ABSTRACT

This study looks at the making of a French-Canadian community in Maillardville, British Columbia, between 1909 and 1939. Drawing on oral history transcripts, as well as textual and visual documents, From the Mill to the Hill explores how complicated and contested relations of race, class, gender, and sexuality intertwined to constitute a French-Canadian identity and community in Maillardville prior to the Second World War. Using critical discourse analysis as methodology, this study examines the narratives of 23 men and women who were interviewed in the early 1970s and lived in Maillardville in the period preceding that war. Newspaper articles, city council minutes, company records, church records, as well as historical photographs culled from various archives and a local museum, also serve as primary documents.

From the Mill to the Hill argues that a French-Canadian identity and community was constructed in Maillardville between 1909 and 1939 through the racialization of bodies and spaces. Narratives about the myth of the frontier, the opposite "other," and the racialization of the space in and around the company town of Fraser Mills illustrate how identity construction operated within a gendered and racialized framework. Secondly, this study excavates the fragile "whiteness" of French Canadians as both colonizers and colonized in British Columbia. Even though these French Canadians were de facto Canadian citizens — thus entitled to purchase land, and (for the men) vote in elections — they were also working-class, poor, Roman Catholic, and French-speaking — all attributes that made them inferior in the eyes of English-speaking Canadians of Protestant British descent. Finally, this thesis explores the moral regulation of gender roles, heteronormativity, and wedding ceremonies. Looking specifically at the institutional power of the Roman Catholic religion and education, this research shows
how the French Canadians' fragile whiteness was also fractured along axes of gender and sexual inequalities.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FFCB  Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique
RRAS  Reynoldston Research and Studies
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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Immigration, heritage, and Francophone communities

In January 2005, the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FFCB) — an umbrella organization comprised of close to forty Francophone and Francophile associations throughout the province — released its 2004-2009 regional action plan to promote Francophone immigration to British Columbia. Among other objectives, the Fédération's plan intends "to improve the reception and settlement services adapted to the needs of French-speaking immigrants and facilitate their integration." Ultimately, the 2004-2009 action plan aims to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants who settle in the province. For the leaders of the Fédération, attracting and retaining "Francophone immigrants" is a way to reinforce the demographic and political weight of the "Francophone community." In line with Canadian discourses on multiculturalism, resorting to immigration is also presented as a tool to "revitalize" and "enrich" the community culturally, economically, and socially.

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1 The FFCB is made up of 37 member associations (FFCB, 2005/2006: 23). The majority of these associations are located in the Lower Mainland (21 associations) — including Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster, Surrey, and Vancouver — and on Vancouver Island (10 associations) — including Campbell River, Comox, Courtenay, Nanaimo, Saanichton, and Victoria. On the other hand, there are only two member associations in Northern British Columbia (Kitimat and Prince George) and in the interior (Kamloops and Kelowna), and one in the south of the province (Nelson), and one on the Sunshine Coast (Powell River). The geographical distribution of the FFCB membership — heavily concentrated in the Lower Mainland — roughly reflects the demographic reality of the Francophone population in the province. According to the 2001 Canadian Census, 63,630 people with French as a mother tongue lived in British Columbia, and nearly 30,000 of these Francophones inhabited the Lower Mainland, while about 6000 of them lived in Victoria's urban region (FFCB, 2004: 8, 13).


3 From May to November 2003, I was hired as a researcher by the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique to conduct a research project on Francophone immigration. The goal of this initiative was to establish the "settlement needs" of French-speaking immigrants settling in the Lower Mainland. During this assignment, I had a number of discussions with the leaders of the Fédération and had a chance to learn some of their politics and goals.
The Fédération’s current interest in immigration has not emerged in a political and historical vacuum. Since 2002, the federal government has officially committed itself to supporting the development of Francophone Canadian minority communities outside Quebec through international immigration. Indeed, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* that came into effect in 2002 includes linguistic provisions to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities. In November 2003, the federal government also made public its *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*. In the press release promoting this initiative, then Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Stéphane Dion, is quoted as saying that the strategic framework “clearly shows the government’s commitment to strengthening the linguistic duality that is fundamental to our Canadian identity.” Indeed, to ensure that Francophone minority communities ‘fully benefit’ from immigration, the Canadian government has agreed to spend nine million dollars over a five-year period (Alary, 2003: 5). On September 11, 2006, the recently elected Conservative government reiterated the Liberal commitment to support Francophone immigration by launching its own *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*. Once again, Francophone immigration was presented as a key factor to “preserve” the linguistic duality of “our country” and boost the “growth and vitality of our country’s Francophone communities.”

On the surface, there is a discourse of inclusiveness, openness, and pluralism towards French-speaking immigrants in BC and across Canada. However, as I have observed after participating in various events in the Lower Mainland since 2002, these narratives of tolerance and benevolence are also accompanied by exclusionary attitudes.

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and practices.\footnote{For discussions on exclusionary practices and issues of pluralism and racism within Francophone communities in Ontario, see Madibbo, 2005, Chambon and al., 2001, Kérisit, 1998, and Berger, 1997. For national studies, see Quell, 2002 and Jedwab, 2002.} For instance, during the \textit{Fédération's} annual general assembly in 2003, a community leader of Moroccan origin proposed modifying the mandate of many of the FFCB affiliated associations by pluralizing the term 'francophone culture' in their mission statements. The mandate of many francophone groups in BC includes "the protection of the French language and \textit{the} 'francophone culture' in British Columbia" as a strategy of survival within a "sea of Anglophones." Here, the addition of an 's' to the word 'culture' seemed like an attempt to take into account the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the thousands of Francophones living in the Lower Mainland and in other parts of the province.\footnote{According to the 2001 census, nearly 20\% of the mother tongue Francophones living in the Lower Mainland were immigrants. At the provincial level, immigrants made up 15\% of the 63 630 mother tongue Francophone population in 2001 (FFCB, 2004: 13).} In other words, this Moroccan man, along with other women and men of colour, wanted an acknowledgement of the many francophone immigrants — mainly newcomers to the Lower Mainland from North and Central Africa — who participate in the life of the francophone community. In the end, however, the white Québécois Francophones and other Franco-Canadians who lead the majority of the FFCB affiliated groups refused to pluralize 'culture' in the mission statements.\footnote{In general, the term \textit{Québécois} refers to people who live in Quebec. In the context of Quebec nationalism, the term seems to refer mostly (if not exclusively) to white French-speaking people of distant European origins — the so-called Québécois "de souche" or "pure laine," as opposed to more recent immigrants. Before the 1960s, the Québécois referred to themselves as French Canadians. However, the term was dropped after the 'Quiet Revolution' and is not used much anymore. French-speaking people that live in other provinces have also considered themselves as French Canadians, but have started to define their identity provincially (and see themselves as Franco-Ontarians, Franc-Saskois, Franco-Manitobains or Franco-Colombiens, for instance) in response to Québec nationalism. More recently, the term "Francophone," supposedly more inclusive and "multicultural," is used to refer to anyone who speaks French (as a first language or as a first official language) and lives in Canada. For instance, the FFCB was first called \textit{Fédération Canadienne-Française de la Colombie-Britannique} at its inception in 1945. The name was changed to \textit{Fédération des Franco-Colombiens} in 1969, to finally become the \textit{Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique} in 1992. In this thesis, I will respect the appellation of the time and talk of French Canadians before 1960 and of Québécois or Francophones after 1960. For a discussion of the disappearance of the term 'French Canadian,' see Martel, 1997.} At the meeting, many
went as far as defending the idea of one unique 'Francophone culture,' arguing that this representation included everyone who is 'Francophone' — whites and non-whites, immigrants and non-immigrants.

The principal argument made by white Québécois Francophones to defend the idea of one unique "Francophone culture" is twofold. Firstly, it seems more economically viable for Francophone associations to emphasize a homogeneous linguistic and cultural minority status, as opposed to a "multicultural mandate." Most of the FFCB affiliated associations receive their funding from the federal government under the privileged category of 'official-language minority community.' The white leaders fear that if they state that they also want to promote the 'cultures' of so-called 'ethnic groups,' their associations would have to apply for funding under the status of a multicultural group and hence lose a privileged position in the funding game.11

Secondly, while this argument seems very pragmatic, it also hides an important conception of the Francophone living in Canada— one that portrays and imagines the group as necessarily white, French-speaking, Canadian-born or educated, and of European origin.12 On a more profound level, this portrayal serves to mask a racist discourse. Not only does it allow whites to preserve their status of power within the community, but it helps silence, ignore, and marginalize non-whites. Even admitting that francophone groups in British Columbia are multicultural would blur the traditional

11 Under the Collaboration Accord Between Canadian Heritage and the Community Sector of the Francophone Community of British Columbia, BC Francophone community groups received a budget envelope of $2,678,000 for the twelve-month period from April 1, 2005, to March 31, 2006. Here, the funding is in line with the objective of the Official Languages Act which aims at "enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development." (Emphasis added). See <http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/accords_collaboration/BC/index_e.cfm> (accessed 9 April, 2007).

12 Here, I must point out that not all whites belong equally to the Francophone group. For instance, it is interesting to note that recent Francophone immigrants of European origins do not necessarily share this "one unique culture" imagined by white Francophone Québécois and Canadians. French immigrants have their own separate primary school in Vancouver, and organizations like L'Alliance française that compete with Francophone ones.
distinction between bilingualism and multiculturalism. In a way a “multicultural francophonie” threatens the privileged position of the francophone community as descending from one of the ‘two founding nations’ of this country and challenges the dual linguistic character supposedly so fundamental to “Canadian identity.”

Interestingly, while there is interest in immigration, identity, and multiculturalism among Francophones in British Columbia, there is also a concurrent celebration of the white French-Canadian “old timers” who settled south of Coquitlam, BC, in 1909 and 1910. Popular histories, tourist brochures, museums and festivals commemorate these “pioneers” who built the “French village” that became known as Maillardville. For instance, a recent article in L’Express du Pacifique, Vancouver’s only weekly community newspaper published entirely in French, covers the launch of a tourist brochure inviting visitors to “experience” Maillardville. *Maillardville Toujours: A Walk through History* is the title of a glossy pamphlet advertising self-guided walking tours through the historical “French” neighbourhood of Maillardville. In the article, then Mayor of Coquitlam, M. Jon Kingsbury, is quoted as saying, “il est important pour nous de protéger l’héritage des pionniers de Maillardville.” A photo of white people — including the MLA for the district, a male historian, and the mayor of Coquitlam, all dressed as ‘pioneers’ — accompanies

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13 For debates around multiculturalism and bilingualism within francophone communities, see Quell, 1998.

