to protect their homes and businesses from destruction and in the 1970s, when the Federal Government has actively solicited projections of "difference." To the extent that the "Chinese" have participated in the dominant racial ideology, they too have contributed to the making of white European cultural hegemony in Canada.

The Idea of Place

The study of the race idea is considerably strengthened by a sensitivity to its geographical underpinnings. In Chapter Two I argued that racial ideology was objectified through the spatial concentration of merchants and workers of Chinese origin in a marginal territory and in Chapter Four I discussed the strategies employed by the levels of government to further institutionalize the racially defined spatial order. Perhaps the most important and least obvious dimension of the making of the idea of race, however, has been through the social construction of stigmatised places, as identity and space have coalesced in the achievement of racial identity. Indeed the objectification of racial categories in space in the example of the Chinese, cannot be understood without appreciating the force of the idea of "Chinatown."

Studies of the meaning of place in human geography have too rarely taken measure of the role of external agents, such as the state, in defining place. Yet those with the power of definition in a sense create a "place." Furthermore, to the extent that politically sanctioned
ideas have an impact, "landscape impressions" become contexts for the actual making of place - they become "expressed" in the landscape, as Samuels has argued. From this perspective, the regionalization of the city is a social process which is continuously realized, much like the regionalization of the globe into such abstractions as "West," "East," the "Dark Continent," the "Third World," the "Pacific Rim" and so on. Perhaps not all urban "places" are as heavily laden with a connotative load as "Chinatown." But Chinatown is important in pointing up once again the more general principle that a negotiated social process lies behind the apparently neutral-looking taxonomic systems of census districts. Moreover, in the case of Chinatown, the use of ideology by institutions to create and recreate the idea of place is further testimony to the fact that a set of power relations may to a greater or lesser degree, underpin and keep alive our spatial categories.

The importance of these "imaginative geographies," to use the words of Said, cannot be underestimated because they organize social action and political practices - indeed they are a critical part of the structuring of society. Lowman has argued convincingly that crime maps may be mental maps reflecting more the images of the city and the activities of control agents, such as the police, courts, and elected officials than the inherently "criminogenic" nature of "problem" areas. The lending practices of financial institutions have also been shown to rely upon and reinforce the contours (and underlying power relations) of the social regionalization of the city. Cosgrove has also noted the importance of landscape definition, arguing that the landscape be conceptualized as a symbolic system that has a structuring role of its own. In a considered grappling with the problem of the
relationship of the cultural domain to the other "levels," Cosgrove argues for their "dialectical unity" and locates the Italian Renaissance city in the realm of "symbolic production" where its form is part of the means by which the Italian nobility communicates and legitimizes its cultural hegemony.20

This study has attempted to bring further evidence to the growing consensus in human geography that our landscape ideas, as symbolic resources, have an influential structuring role in the reproduction of wider social processes. It has attempted to do this through a diachronic approach that conceptualizes place as a historically evolving social product whose transformation is, in the words of Pred, "inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space."21 Specifically, I have examined the reciprocal relationship between Chinatown as a Western idea and as a concrete form, and the manner in which, through the activities of certain key agents, it continuously expresses, realizes and reinforces the process of racial categorization.

An explicitly diachronic approach has much to offer the recent objective of cultural geographers, and indeed human geographers generally, to demonstrate in their different ways that "geography matters."22 By diachronic, I mean an approach where narrative and analysis are "mutually interdependent" axes of the study of "structuring" (to use the words of Abrams' "historical sociology"23). Place is not abstracted but "situated in process in time." Armed with such a methodological strategy, we can attempt to demonstrate empirically (rather than logically deduce or simply assert) the structuring role of place and landscape - the emergence of its idea in a particular historical and social context, the "acting back" of its idea.
and its emergent assimilation to a social order which in turn re-shapes the idea and the reality of place. The approach can bring a more critical dimension to the hermeneutic circle by locating the social and historical production of the part (the text, or landscape) in the whole and vice-versa.

A diachronic strategy requires us as interpreters to return to the "local knowledge" that shaped the meaning and definition of place in time past. But the methodological task does not end there, as Abrams insists. It has in fact only begun, for having recovered past subjectivities (as far as it is ever possible), "we must turn our backs from 'their' meanings to our own and to the things which we know about them which they did not know, or say, about themselves." In other words, we must withdraw in order to illuminate the patterning behind social action. Empirical data is of course indispensible to such a task, but so too is our own analytical distance. One of the reasons why the prejudice framework is analytically suspect is that social scientists have used the rules and outlooks of their own seemingly "tolerant" social reality as benchmarks to describe past mentalities. They have not penetrated to the symbolic system that informed those subjectivities. From that vantage point Chinatown can be no more than the victimized colony of the "East," a conceptualization that limits our ability to see connections between Chinatown and wider processes, such as racial classification.