14 In the context of Ontario, for instance, Quell writes that “the recent arrival of new Francophones from Africa and the Caribbean is a double-edged sword for long-established Franco-Ontarians”:

On the one hand, this influx gives a welcome boost to the overall number of Francophones and thus strengthens the argument that the state (at both federal and the provincial level) should continue to provide services in French. On the other hand, though, it challenges not only the cultural and historic identity of Franco-Ontarians but leads to increased competition for federal funding among francophone organizations and more French-speakers crowding an already tight French-speaking labour market (Quell, 1998: 177).

While this observation concerns Ontario, it seems that there is a similar situation in British Columbia.

15 The *Maillardville Toujours* brochure is available at the Mackin Heritage Home and Toy Museum in Coquitlam, located at 1116 Brunette Avenue.
the article, suggesting that the little village south of Coquitlam was a homogeneous, white, French-Canadian community (see Figure 1.1).

Illustration 1.1.... ALL DRESSED UP: City of Coquitlam officials and community and provincial government representatives celebrate Maillardville's 'pioneers' during the launch of a tourist brochure in 2003
From left: Carole Helter, Francophone liaison for MLA Richard Stewart and Festival du Bois committee member for the Société Maillardville-Uni; Antonio Paré, local historian; Barb Hobson, Place des Arts Board member; Jon Kingsbury, mayor of Coquitlam, Barb Stegemann, tourism director for the City of Coquitlam; Al Ordge, manager of economic development for the City of Coquitlam; and Richard Stewart, the Coquitlam/Maillardville MLA who is responsible for Francophone Affairs (Anne Moisan-Lapointe Photo, L'Express du Pacifique, October 27, 2003. p. 7)

As I look at the photograph, I struggle with the narrow and romanticized construction of Maillardville embedded in the image. For instance, I wonder why the men and women all seem to wear upper- or middle-class attire. How is this reconstruction of the past representative of the population of Maillardville in 1909 and 1910? In terms of
race, I wonder why only white people are part of the photograph. While I applaud the idea of unveiling Maillardville's past — a past that is relatively unknown and not very well documented by professional historians, sociologists, or Canadian studies specialists — I am also concerned about the type of popular history being developed within the tourism and heritage industries. I wonder how the heritage hype around Maillardville silences some voices while celebrating others. I wonder how this heritage includes or excludes non-whites in today's discourses of Canadian 'francophone identity.' In the same vein, I wonder why only certain 'pioneers' are glorified and celebrated.

For instance, while Maillardville is manufactured as a tourist location, nothing is said about the racial context surrounding the birth of the community. There is no acknowledgement that the French-Canadian lumberjacks recruited by the Fraser Mills Company came to BC to replace readily available Asian and South Asian labourers (see Stewart, 1956, Hak, 2000 and Spagnolo and Levesque, 1980). On the other hand, the complicated social position of French Canadians, as both colonizers and colonized, is not acknowledged. In these accounts, the history of English-Canadian persecution or denigration of French Canadians (and later Québécois and Francophones), who have been racialized negatively as second-class citizens because of their language and religion, is not part of the heritage narrative.¹⁶ Not only is this two-edged discriminatory and racist context ignored, but class, gender, and sexuality — categories of analysis vital to historical inquiry — are also overlooked in these official accounts.

In this study, I will contextualize the current glorification of Maillardville within the tourism and heritage industries, as well as concurrent debates over immigration and multiculturalism, by focusing on the period from 1909 to 1939. As I am committed to a Marxist, feminist, anti-racist and queer theoretical framework, I will explore how dynamic,

contested relations of race, class, gender and sexuality intertwined to constitute a French-Canadian identity and community in Maillardville in the decades preceding the Second World War. Drawing primarily on oral history transcripts, but also on a range of textual and visual records (newspaper articles, city council minutes, company records, church records, as well as historical photographs), I will explore the making of Maillardville, British Columbia, as a predominantly white, male, heterosexual, and class-stratified French-Canadian community. My purpose is to excavate the creation, maintenance and dominance of white, patriarchal, Roman Catholic, and French-speaking identity and community in Maillardville from 1909 to 1939.

Using critical discourse analysis, I will examine the narratives of men and women who lived in Maillardville. I will study how twenty-three Maillardville residents made sense of and remembered their 'everyday lives,' as they attended school, stayed home, worked for wages, engaged in unpaid work, got married (or not), struggled to keep their French language alive, and practiced and resisted the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. My analysis of additional textual and visual records will further contextualize, nuance, support, and sometimes contradict what I have found in the interviews. As I critically explore this discursive field, I will focus on three major themes: the racialization of the space in and around the mill, the "in between" social position of French Canadians as colonized and colonizers, and the moral and social regulation of heteronormativity. Along with my focus on these three dimensions, I will pay attention to the French language (in a particular form) as a defining identity factor and the issue of

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17 I will analyze the transcripts of oral histories conducted with twenty-three French-Canadian men and women who lived in Maillardville during the first half of the twentieth century. These oral histories were conducted in the early 1970s by Cheryl Pierson, who undertook twenty-two interviews, and Frankie Johnson, who did the remaining two. This series of interviews was part of an oral history project conducted for Reynolds Research and Studies. (See Chapter 3 for a discussion of these oral histories and my methodology).

18 I borrow this expression from Dorothy E. Smith. I will expand on her Marxist feminist materialist approach in the methodology section of this thesis.
As I analyze the making of Maillardville, I also aim to tease out the relevance of this case study to broader debates about the constructions of the Canadian nation, and nationalisms and nation-building in general.

I have decided to end my inquiry in 1939 because of the beginning of the Second World War, which marked significant changes. In the decades preceding WWII, Maillardville remained relatively closed to exterior influences and the life of the community revolved around the Church, the school and the lumber mill (Stewart, 1956, Villeneuve, 1979). After the Second World War, Maillardville became less isolated. Immigrants from Eastern Europe and migrants from the Prairies settled near or in Maillardville to work at the lumber mill (Stewart, 1956). The presence of the English language also became stronger, and the community became less and less homogeneous. In his interview with Cheryl Pierson, one of the participants explains how Maillardville started to change after the Second World War:

You see, here, a long time, the French really kept by themselves too much, and this place didn’t grow too much. But since World War II, it kind of developed things around, and they [the French] got mixed up. More English people, different nationalities, you might call it. And they got acquainted with one another and there was more business that came in, and stores here and there, French-speaking business, English-speaking business (Pierson, Interview with Arthur Laverdure, 1972).

Making a similar argument, another male interviewee, Ralph Duplin, explains to Pierson that “the big change here in Maillardville was after this last war, because from 1910 through thirty, it [Maillardville] was practically the same.” (Pierson, Interview with Ralph

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19 In a 1987 study conducted by the Association of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists (ACCTRA), Rita Shelton Deverell seems to have coined the term "audible minorities" to account for discrimination due to accent (Karim, 1993). While this term is a contemporary expression — related to the better known "visible minorities" census category, which accounts for discrimination due to physical appearance (read race) — I find it useful to refer to "audible minorities" to explore social inequalities in Maillardville prior to the Second World War. Intertwined with race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and age, for instance, a person’s ‘accent’ in the society’s dominant language also constitutes a dimension of social inequality.
Duplin, 1972). Like Laverdure, Duplin notes that "more people came in after the war" (Ibid, 1972).

1.2 Doing historical sociology, historicizing identities

As I embark on this project, I adhere to the popular saying stating that one needs to know the past to understand the present. Following the basic premise of historical sociology, I believe that "in order to understand how social life works one must understand it from an historical perspective" (Brock, 2003: 1). I am particularly inspired by historical sociologist Philip Abrams, who writes that "[s]ociological explanation is necessarily historical" (1982: 2). As he discusses the 'two-sidedness' of society, Abrams makes it clear that the social world is in fact first and foremost historical:

> The two-sidedness of society, the fact that social action is both something we choose to do and something we have to do, is inseparably bound up with the further fact that whatever reality society has is an historical reality, a reality in time. When we refer to the two-sidedness of society we are referring to the ways in which, in time, actions become institutions and institutions are in turn changed by action (Ibid.: 2).

In this sense, the fact that we are both the creators and the creatures of the social world needs to be understood historically.

Following Michel Foucault’s 'History of the Present' approach, I agree with him that it is important "to ask how present social arrangements and ways of thinking about the social world came about" (Brock, 1). As I look at the making of Maillardville, I am interested in finding out how categories of identity and identification were produced and reproduced through discourses and practices of power. I wonder, for instance, how French Canadianness, as a social/racial category, was constructed in opposition to "Orientalness," on one hand, and 'Englishness,' on the other hand. What were the material (and symbolic) consequences of this racial ordering? How was 'French Canadianness' gendered, classed, sexualized, and racialized? How do past social inequalities resonate in the present? For instance, it seems that the anti-Asian racism
that surrounded the birth of Maillardville in 1909 and 1910 is echoed in current heritage narratives which celebrate only white pioneers. As Abrams writes,

> Doing justice to the reality of history is not a matter of noting the way in which the past provides a background to the present; it is a matter of treating what people do in the present as a struggle to create a future out of the past, of seeing that the past is not just the womb of the present but the only raw material out of which the present can be constructed (Abrams, 1982:8).

In line with this definition, this study contributes to critical work on constructions of identities and communities in the past (see Stoler, 1995, 2002, on British Colonialism and colonial identities, and Perry, 2001, on colonialism in mid-nineteenth-century British Columbia; also Mawani, 2003 on the making of Vancouver's Stanley Park 1991, and Valverde, on moral regulation in English Canada, among many others). In British Columbia, social geographer Cole Harris looks at the creation of "native spaces" between 1850 and 1938. More precisely, he examines the processes by which Aboriginal people were displaced and relocated on reserves, while a (white) settler society took possession of the land. Looking at this particular colonial encounter, Harris shows how the "making of native spaces" has direct relevance today, when he writes:

> "Native British Colombians still have too little access to the means of making a reasonable living, while non-Native British Colombians are the continuing beneficiaries of the colonial processes that displaced the prior inhabitant of this land" (xxxii). On a completely different topic, feminist scholar Jennifer Terry also looks at how the past resonates in the present, as she explores the 1930's medico-scientific discourse on homosexuality (1991). She concludes that homosexual subjectivities constructed in the past "are not static nor contained; they are effects in the history of the perilous present" (71). By referring to these two brief examples, I just want to make it clear that I am doing historical sociology because I find it crucial to look at the past sociologically, in order to comprehend how identities and communities are constructed in the present. With regard to this specific study, I believe that examining the making of Maillardville from an
historical perspective contextualizes the current glorification of this community and contemporary debates over Francophone immigration in British Columbia and other Francophone communities in Canada.

1.3 On nation and nation-building

While this study focuses on the small community of Maillardville, as a case study, it is also relevant to explore broader explorations of nationalisms and nation-building. Here, I recall Benedict Anderson, when he defines the nation as "an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (1991: 6). As Anderson explains, the nation is imagined, "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). According to Anderson, nations need founding myths and stories to feed this sense of sharing a common past and belonging to a community of people who have never met. In focusing on the making of Maillardville, I look at the exclusionary myths that construct the Canadian nation.

In agreement with anti-racist feminist scholars, I also conceptualize nationalisms as being racialized, classed, gendered, and sexualized (see for instance, McClintock, 1995; Bannerji, 2000; and Mackey, 2002). Indeed, one's representation as within and belonging to the nation depends on these markers of social inequality, namely race, gender, class, and sexuality. In other words, men and women, both racialized others and "normalized" white people, workers and upper-middle class folk, as well as "normal" heterosexuals and "abnormal" sexual deviants, do not equally belong to the nation, and this differential belonging has material consequences. In the case of Maillardville, Canadian nation-building translated into a differential treatment for several racialized groups. Indeed, while heterosexual white male French-Canadian workers (and their families) were encouraged by the Fraser Mills Company to settle in British Columbia in spite of their inferior status as Francophones, South Asian and Asian single male
workers (the latter considered “undesirable yellow labour” by the Anglo-Canadian elite of the province), were discouraged from settling permanently (See Stewart, 1956 and Hak, 2000).

In this sense, I agree with Eva Mackey when she argues that the nation is constructed both symbolically, through myths and discourses, and physically, through the concrete management of populations (2002). Indeed, the idea of the nation is constantly invented and reinvented through various practices and discourses. Far from being something natural and given, the nation has to be constantly (re)affirmed, often through violent processes. When Aboriginal peoples are physically displaced and relocated to ‘reservations,’ when female immigrants received different treatment from male immigrants through domestic worker status, or when border officials use racial profiling to control who can or cannot enter the country, the nation is built through the concrete and violent management of populations. On the other hand, a recent newspaper article that presents hockey as the “fabric of our lives,” essential to ‘us’ Canadians (The Province, January 16, 2005, p. A1), constructs the nation discursively and traces its boundaries, as does the hyphenation of the term “Canadian” to refer to non-white and non-English groups (Indo-Canadians, Chinese-Canadians, French-Canadians, etc…).

While I explore the construction of the nation in this study, I also aim to contribute to critical whiteness studies (Frankenberg, 1993, 1997, Jacobson, 1998, Rasmussen and all., 2001, Goldberg, 2002, Roediger, 2005). This particular case reveals how whiteness, as a category of dominance and privilege, is internally fractured (Frankenberg, 2001, Goldberg, 2002). As Ruth Frankenberg explains, “[w]hiteness as a site of privilege is not absolute but rather crosscut by a range of other axes of relative advantage or subordination; these do not erase or render irrelevant race privilege, but rather inflect or modify it” (2001: 76). For instance, in the context of Maillardville, French
Canadians disrupted simple white/non-white dichotomies as they occupied a complicated position as both colonizers and colonized in the first decades of the twentieth century. Considered "white" in comparison to Asians and South Asians, French Canadians were nonetheless considered "less white" than Anglo-Canadians within the social hierarchy of British Columbia. As Ruth Frankenberg makes it clear, whiteness is historically specific:

Whiteness is a product of history, and is a relational category. Like other racial locations, it has no inherent but only socially constructed meanings. As such, whiteness's meanings are complexly layered and variable locally and translocally; also whiteness's meanings may appear simultaneously malleable and intractable (2001: 76).

Inspired by this definition of whiteness, I hope to further problematize whiteness itself as I examine the case of French Canadians in Maillardville. However, before going any further with this undertaking, I must acknowledge that it is important to locate myself within this academic endeavour.

1.4 Locating the researcher in the text: "It must be nice to be white"

In a recent argument, a friend told me: "It must be nice to be white." As I procrastinated in writing this thesis, he said that it would certainly be different if I was not white. He meant that handing in a late assignment, for example, for a non-white person, could be associated with laziness, lack of discipline, or even lack of professionalism due to cultural differences (read race). As a Latin-American man, my friend makes me think about how easily non-white people are negatively racialized. While, in my case, procrastination is just that — procrastination — in his case, the same behaviour becomes tainted with all sorts of racist prejudices. A common one that links geography and racism goes like this: hot climates, where people have "siestas" in the middle of the day.

20 I have decided not to use quotation marks while I discuss race or write terms such as white, black or non-white. There has been much debate on the usefulness of race as an analytical tool and some have argued that race should always be used in scare quotes to acknowledge its social construction (see Miles, 2000). While I agree with the fact that race (like gender, class, and sexuality) is socially constructed and should not be conceptualised biologically, I do not think I need inverted commas to make this point.
day, certainly do not conjure up notions of a strong work ethic. This discussion makes me think about the importance of looking at processes of racialization and the social construction of whiteness.

In many ways, being racialized as white has allowed me to ignore racism. I used to think, “Well, as a white person, I have never experienced racism.” True enough. However, I must also concede that I have benefited from racism. This privileged location that constructs whiteness as noble, smart, generous, hard-working, civilized, clean, and superior places me in a position of power (McIntosh, 1995). Studies of whiteness show well how this particular racialized location has been made invisible, unnamed, and unmarked (Frankenberg, 1993, Backhouse, 1999, McIntosh, 1995). In naming whiteness in this study and acknowledging its status of privilege and power, I want to deconstruct what it means to be white and, in this way, fight racism.

At the same time, ‘whiteness’ itself is an internally fractured category of identity. As a middle-class, white, heterosexual, francophone Québécois woman, my standpoint vis-à-vis the Canadian nation and the making of Maillardville places me in a complex position. Being racialized as white and coming from a middle-class background, I occupy a privileged position within Canadian society. Yet as a woman, my gender often signifies that I am considered a second-class citizen. Being francophone also means that I belong to another group, the Québécois. My accent in English is a French one, and this locates me as a member of one of the so-called ‘two founding nations,’ and gives me access to bilingual employment in the job market.

However, being Québécois has also been a source of shame and inequality at times. Last summer, as I was speaking French with a friend on a Penticton beach, in British Columbia, I was told by an Anglo-Canadian man from Toronto that there were too many Quebeckers in the Okanagan. This derogatory comment makes me reflect on the concept of “too many.” Looking at nationalism in Australia, Ghassan Hage argues that
categories such as "too many" are "primarily categories of spatial management" (2000: 36). Based on interviews with white Australians, Hage writes that "what motivates the production of categories such as "too many" [...] is the wish to construct or preserve not just a 'race,' an 'ethnicity' or a 'culture', but also an imagined privileged relation between the imagined 'race', 'ethnicity' or 'culture' and the national space conceived as its own" (Ibid: 38). In the context of my experience at the beach, it seems that this Torontonian man — as an English-speaking Canadian — felt that he had more right to be at the beach than me — a Francophone Québécois woman — even though we were both from "out-of-province." In other words, he felt comfortable enough to tell me that this British Columbia beach was for English-speaking people. In a way, he made me feel that as a Francophone, my presence was undesirable. On the other hand, saying that there are too many "Anglos" at the beach would not have much impact, since according to dominant narratives, the Okanagan is "supposed" to be populated by "Anglos" anyway.

As I consider my contradictory positions of privilege, I am inspired by anti-racist feminist scholars who are writing about doing research self-reflexively (McCorkel and Myers, 2003, Naples, 2003, Kirsch, 1999, Stacey, 1991). For instance, Gesa E. Kirsch writes the following:

The goal of situating ourselves in our work and acknowledging our limited perspectives is not to overcome these limits — an impossible task — but to reveal to readers how our research agenda, political commitments, and personal motivations shape our observations in the field, the conclusions we draw, and the research reports we write. That kind of knowledge can help readers understand (rather than second-guess) what factors have shaped the research questions at hand; it also helps ground the research report in a specific cultural and historical moment. Of course, no amount of situating oneself or one's research guarantees more thoughtful and sensitive work. But it remains a critically important step in pursuing ethical research (1999: 14).

Following this advice, I am conscious of my multiple locations of privilege and inequality, and I bring this consciousness to my exploration of Maillardville and the construction of the Canadian nation.
My interest in nationalisms and French-Canadian identity in Maillardville also stems from my own personal history. Growing up in Québec in the 1980s and 1990s, I was too young to remember the first referendum on sovereignty in 1980 and too young to vote in the second one in 1995. However, I remember vividly then Québec Premier Jacques Parizeau’s infamous speech after the slight defeat of the ‘Yes’ side. It felt very strange when I heard him saying that “we” had lost because of “money and the ethnic vote.” I agreed with the first part, but I was a little confused by his reference to “the ethnic vote.” Blaming ‘ethnic voters’ for the defeat of the ‘Yes’ side made me question what the ‘Québécois nation’ was really all about. Was it not supposed to include everyone living in Québec: immigrants of non-European origins, non-Francophones, people of colour and Aboriginal people? At this time, I started to doubt this nationalist endeavour. I had always thought I was Québécois and my people deserved a country, but then, it seemed that being ‘Québécois’ was equated with being so-called white, French-speaking and of distant European origins, or “pure laine.” To this day, I question nationalisms and the processes of nation-building.

As a white woman, I am also embarking on this project in a very personal manner. I remember how, in 1995, Lucien Bouchard, then leader of the Bloc Québécois, suggested that Francophone women should have more babies because the Québécois were one of the white races that has the fewest children (Venne, 1995; A10). This racist statement encouraging white Francophone Québécois women to become ‘fecund breeders of pure laine children’ (Ross, 1998: 188) reinforces the urgency I feel towards exploring nation-building. As I will undergo my research on Maillardville between 1909 and 1939, I hope this project will help question nationalisms and racisms, sexism and heterosexism, as well as all the violence they impart.
1.5 Outline of the Chapters

Chapter 2 will offer a critical literature review of scholarship on Maillardville and on French-Canadian minority communities during the time period under study. While very few scholars have studied Maillardville in any depth, there is, on the other hand, an abundant literature on French Canadians during the early part of the twentieth century.