It should be clear from these general concluding comments that, although I have examined the details of the race definition process in one setting and period, the Vancouver case study points beyond itself to some more general themes concerning power and racial discourse,
representation and the Other, the social construction of identity and place and the relationship between ideology and institutional practices as it is played out at the local level. Geertz's call for "a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structures in such a way as to bring both into view simultaneously" is rather too exacting an appeal to be scrupulously practised, but it does in spirit, present a challenge we can endeavour to approximate.26 Thus, although the perceptions and practices of the likes of Commissioner J. Chapleau, Health Inspector R. Marrion, Prime Minister W. Mackenzie King, Alderman H. Wilson, Mayor T. Alsbury and Chinatown planner, Mr. M. Kemble, are clearly important in themselves - obviously the analysis could not be built without recovering them - their particular significance, at least for my interpretation, is their contribution to the making of a racial frame of reference in a context of white European cultural hegemony. It is that frame of reference that in different guises has, I have argued, supported and carried forward the social and spatial categories of identity and place and justified the century-long institutional practices upon which those abstractions have been predicated.

All of the world's societies impose what Said has called "corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge."27 That the objective world is subjectively interpreted is by now well known by humanistic geographers. The city as a whole is inaccessible, we have learned, unless it is reduced and simplified. The problem is not so much that the transformation or conversion of the external world occurs. What is of course significant is the categories we use to do so; moreover, the particular field of
meaning that our categories accrue and the functions they perform for us. In the case of racial categories, it will be apparent to all critical observers that they do a considerable disservice to reality, reducing the range of human variation - mental, moral, physical, social, institutional - down and backwards to a limited set of primitive, explanatory types. In their name has been justified the erection of epistemological barriers that enslave representer and victim alike. Yet our representations are deeply embedded in our culture and language, our institutions and our tradition. We live by our abstractions and our lexicon, indeed as Olsson has pointed out we are bound by them for without them "is to tear the world asunder."

But such a message is overly pessimistic as Olsson himself realized. In a statement that has considerable relevance to the most mischievous category of all - that of race - he said: "When we cease to believe in a word, it no longer has power. And when words lose their power, so do the institutions that are built upon them."28 The pressures which make the Other into our designated image are never complete and always reversible. Our racial categories are not inherently enslaving but open to challenge and scrutiny. Indeed they can be transcended through new images, new meanings, new worlds that promise more creative human encounters than those conducted behind arbitrarily erected and enforced borders. As Olsson again has said, "In order to live and create, we must destroy the tradition from which we stem."29
NOTES

1. The key concepts of the sociobiological argument are inclusive fitness, kin selection and reciprocal altruism. The argument is made that attachment to our respective ethnic groups is a natural extension of kinship and is ultimately an expression of our effort to optimize the production of common genes. P. van den Berghe, *The ethnic phenomena.* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1981). Van den Berghe claims that his selectionist theory "accounts better for the appearance and disappearance of racism in various times and places than competing theories that attribute racism either to ideological factors ... or to the capitalist mode of production." p.32. For a critique, see for example, M. Barker, *The new racism.* (London: Junction Books Ltd., 1981); M. Sahlins, *The use and abuse of biology.* (Ann Arbor: the University of Michigan Press, 1976), chap.1.


11. For Mouffe, the hegemonic principles unifying social groups are always provided by the "fundamental classes" defined through the
production process. While recognizing that the originality and importance of Gramsci is his break with the base-superstructure model, Mouffe still wants to insist that the "autonomy" of the "superstructures" is not "incompatible with the determination in the last instance by the economy." Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci, op. cit., p.200. For a recent example in geography of a less restrictive interpretation of hegemonic sectors, see J. MacLaughlin and J. Agnew, Hegemony and the regional question, op. cit.


13. ibid., p.111.


15. The split labour market thesis was developed to explain the economic sources of ethnic conflict. See the brief discussion in Chapter Two.


20. D. Cosgrove, Problems in interpreting the symbolism of past landscapes, op. cit. Duncan has also uncovered the relationship between power and landscape symbolism in pre-colonial (and later) Kandy in Sri Lanka. Changes in authority and meaning under three cultural paradigms, op. cit.


29. ibid., p.304.
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