Chapter 3 will present a discussion of my methodology — which combines critical discourse analysis of interview transcripts with critical discourse analysis of textual and visual records — and my theoretical framework. Here, I will evaluate Marxist, feminist, anti-racist and queer theories that will be useful to unpack critically the constructions of the nation, and more precisely constructions of Maillardville. In this section, I will also explain how I located and chose my primary sources.

In Chapter 4, I will explore the racialization of space. Through the myth of the frontier, and the constructions of Asian and South Asian “others,” as well as the making of racialized “towns” (namely Maillardville, “Chinatown,” “Japtown,” and “Hindutown”), I will analyze processes of racialization. More precisely, I will focus on the construction of a French-Canadianness that is imagined as socially and racially different, and superior to, an othered “Orientalness.” I will look at how this French Canadianness was produced and reproduced to celebrate the “French Canadian race” and silence non-white peoples (as well as people of non-British or non-French origins) who lived in or near Maillardville from 1909 to 1939. In this section, I will demonstrate how the making of Maillardville shaped and was shaped by racial inequalities.

In Chapter 5, I will further explore social inequalities by examining the complexities and contradictions of whiteness. Here, I will include English-speaking Canadians of British descent in the analysis. I argue that the French Canadians who moved to Fraser Mills at the beginning of the twentieth century occupied a liminal “third category,” somewhere between whiteness and non-whiteness — as “colonizers” and
“colonized” at the same time. Even though these French Canadians were de facto Canadian citizens — thus entitled to purchase land, and (for the men) vote in elections — they were also working-class, poor, Roman Catholic, and French-speaking — all attributes that made them inferior in the eyes of English-speaking Canadians of Protestant British descent.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I will explore the power of the Catholic Church and Catholic schooling. For instance, how did patriarchal discourses centered on the role of the Catholic Church and the school construct distinctive gender identities (femininity and masculinity) and define gender roles? I will look at the moral and social regulation of heteronormativity. Here, I will explore how French-Canadian nationalism and identity were defined through normative sexual practices and restrictions.

Exploring Maillardville from a critical discourse analysis perspective is essential in order to understand present-day discussion and debates on Francophone identity in Canada. My thesis is part of a social justice project whose goal is to end racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia in part by grasping the influence of an exclusionary past on our present. I hope that a critical textual/discourse analysis of the social construction of Maillardville between 1909 and 1939 will help me contextualize the current glorification of Maillardville as a singular and romanticized epitome of “Frenchness” in Canada, and contribute to current debates about a ‘francophone culture’ that every francophone is supposed to share.
II LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous work on Maillardville: white, male and working class

As I researched material on Maillardville and its histories, I quickly realised that very few scholars have turned their attention to this tiny but significant community. As opposed to other francophone minority communities in Ontario (see Welch, 1994/1995, Cardinal, 2001 and Martel, 1997), Manitoba (see Hébert, 1994), and the United States (see Anctil, 1992), francophone groups in British Columbia have not been the subject of much historical research (with the exception of Laurette Agnew's Présence francophone à Victoria, written in 1987). With regard to Maillardville, I found only three documents that specifically study this French-Canadian community (see Stewart, 1956, Williams, 1982 and Villeneuve, 1979). Considering the lack of research projects that have looked at the history of Maillardville, there is no doubt that much more needs to be done to unveil the complicated stories of this settlement.

The most comprehensive account of Maillardville consists of a Master thesis in history written at UBC by John Ray Stewart in 1956. Stewart explores the history of Maillardville from its beginnings in 1909 until 1956. Having grown up in Maillardville and gone to school with the sons and daughters of the French-Canadian 'pioneers', Stewart strove to acknowledge the contribution of French Canadians to building British Columbia and to unveil their struggle to keep their language and culture alive. Drawing on ten interviews and five personal correspondences (written letters) with members of the community, newspaper articles, municipal and company records, statistics from the Canadian census, and his own experience in Maillardville, Stewart offers a detailed account of the history of the community. While his work is not critical in analysing race,

21 In all the documents that I have consulted for this project, the term 'pioneers' is used to refer to the French Canadians who came to Fraser Mills in 1909 and 1910. I argue that this expression is problematic as it ignores the many French Canadians who were already in British Columbia and other 'pioneers' (Chinese, Japanese, South Asians) that were already living and working in Fraser Mills prior to the establishment of Maillardville. It also erases the presence of First Nations.
class, gender or sexuality, it is still an extremely useful overview (although from a very andocentric and white standpoint) of the social changes that occurred in Maillardville.

One of Stewart's most interesting chapters, entitled "French-Canadian Settlement in relation to the Lumber Industry," reveals in detail how the workers from Québec were recruited by the Western Lumber River Company in 1909 and 1910. Referring to newspaper articles and personal interviews, Stewart illustrates the racist climate at the very heart of Maillardville's birth. As he explains why French Canadians were hired, he writes:

Opposition to the employment of Asiatics gradually developed from many sources. White labourers resented the competition of Orientals whose low standard of living, they claimed, invited payment of low wages. At lumber mills Anti-Asiatic demonstrations occurred and incidents of fighting were not uncommon. Merchants criticized industrialists who hired Orientals (usually poor store customers) who, they said, sent most of their pay-cheques back to their native land. [...] Dissatisfaction with Oriental workers led to a decision by the management of the larger lumber plant in British Columbia to experiment with imported French-Canadian labour (1956: 41-42).

Here, Stewart offers a wealth of information to contextualize the hiring of French Canadians, even if he does not adopt an explicitly anti-racist approach to history. For instance, Stewart uncritically uses terms such as "Orientals" and Asians throughout his thesis. He also describes a racialized pay scale, rather than critically deconstructing it. Nonetheless, his constant reference to newspaper articles in New Westminster's British Columbian and Vancouver's Western Lumberman is particularly useful to locate stories of Maillardville in the larger economic, political and social context.

Stewart also demonstrates that the Maillardville community was very isolated and homogeneous for the first few decades following its foundation. Referring to the Canadian Census, Stewart reveals that the number of French Canadians who lived in the settlement of Maillardville grew from 295 people in 1911 to 1573 in 1941 (95-96). However, these numbers are only an approximation, since they are based on larger census areas that included Maillardville. According to Stewart, community life revolved
around the Roman Catholic parish, the Catholic school, and the lumber mill. The first priest of the parish, an Oblate, Father Edmond Maillard, gave his name to the little village and Maillardville was granted its own post office in 1913. Stewart reports that for its first twenty years the French community offered a "happy social life" for its members, as well as "friendly" employee-boss relationships:

On the company townsite the people enjoyed a happy round of social life. The community centre for square dances and parties was the unoccupied top storey of the general store, a spacious building. The wives and daughters of the company officials helped in planning the festive gatherings and relations between management and workers was [sic] very friendly (47).

This romantic portrayal of the French-Canadian settlers, as simple and happy people, does not seem to account for all the members of the community. Here, I find Stewart's analysis of social life and labour relations problematic. I wonder: how did women who did not want to get married or have children resist or accommodate the community's pressure? How did women who wished to pursue a career negotiate their social position? I also wonder about employees who were not satisfied with their working conditions. How did all these people make sense of their ‘everyday and every night lives'?22 In this study, I will explore these questions in greater detail in chapter six, which deals with heteronormativity and gender roles.

Stewart also recounts how the depression years of the 1930s started to bring changes in the community. During this decade, many Anglophone and Francophone newcomers from the prairies migrated west to British Columbia in search of employment. For Stewart, this influx explains the building of Coquitlam's first secondary school in 1938. The new institution offered different possibilities for the youth of Maillardville, as many of the young people completed high school at this institution (in English) and entered professions outside of the mill, such as teaching, pharmacy, or nursing. Here

22 I borrow this expression from Dorothy Smith (1987).
again, there is no analysis of gender, so it is not clear if women and men had equal access to these professions. I suspect that many of them were highly gendered, with women working as nurses and teachers, and the men becoming pharmacists. As Stewart explains it,

"The advent of a host of 'outsiders' to the Maillardville settlement constituted a threat to the homogeneity of the race, language and religion. Many who bought property within the general area of the original French Canadian colony were Scandinavian, Ukrainian or Anglo-Saxon (71)."

In the forties, the establishment of a Protestant church also altered the social environment of Maillardville. Stewart claims that the only reason the settlement did not become "Protestant-dominated" was that hundreds of French Canadians from the prairies came to Maillardville to work at the mill (71). In 1946 a second Catholic parish Church, Notre Dame de Fatima, was built to accommodate these newcomers. According to Stewart, both parishes were very active in the 1940s and 1950s, as they carried on "an active programme centred around the school and the church" (74). Each parish had its own French-Canadian club (Cercle des Canadiens français) and local chapters of the province-wide Fédération Canadienne-Française, that shared the goal to "foster and perpetuate French-Canadian culture, language and religion" (75).

Stewart concludes his thesis by forecasting the inevitable "assimilation" of the Maillardville French Canadians. Because of mixed marriages, work opportunities outside of the mill, and rapid suburbanisation, many French Canadians were "losing" their Catholic faith and French language, and speaking English more and more. Stewart deduces that the survival of the French-Canadian group would depend on the vitality of community associations and groups, like the Fédération Canadienne-française de la Colombie-Britannique, as well as the dynamism and the level of determination of the school and the parish to ensure Catholic education in French.
While Stewart's thesis briefly mentions the 1931 strike at Fraser Mills and claims that not many French-Canadian workers took part in that revolutionary endeavour, M. Jeanne Meyers Williams, on the other hand, reports the active participation of the Maillardville community in labour organization. In her 1982 M.A. thesis in history, written at SFU, the author argues that the close-knit character of the community offered favourable grounds for organization. A strong kinship network (one Maillardville family, for instance, was linked by marriage to 27 others), and a high rate of co-residency, as well as residential concentration ensured social cohesion among the French Canadians, who were predominantly working class.

Williams also maintains that while the French Canadians brought with them their traditional institutions — the Church, the Catholic religion, the school and the family — their relations to these organizations changed once in Maillardville. As opposed to the reality in Québec, where the Church had a huge influence on the workers (through Catholic unions, for example), the Maillardville priest's anti-strike campaign did not stop the parishioners from actively participating in the 1931 labour action. Indeed, while accounting for only eighteen percent of all the mill workers in 1931, French Canadians made up almost half of the strike committee (1982: 42).

Drawing extensively on company records (complete payroll records of the Canadian Western Lumber Company, Minutes of the Strike Committee, and managers' personal correspondence), oral histories and newspaper articles from the *British Columbian*, Williams offers a detailed account of the strike, albeit from an ethnic relations' perspective.\(^{23}\) She reveals that most of the British, Anglo-Canadian and American men occupied positions of management in the mill, while French Canadians,

\(^{23}\) I do not adhere to the ethnic relations approach to studying race; I prefer a perspective that acknowledges the social construction of race and ethnicity as empty and fluid categories. As Backhouse (1999) explains, and I agree, "races" do not exist per se, but racism exists and causes tremendous violence and hatred.
East Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian labourers occupied lower ranks as semi-skilled or unskilled workers. In her opinion, the absence of upward mobility for the non-British or non-Anglo-Canadian groups, compounded by their low pay (although Asians workers were paid only a fraction of what the white non-Anglo and semi-, or non-skilled workers made) allowed for a class solidarity that overcame ethnic or racial differences.

Williams concludes that even if the strikers did not make substantial gains, the work stoppage was still successful:

... the workers at Fraser Mills did not achieve large wage increases, their union was not recognized, and many of the demands were never seriously considered. Yet the downward spiral of wages stopped. Community residents remember that the 1931 strike not only improved company policy towards its workforce, but also brought an end to what one resident referred to as “nationalism,” antagonism born of ethnic and national differences (112).

Here, Williams argues that, on the mill floor, the common situation of the men working together allowed for bonds of class to develop. She maintains that if there had been strong divisions between the workers according to their ethnic backgrounds, the strike would have failed. She cites the demands of the strikers, organized under the Workers' Unity League (WUL), to show the solidarity between Asian and white workers. Indeed, not only did the strikers demand a 10 percent wage increase, they also demanded “equal pay for equal work,” as well as the abolition of the contract labour system for “Oriental workers,” and the dismissal of one particularly notorious Japanese labour contractor (84). Williams concludes that “the appearance in the strikers' demands for an end to the contract system reflects the degree of unity among the men, regardless of ethnic or racial background.” However, since she does not refer to any primary material or oral histories with non-white workers, I question the validity of her conclusion, and
wonder if Asian workers would have agreed that their relations with white workers were marked mainly by solidarity.

While it is difficult to answer that last question, there is further evidence that white union organizers did include Asian workers in the union movement during two brief periods in British Columbia: at the end of the First World War and during the Great Depression (Creese, 2000: 299). Gillian Creese reports that in the "Greater Vancouver area Chinese, Japanese, and East Indian workers took part in no fewer than fifty separate strikes between 1900 and 1939" and "seventy percent of these strikes involved the joint action of Asian and white workers, mostly in the lumber industry and the fisheries (300)." In fact, in Fraser Mills, Creese reports that under the Workers' Unity League, 600 white, Chinese, Japanese, and "East Indian” workers went on strike in 1931 (300).

While Williams recounts in detail the development of the 1931 strike, she mainly focuses on the roles played by men. Indeed, women are only mentioned when she writes about the community kitchen. Women's everyday lives, including their participation in the strike, remain unknown. In the same vein, Williams does not pay much attention to sexuality, even if she points out the importance of family links and (heterosexual) marriages. Overall, however, Williams' study is useful and interesting to better understand the active participation of French Canadians in the 1931 strike and the prevalence of their working-class status.

Another work that looks at social class in Maillardville is Paul Villeuneuve's article, "Maillardville: All Quiet on the Western Front." Written in 1979, and translated in English in 1983, this short piece offers an insightful view of the history of Maillardville. Villeneuve explores the evolution of the French-speaking community, focusing on social class, and uses a historical and dialectical materialist approach to show how the community evolved through the years. Like Stewart, he states that the community lived
in a relatively closed environment with little contact with outsiders for the first few decades following its foundation. However, things started to change with the 1930s' Great Depression. The arrival of French Canadians from Willow Bunch (Saskatchewan) and Saint-Boniface (Manitoba) led to the construction of the second church to accommodate these newcomers. Later, the pressures of the Second World War and the suburbanization of the 1950s "combined to swamp the francophone community in an English-speaking environment" (Villeneuve, 1983: 158).

In this context of "assimilation," Villeuneuve argues that it was the petite bourgeoisie (composed mainly of the members of the clergy and business people) that had more to gain than the workers from defending French culture and language in the period after the Second World War. With the diversification of the economy and the labour market, the life of the village was no longer centred on the Church and the lumber mill. In this context, some elements of the petite bourgeoisie struggled hard against assimilation:

"...[T]here was resistance to integration, with certain elements of the French-speaking petite bourgeoisie of Maillardville putting up a furious struggle against it. [...] The motivations of that faction of "activists for the French cause" were of two sorts. There was, of course, a profound desire to preserve the cultural values of the group, which were often opposed to the dominant values of Canadian society. Another less obvious motivation lay in the base of economic and political power for the petite bourgeoisie that the francophone ethnic group constituted in virtue of its distinctive character. It must be acknowledged that during this time the workers and employees of Maillardville were obliged to assimilate in order to survive (Villeuneuve, 1983: 163).

Here, Villeneuve suggests that an elite had a lot to gain from defending the language and culture of the Francophone community of Maillardville. One might wonder how far these values were shared by the various members of the community. What were the values promoted by this elite? Were they, as Stewart and Williams suggest, related to the centrality of the Catholic religion and the French language? If that is the case, how
did different people from diverse social classes, genders, and races identify with or rebel against these values attributed to the "French-Canadian community"?

In brief, the history of Maillardville presented in these studies is clearly oriented towards the experience of white males from working-class or lower middle-class backgrounds. Within these narratives, gender constructions, processes of racialization, and the importance of sexuality are all obscured. Although the two sources explore social class formation (Williams, 1982 and Villeneuve, 1979, 1983), they pay little attention to women and non-whites, and normalize heterosexuality.

2.2 General (white male) literature on French Canadians

Because there are so few secondary sources pertaining to Maillardville, I find that it is crucial, in order to contextualize the development of this community in the first decades of the twentieth century, to explore the histories of other French-Canadian women and men at that time. If the literature on Maillardville is mostly oblivious to interrelations of race, gender, class, and sexuality, the scholarship on French-Canadian communities in the first half of the twentieth century is similarly marked by gaps and silences (see Durand, 1999, Martel, 1997, and Frenette, 1998).

In *Brève histoire des Canadiens français*, Yves Frenette (1998) shows how migrations were central to the identity of French Canadians between 1880 and 1918. However, while Frenette explores the phenomenon of "chain migration" (where, as in Maillardville, people who moved from Quebec invited other relatives to join them in their new French Canadian villages), he overlooks the importance of gender dynamics. He argues that French Canadians who left Quebec at the turn of the twentieth century brought with them two important institutions — the family (immediate and extended) and the Catholic Church — but he does so without acknowledging the patriarchal structure in which each of these powerful organizations was embedded.
Based mainly on secondary sources and some archival material, Frenette explains how the parish played a central role in the lives and identity of French Canadians. According to him, the parish constituted the first site of belonging and the church the first sacred space. Seen from far away, the church dominated the whole village (100). The priest was the most important person in the community, and acted as a financial, economical, legal, and cultural counselor (102). Moreover, the parish played the role of guardian of the culture and the faith:

Outside of Quebec, the parishes prepare the way for activism to maintain French culture and the Catholic faith, becoming real enclaves in foreign soil. More than in Quebec, they are the pivot around which all the social activity revolves. The school, the hospital, the credit union are organized around the parish, where there are recitals, bazaars, lectures and theatre plays. The parish supervision gives the migrant his identity, a feeling of security and belonging in a strange milieu (my translation: 103).

Here, Frenette makes uncritical use of the terms “identity, a feeling of security and belonging in a strange milieu.” Rather than deconstructing these categories, he simply takes them for granted. For instance, I wonder how this “identity” was constructed, adopted, and resisted.

Moreover, in his account of the importance of the parish, Frenette does not look at gender inequality. While he briefly mentions how women are the main agents of socialization, he does not explore in any detail their contribution to the economy and the family. On the other hand, he does look closely at social classes. In a sub-chapter entitled “Nègres blancs d’Amérique?”, he refers to the subordinated socio-economic position of the French Canadians, where, as in Maillardville, the owners of companies were English Canadians and Americans and many of the workers were French-speaking people.24

24 It is interesting to note that Frenette is referring to Pierre Vallières’ autobiography, translated as White Niggers of America, written in 1968. In his book, Vallières argues that French Canadians are like black people in the United States because they too are oppressed and do not own the means of production.
Another author who studies the importance of the Catholic religion and social stratification within French-Canadian communities is Marcel Martel (1997). Oblivious to complexities of gender and sexuality, he does, however, investigate racism and xenophobia. In his "Le Deuil d'un pays imaginé: Rêves, luttes et déroute du Canada français," Martel explains how the French-Canadian elites — the male leaders of French-Canadian institutions, such as the Church, the schools and various associations — developed an organic vision of the nation based on an ethnic conception of nationalism (19). According to Martel, these elites defined the French-Canadian identity and traced the boundaries of the group over which they exercised social control. Their ideology relied on the use of the French language and defence of the Catholic faith. It also implied a defensive attitude towards other groups, both Anglophone and Allophone. Martel also mentions the ideology of survival as a nation, which meant that leaders of French-Canadian communities located in other parts of Canada considered Québec as the mother-province. The survival of the French-Canadian identity was safeguarded by the union of the Catholic faith, the French language, and related institutions like the French-speaking schools and the Church. Here, Martel's findings are interesting to contextualize Maillardville's history, as the Church clearly played an important role in the community.

2.3 Women's histories in French Canada

While the literature discussed so far does not pay much attention to women's histories and experiences, there are many sources that have done so in regard to French Canadian communities. For instance, a thesis written in 1994, entitled "Les grandes gardiennes de la langue et de la foi: Une histoire des franco-manitobaines de 1916 à 1947" explores the role of Franco-Manitoban women — as mothers, teachers and religious sisters — in the transmission of language and culture between 1916 and 1947, the time period when teaching in the French language was illegal in Manitoba schools.
The author, Monique Hébert, explores the lives of women precisely because they have traditionally been excluded from the official history and archives. Based on interviews conducted with 38 women, this thesis argues that women were the principal agents of socialization and caretakers of children, and thus they contributed to the survival of the Franco-Manitoban community. Even if there are no similar studies looking at Maillardville, I would imagine that the narrative glorifying women as guardians of the faith and culture prevailed in this French-Canadian community as well.

In other secondary sources, different authors have also looked at women and family history in Québec (see for instance, Le Collectif Clio, 1982; Baillargeon, 1991; and Lemieux and Mercier, 1989). One of these works is particularly interesting in terms of understanding the daily lives of the women who left Quebec to settle in Maillardville. Lemieux and Mercier (1989) refer to various primary sources (autobiographies and personal documents, diaries, correspondences and oral histories) to explore women's work. I am conscious that looking at the stories of women from Quebec rather than French-Canadian women living in Maillardville may be a flawed basis of comparison, as there is a good chance that in leaving Québec, the women who settled in Maillardville between 1909 and 1910 also left behind a way of life. However, as Frenette argues, French Canadians who migrated to other parts of the country between 1880 and 1918 also brought with them an important institution — the nuclear and extended family, which was supported by the Church. In this sense, it is probable that the role played by women was similar in Québec and in Maillardville during the same period.

In their work on heterosexual married and unmarried women, Lemieux and Mercier explore the institution of the nuclear Quebecois family between 1880 and 1918. They show how the different educational institutions played an important role in educating women as "ideal wives" and stay-at-home mothers. For instance, in their chapter on *L'apprentissage du travail*, the authors explain how the institutions of the
family and the school taught girls their domestic and maternal roles within the family. They confirm that there were very few feminine models in the realm of professional work, except for teachers, or nuns. Indeed, for girls, all the educational systems between 1880 and 1940 were oriented towards these two careers (Lemieux and Mercier: 87).

It is interesting to note how the authors attribute greater agency to women who worked in other jobs, through interviews with daughters who talk of their mothers and grandmothers. Many poorer women did not choose (or did not have the opportunity) to be teachers or nuns; instead they worked (usually only until marriage) in factories or as secretaries. For them, these jobs were a way to access better salaries and gain a certain economic independence (95). However, attentive to class stratification, the authors note how work in factories was not always a way to gain independence. In working-class families, daughters would often give their entire salary to their parents (in most cases to the father, who was the “chief” of the nuclear family in this patriarchal order) (95). Not only do Lemieux and Mercier mention factory work, they also refer to the domestic work of live-in servants. Here again, agency is ascribe to these women, as they describe their reaction to exploitation and the condescending attitudes from their employers (94).

Here, the description of the different work options for women provides an interesting context for an understanding of the lives of the women who settled in Maillardville at the beginning of the twentieth century. Indeed, it is very probable that similar roles were ascribed to the French-Canadian women living in Maillardville at that time. Since there are no scholarly sources concerning this question, my archival work and analysis of interview transcripts will help shed some light on this issue. However, what remains problematic with regards to women’s history is that gender is not deconstructed as a category of social inequality. All the literature reviewed thus far on women takes femininity (and masculinity) for granted and does not problematize the concept of the “French Canadian woman.” As Mariana Valverde has suggested,
women's history was not sufficient, or self-sufficient, because it [could] fall into the trap of presupposing its object of inquiry" (cited by Parr, 1995: 362).

In short, the literature on French-Canadians living in Québec, or other parts of Canada, reaffirms the importance of the Catholic Church, the family, and the French language between 1909 and the 1939. It also shows how certain elites developed and benefited from an ideology of survival aiming to protect the identity of the group. Moreover, many feminist scholars have turned their attention to the lived realities of women within these communities. They have revealed how their roles as mothers, teachers, nurses, factory workers, nuns or servants were embedded in patriarchal structures.

Conclusion

To summarize, the literature looking at the history of Francophones in Maillardville has mainly focused on white males and their predominantly working-class status. The more general literature on French Canadians does explore women's histories, and gender inequalities. In the next section, I will discuss feminist theories that will allow me to address in greater detail the interrelation of race, class, gender, and sexuality. As I want to explore the construction of Maillardville as a predominantly white francophone, Catholic, and patriarchal society, I am interested in the role of gender, sexuality, class and race in the making of this small community. Through critical discourse analysis of archival documents and interview transcripts, I hope to show how relations of ruling promoted a particular type of society and at the same time contributed to a contrived and specific idea of the Canadian "nation."
III METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To explore the construction of Maillardville as a predominantly white, working-class French-Canadian community between 1909 and 1939, I have chosen to examine 23 oral histories conducted in the early 1970s, as well as a range of textual documents (newspaper articles, city council minutes, company records, and church records), using critical discourse theories and methodologies (Henry and Tator, 2002, Theo, 2000, Wodak: 2001, Fairclough, 1995 and Van Dijk, 2001). For the purpose of clarity, I am separating the methodology section from the theory section in this chapter, but in practice, as I have conduct this project, I have realized that methodology and theory are intertwined. In this chapter, I am drawing an artificial line between methods and theories, although I am conscious that the two operate simultaneously as they constantly inform one another.

3.1 Choosing primary sources

Before I started my fieldwork on Maillardville, I had thought I would mainly work with various historical textual and visual documents: newspaper articles, photographs, different church records (birth and death certificates, wedding registries, for instance) and the like. However, I quickly realized that these primary documents were either inaccessible, difficult to analyze, or non-existent. This unnerving discovery made me reflect on the use of oral histories in the social sciences. While I do not think that oral histories should be used only as a last resort (when there are no other primary documents available), I admit that the lack of access to textual and visual records forced me to look at oral narratives. However, once I read the transcripts of the 23 interviews (and listened to the original tapes), I realized that these narratives offered a rich and fruitful site for critical research and analysis. Indeed, I am convinced that it would be
impossible to find such rich and personal accounts of people's lives in newspaper articles or church records.

My decision to explore oral histories, along with textual and visual documents, arose from necessity, primarily because accessibility became a major issue. The Notre-Dame de Lourdes Church, located in Maillardville, Coquitlam, which constituted a centre of social and cultural life in Maillardville between 1909 and 1939 (see Stewart, 1956), closed its doors to my research endeavours. While I was able to look at photo albums, I was not given access to any other documents related to the history of this church. The present priest of Notre-Dame de Lourdes, Father Stan Fryteck, gave formal instructions to the volunteer archivist who greeted me one morning in November 2005: no written documents were to be shown, especially letters that might have been exchanged between a former Maillardville priest and the Archdiocese of Vancouver. With regard to other church records, the archivist told me that she did not like people to look at birth, wedding, or death certificates.25

With Church records largely inaccessible, I sought other primary documents, but these also posed difficulties. I would have liked to analyze historical photographs, as the Mackin House Museum hosts a collection of more than 700 photos pertaining to Maillardville. However, these very interesting and diverse photos, depicting the early life of Maillardville, are presented without much context. In many cases, it is not clear who is photographed, who took the pictures, and most importantly, for what purpose these photos were taken. Among others, the family portraits depicting large heterosexual weddings, the images of men playing hockey or working at the mill, and a series of religious photographs, all constitute interesting narratives about the past. These photos raised many questions about the predominance of heteronormativity, the patriarchal

25 While I could not access church records, I was however able to look at an old photo album in the presence of the church archivist, and I did gather some interesting visual and textual material pertaining to my time period.
structure of the community, and the role of the Roman Catholic Church in twentieth-century Maillardville. However, it would have been extremely difficult to pursue historical research with this material. As opposed to Kim Greenwell (2002), who analyzed historical photographs in the colonial context of missionary narratives in nineteenth-century British Columbia, I could not contextualize these pictures from Maillardville. While Greenwell drew her analysis from the textual narratives that accompanied the photos in missionary books and publications, there were no such textual frames to probe in the case of the Maillardville collection. Indeed, the photographs seem to have been taken from family albums and combined simply to offer an agreeable collage, organized thematically, for the visual pleasure of museum visitors.

Therefore, on discovering the oral histories, they seemed to me an inevitable choice as a means to explore a past that would not have been documented without them. For instance, the small French-Canadian community of Maillardville did not produce a local newspaper between 1909 and 1939. Perhaps one of the most significant reasons for oral histories as my main source could be summarized in socio-economic terms. As poor, working people, the majority of French-speaking men and women who settled in Maillardville prior to 1939 had little access to the written word/world. As such, these people did not produce written records. For all these reasons, I have decided to focus my study on the analysis of these oral histories as a way to amplify narratives voices not yet widely heard.

3.2 On my primary sources

In the early 1970s, 23 French-Canadian men and women from Maillardville participated in an oral history project conducted by Reynoldston Research and Studies (RRAS).

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26 I believe that a critical analysis of the Maillardville Museum would be a worthwhile project for future research. Indeed, the organization of the museum enacts certain discourses of whiteness and racism that demand to be unpacked. For instance, of all the museum’s photos, there are only four or five that feature non-white people.
Founded in 1968, RRAS was "an associate group of individuals attempting to provide a comprehensive range of Oral History information and material for interested researchers" (Langlois, 1972: 4). RRAS started as a private organization consisting of a Chairman, W. J. Langlois; two Directors, Robert H. McGowan, and Colin M. Reeves, and several research associates. The organization was named after the small French-Canadian logging community of Reynoldston in upstate New York, and the oral histories would initially focus on French-Canadian history.

In February 1972, RRAS received a grant from the Canadian government to undertake a project entitled "The Cultural communities of British Columbia Oral History Project," headed by W. J. Langlois. The project was located in the Main Library of the University of British Columbia. The goal of this endeavour was to collect oral histories from members of different ethnic groups, including Doukhobors, Japanese, Chinese, Indo-Canadians, and French Canadians, in order to provide information on the contributions of these communities to the economic and cultural development of the province (RRAS, 1972a: 18). Among other things, the project aimed at documenting the Great Depression, the labour movements in British Columbia, and the memoirs of veterans of the Boer War and the two World Wars. The project focused on the histories of the "common man," rather than exploring the past through the life of "important people" (RRAS, 1972b: 8). The premise was that recording the past from the perspective of local people was necessary to access knowledge which would otherwise remain undocumented. It is in this context that 23 French Canadians from Maillardville — 15 men and eight women — were interviewed in 1972 and 1973. These interviews are all available on tape at the British Columbia Provincial Archives, in Victoria, BC, and most have a transcript available.

27 RRAS received a Canadian Government Local Initiatives Programme Grant.
28 While the Special Collection of the UBC library still has some of the interview transcripts, all of the interviews are available at the BC Provincial Archives in Victoria.
Along with textual and visual records, these 23 oral histories constitute my principal primary documents to analyze the making of Maillardville between 1909 and 1939. The interviews, following a thematic and biographical format, focus mainly on the first part of the twentieth century. Since most of the interviews (21 out of 23) were conducted by the same researcher, mostly in English, there is continuity between the different themes discussed and the questions asked. Indeed, Cheryl Pierson, who also spoke French, interviewed 21 out of 23 respondents, and Frankie Johnson, who was also bilingual, interviewed the two remaining people.

Only two of the interviews were conducted in French. Interestingly enough, while practically all of the English transcripts were kept in their entirety at the British Columbia Provincial Archives, the two French interviews were not transcribed. I am not sure why most of the interviews were conducted in English. Following Tim Stanley's comment on the politics of translation (2000), I agree with him that an anti-racist history needs researchers who can read documents inaccessible to monolingual English-speaking Canadians. As a native French-speaking woman from Québec, I was able to listen to these two interviews and understand the subtleties of the language spoken. I also found that listening to the French interviews brought to light issues related to language politics and linguistic assimilation. Speaking French, the interviewees would often comment on words that they couldn't remember. It made me reflect on the fact that, as second generation French Canadians living in Maillardville, many of the interviewees felt that they had "lost," or were in the process of losing, their language.

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29 These interviews have never been used in their entirety in any previous research. M. Jeanne Meyers did use seven of these interviews in her work on the 1931 strike at Fraser Mills (1982). However, her research is mainly based on archival data, and she only refers to the interviews to support a few points.

30 To date, I have not been able to find out more information about the two interviewers.
The 22 interviews lasted between one and four hours each. The interviewees, the eldest being born in 1892, are the children of the settlers who came to the company town of Fraser Mills and subsequently settled on the piece of land that became known as Maillardville at the turn of the twentieth century. Some were part of the contingent of workers that were recruited by Fraser River Sawmills in the fall of 1909 and the summer of 1910. Others came later on, alone or as part of nuclear or extended families, during the decades following the arrival of the initial groups. A few of the interviewees made the trip to B.C. with their mother and siblings to join a father who had already settled in Fraser Mills earlier.

In the interviews, the participants talk about the long trip to Fraser Mills from Québec or Ontario; how they travelled in one group, by train, and their fare was advanced by the company. Others remember living in the harsh conditions of the Prairies before finding work (or not) in Fraser Mills (the company town site). The French Canadians recount their own first impressions of Fraser Mills, as well as how their parents felt about coming west. On this topic, they inevitably mentioned the Chinese, Japanese and South Asian labourers who were already working at the mill. Although there were already labourers working and living in the small company town, the French Canadian interviewees all say there was "nothing" in and around Fraser Mills. To them, the place was wild and "empty."

The interviewees also explain why their fathers decided to settle in B.C. — the need for steady work and the harsh poverty back home being the most popular reasons. Many of Pierson’s questions focused on working and living conditions. The strike of 1931

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31 23 French-Canadian men and women participated in the interviews, but four of them were interviewed with their spouses. Marie-Rosa Dicaire was interviewed twice. As such there were 22 interviews with 23 participants.
32 Fraser Mills is the company town where French Canadians first settled and worked in 1909 and 1910. Maillardville is the settlement where French Canadians built houses, a church, and a school, on a piece of land just south of Fraser Mills.
is often discussed in detail, as many men worked at the mill during that time and participated in the labour movement. Other questions relate to the First and Second World Wars and how these events were experienced in the community.

The interviewers also focus on experiences of schooling. Most of the participants went, at one point or another, to the Francophone, Catholic Notre-Dame de Lourdes elementary school in Maillardville. The politics of language and religion are explicitly discussed. Religious celebrations and church-centered activities are also a strong focus of the interviews (first communions and Sunday masses, Fête Dieu processions, weddings and picnics, and the like). In these narratives, the themes of solidarity and mutual help between the residents come up often. Poverty is a major thread of discussion for many of the interviewees, especially during the 1930s when many of the residents report being on relief and having difficulties surviving.

Pierson also dedicates a number of questions to the role of the women in the community. In their accounts, the women talk about the domestic realm of home: cooking, cleaning, and raising their children. Some reminisce about their paid work before getting married. While some women had been domestic workers for richer Anglo-families in the community, others worked in canneries, or even at a veneer plant.

In general, the topics discussed in these interviews follow a chronological, biographical, and thematic narrative, starting with the departure from home, the journey, and their arrival in British Columbia, and continuing by describing the work at the mill (for the men) and the housework (for the women), accompanied by the celebration of religious and social activities. These oral histories offer incredible details on the lives and experiences of the French Canadians who lived in what came to be known as Maillardville between 1909 and 1939. Following sociologist Dorothy Smith’s argument, I believe that looking at the everyday lives of women (and men) from their perspective brings a different standpoint to understanding the social world. In doing my research
from the standpoint of working men and women, I argue that I can explore the construction of community. In doing so, I aim to locate it within the larger context of Canadian nation-building, colonialism, racism, sexism, and heterosexism. I acknowledge that these concepts would have been alien to the people interviewed. Rather, they may have seen themselves as contributing to the record of heroic efforts by a beleaguered Francophone community to survive in the face of assimilation. The interviews will reveal their perspectives; the analysis will discuss what they expressed.

3.3 Reflections on using oral histories

As Joan Sangster argues, it is important to explore the interview "as a mediated source, moulded by the political and social worldview of the author and subject" (1994: 247). The narratives of the interviewees are related to their localities and assumptions about the social world. For instance, a working-class French-Canadian man, who was also a union organiser, must have experienced and made sense of the Depression years differently from a middle-class woman of British origin living in Fraser Mills. The French-Canadian man might be expected to talk of the collective strategies of the Maillardville residents to overcome poverty, while a British woman, not directly affected by the Depression, might remember social solidarity in Maillardville quite differently.

Joan Sangster (1994), discussing a feminist approach to oral history, suggests that we should use the insights of post-structuralism to unveil the competing and concurrent versions of multiple pasts. Instead of arguing that one past is more “true” than another, social historians should locate historical memories within the subjectivities of the interviewees. As co-participants in the creation of oral histories, interviewers also come with their own world views and politics. In the context of this project, it is important to explore the locations and worldviews conveyed by Cheryl Pierson and Frankie Johnson, the two interviewers. Understanding where they were coming from is essential for a more in-depth analysis of the interviews. Analyzing their choice of questions, as
well as how they formulated them, may reveal a lot about who they were and their relationship to the interviewees.

Also, as the one who is analyzing these interviews, I must also locate myself in this academic endeavour. My own world views and perceptions certainly affect my choice of topic and what I read out of, or into, these accounts. As a white, heterosexual, middle-class francophone woman, I come to this project with my own experiences and expectations. My theoretical framework also makes me read and pay attention to certain aspects of the interviews, rather than others. Like Katherine Borland (1991), I need to acknowledge how my analysis of the interviews will probably differ from the interviewees' own interpretation of their past. For instance, speaking in 1972 and 1973, the interviewees were certainly not expecting their stories to be analyzed from an anti-racist, feminist, or queer perspective.

Finally, as I am working with someone else's research, I have to consider the gaps and silences of the interviews. For instance, many questions have been left out of the discussion. Topics treating delicate subjects such as contraception, abortion, children born out of wedlock, adoption, or domestic violence, for instance, have not been addressed. I would have also liked the interviewers to look more directly at the church, and at what kind of role the priest and nuns played in the community. Issues of alcoholism and prohibition have also been left out of the discussion. These are all questions that I would have like to ask, to better understand the construction of the family and the nation.

My analysis of oral histories is also combined with an analysis of textual records. Articles published in *The Western Lumberman* will also be very useful. This paper is available in the UBC Library. The Minutes of the Council Meetings of the municipality of Coquitlam also constitute valuable sources of information about what was discussed in
Maillardville. Available online on the City of Coquitlam Archives website, the minutes are easily accessible from 1909 to 1939.

3.4 Using critical discourse analysis to combat social inequalities

To complete a critical textual/discourse analysis of the construction of Maillardville as a white, Catholic, francophone community, I am inspired by Foucault's approach to history and discourses. As Adams writes, a Foucauldian notion of discourse "refers to organized systems of knowledge that make possible what can be spoken about and how one may speak about it" (1997: 6). These systems of knowledge, embedded in different institutions, produce meanings and organize the social world by creating statements of 'truth.' Here, the concept of "power/knowledge," developed by Foucault, helps us to understand how certain discourses are historically produced and become hegemonic and commonsensical. For instance, in his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978) shows how a multiplication of discourses around sexuality, articulated by various experts — doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, biologists — and maintained through various institutions — the school, the Church, the family — created the 'truth' about sex. With regards to the social construction of a French-Canadian identity, it is certainly fruitful to explore how discourses and relations of power are interrelated.

Henry and Tator's discussion of critical discourse analysis and ideologies is also very fruitful in developing my methodology. According to these authors, ideologies "organize, maintain and stabilize particular forms of power and dominance" (2002: 20). Using the example of "democratic racism" in the media, Tator and Henry explained how strong beliefs in multiculturalism, tolerance and liberal democracy can coexist with racist discourses in Canadian newspapers. Through a textual analysis of systemic racism in media discourses, Tator and Henry explore how "dominance and inequality are enacted through systems of representation and more specifically through the everyday 'talk' and
"text" of the media" (2002: 13) Along these lines, Peter Teo explains that critical
discourse analysis allows one to go beyond a simple description of discourse and further
find "an explanation of how and why particular discourses are produced" (2000: 11).

Inspired by various students of critical discourse analysis (Henry and Tator; 2002, Theo, 2000; Wodak: 2001; Fairclough; 1995 and Van Dijk; 2001), my reading of
the documents pertaining to Maillardville necessitates multiple steps. In the first place, I
offer a simple description of the text that I am exploring, focusing on the topics that
interest me (i.e. the construction of a French-Canadian community and identity in
Maillardville). On a second reading, I identify the underlying assumptions presented in
the document (how are issues of race, class, gender and sexuality conceived in the
document?). Here, I critically reveal the dominant voices embedded in the textual or
visual artifact. In doing so, I also pay attention to different discursive or rhetorical
strategies (alliterations, comparisons, argumentations, allegories, metaphors, etc).
However, in my third reading, I go beyond this purely linguistic or grammar analysis and
also attempt to unveil the socio-political and socio-cultural ideologies that have become
commonsense through specific discursive practices (Teo, 2000: 11). This final reading
allows me to understand how discourses of nation-building and identity interrelated with
and affected the Maillardville French-Canadian community -- its social practices, its
institutions and its individuals. Because discourses are embedded in power relations, I
also question the conditions of production of the document. For instance, were there
institutional constraints under which the document was produced? Are there ways of
reading the document counter-hegemonically? Throughout this process, I recognize that
discourse "both shapes and is shaped by society" (Theo, 2000: 11). Because I aim to
deconstruct relations of power and unveil social inequalities hidden within discursive
practices, my methodology is directly informed by my feminist, anti-racist, Marxist and
queer theoretical framework.
3.5 Feminist theories and the interrelation of race, gender, class, and sexuality

In grade two, I remember my teacher educating us about the history of humanity. She explained how ‘Man’ had developed agriculture. I raised my hand to ask with my little voice: "Shouldn't we say Man and Woman?" She answered quickly, telling me not to be silly because the expression ‘Man’ actually included men and women; it was just another way of saying ‘humanity.’ To this day, my grade two teacher’s answer has not satisfied me. I am aware that a history that is oblivious to gender inequality remains exclusive and sexist. In the same vein, a history that ignores race, class, and sexuality — as important axes of social inequality — produces and reproduces racism, classism and heterosexism. In other words, it leaves social inequality unquestioned and unchallenged.

My theoretical framework draws in part from Smith’s approach in *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987). In her collection of essays, Smith argued that the “established” sociology had ignored the experiences of women and had been written from the standpoint of men in privileged positions within “relations of ruling.”33 I agree with Dorothy Smith that sociological theories, thought of as universal and neutral, have been developed from the standpoint of men; I would add white, middle-class and heterosexual as well. In other words this “means that the concerns, interests, and experiences forming ‘our’ culture are those of men in positions of dominance whose perspectives are built on the silence of women (and others)” (1987: 20). I am interested in the construction of those silences and how they allowed the creation of a particular “imagined community”34 in Maillardville.

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33 Dorothy Smith explains that ‘[r]elations of ruling’ is a concept that grasps power, organization, direction, and regulation as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power.” In this context, the term ‘ruling’ refers to “a complex of organized practices, including government, law, business and financial management, professional organization, and educational institutions as well as the discourses in texts that interpenetrate the multiple sites of power” (1987: 3).

34 I borrow this term from Benedict Anderson, 1991.
While I am interested in how certain people are silenced, I also want to acknowledge that my exploration of history and the nation remains a "temporary and impermanent" endeavour. I agree with Joy Parr (1995) that I cannot "recover history essentially as it was" (358). As gender, race, sexuality, and class are socially constructed and dynamic categories, their meanings and manifestations, and the moral regulations that surround them, change over time. In Maillardville, for instance, there is a good deal of evidence that French Canadians considered themselves as belonging to a distinct race. The discourses of the time mention the importance of protecting the "French-Canadian race" (see Stewart, 1956 and Canada's Digital Collection on BC's francophone community Website). There is also evidence that French Canadians were not considered as white as their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, but still whiter than Asian, South Asian, and Aboriginal peoples. Today, the idea that French Canadians belong to a distinct "race," or are not "white" is surprising, which reveals the instability and historical specificity of the constructed "nature" of race.

Thus, I wish to take into account the fluidity and elasticity of the concept of race (two characteristics that apply to the concepts of class, gender and sexuality as well). In doing so, I join my feminist enquiry to a post-structuralist paradigm that acknowledges the social construction of identities such as women and men, French Canadians and English Canadians, foreigners and national citizens. I want to go beyond these dichotomies to probe how these cultural constructs historically became statements of truth in the present. Like Parr, I acknowledge "diversity and instability rather than searching out unity and solidity" in historical inquiry (375). As she explains in discussing her historical methodology with regard to gender identities:

Thus were identities in fact severalties, multiple, evokable, scrutable, but settled in contingency rather than certainty. Knowing this meant not 'knowing what was,' but knowing what was brought to the fore and forced into congruence, both
seeking the circumstances which made this precedence and symmetry plausible
and reckoning the contradictions which could be its undoing. This knowing is less
agnostic than pantheistic, seeking explanation by inclusion rather than excision.
And like all historical knowledge, this knowing is interim, expectant, augmentable,
recombinant (375).

Adopting this approach to sociological history allows me to deconstruct identities that
were previously taken for granted as ‘natural’ by previous generations of scholars. It also
permits me to revisit the complexities of the relations of power and dominance of men
over women, whites over non-whites, heterosexuals over queer people, economic elites
over workers. Because femininity and masculinity, whiteness and otherness, poverty and
wealth, heterosexuality and homosexuality are fluid constructs, these categories are also
built in interrelation.

While I argue that race, class, sexuality, and gender are not fixed identities, I also
base my understanding of the discourses about Maillardville on the post-structuralist
premise that these categories are interconnected and act in relationship to one another.
In this sense, I agree with McClintock (1995) that it is necessary to look simultaneously
at these categories to understand relations of power in the social world. In her analysis
of nineteenth century British imperialism and colonialism, McClintock explores how race,
gender, sexuality, and class are interrelated. She argues that these articulated
categories cannot be studied separately, “as they come into existence in and through
relation to each other” (5). Introducing her book Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and
Sexuality in the Colonial Contest, she writes:

...no social category exists in privileged isolation; each comes
into being in social relation to other categories, if in uneven and
contradictory ways. But power is seldom adjudicated evenly —
different social situations are over determined for race, for
gender, for class, or for each in turn (9).
In this sense, men and women — colonial and colonized, poor and rich — did not experience colonialism in the same way. For instance, colonized women had to negotiate not only the unequal arrangement of the relations of ruling that located colonized men in higher positions of power, but also violent and unjust relationships with imperial men and women within the framework of colonialism (6). For colonial women, white and middle-class, the Empire might have given them new powers, as “guardians of the white race,” leaders of missionary schools or hospitals, and wives and daughters of colonial men. However, white women were not the ones fixing the terms of the relations of ruling and thus they did not make the “big” decisions of the Empire. As opposed to their male counterparts, they were not the ones collecting the majority of the vast profits from the massive theft of colonial lands. White men were the ones making the laws and the policies to serve their own interests. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the privilege of whiteness in this context made white women “superior” not only to women of colour but also to men of colour. Their position of power over colonized men and women cannot be denied.

In Maillardville, I suggest that French-Canadian women were placed in a complex position as well. As wives and daughters of working class men, they certainly had less access to positions of power than their middle-class American or Anglo-Canadian female counterparts. However, as members of religious orders and teachers at the parochial schools, or simply as white wives, their status must have been higher than any First Nations or Asian men and women. In this sense, the interrelation of gender, race, and class — invented and constantly reaffirmed and reconstructed categories — shows the complexities of relationships that arose in the colonial context of the British Empire and in Maillardville between 1909 and 1939.

Looking at class more specifically also complicates and refines the analysis. In her study of British imperialism, McClintock reveals that not all colonial subjects enjoyed
the same level of power. The working-class men and women, poor and less "civilized" (certainly more promiscuous, according to imperial authorities), were targeted by many reform policies and surveillance practices. Considered the "dangerous class," they were the object of much policing (5). In Maillardville, there is no doubt that the French Canadians, who were members of the working class, were the object of much surveillance from clerical elites. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the priest of the parish was the leader of the community. As the main counsellor and authority figure, the priest certainly acted as a moral force within the group (along with nuns and brothers). His alliance with mill managers and his efforts to discourage parishioners from participating in the labour movement also show how the workers were policed in the workplace by bosses, supervisors, and religious authorities. Women of working-class backgrounds must have experienced surveillance from bourgeois women and clerical elites in various ways. Control over their sexuality, for instance, must have affected their lives in a different manner than men or bourgeois women.

In another Canadian context, this policing of the working class was clearly illustrated by the example of the Dionne quintuplets, the five French-Canadian girls born in Corbeil, Ontario in 1934. It is well documented that the double status of the Quints' parents, as "poor farmers" and French Canadians, justified the role of the Ontario government in taking over as legal guardians of the five girls. As Welch demonstrates (1994/1995), one might wonder if the custody of the Quints would have gone to the state if Oliva Dionne, the father of the five sisters, had been a middle-class Anglo-Saxon male. Here, even if French Canadians were considered white settlers, their lower-class, Francophone, and Catholic status shaped their whiteness. The construction of Canadian masculinity that placed the man as the head of family became troubled because Oliva Dionne came from a working-class Francophone background. In this case, the Anglo-Ontario state, as principal agent in charge of the poor, became the head of the family.
Indeed, French Canadians, considered as among the "dangerous classes," were despised during the Depression for making too many babies. As Welch situates the case of the Dionne quintuplets within the French-Canadian community of the time, he mentions the negative prejudices directed towards them from segments of the Anglophone majority in Ontario:

The notion of the large French-Canadian family frequently has been presented as evidence of the archaic cultural practices of the Dionne family and of French-Canadians in general. Indeed, it was used to attempt to demonstrate that the Dionnes, besides being poor farmers, were content to be breeding machines. These prejudices were linked to the middle-class preference for smaller families and the belief that having large numbers of children was vulgar and primitive, a sure sign of membership in the lower-classes. French Canadians, with their higher birthrate, fitted this stereotype (Welch, 1994/1995: 41).

In this context of anti-Francophone racism, I believe that it is crucial to explore how class difference shaped understandings of whiteness. I am in agreement with Hartigan that "racial identities are locally constituted, following place-specific dynamics that are informed by class positions" (2001: 139). In accordance with anti-racist feminist thought, I add that racialized and national identities were also gendered and sexualized in the context of early twentieth-century Maillardville.

3.6 The construction of the nation: gender power and sexual control

To understand French-Canadian nationalism in Maillardville, I follow the theoretical framework proposed by various feminist theorists who explore the construction of the nation. On this matter, I agree with McClintock when she writes that all "nationalisms are gendered, all are invented and all are dangerous — dangerous [...] in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to the technologies of violence" (1995: 352). Indeed, nationalisms are based on differences between men and women. While men hold positions of power and define the boundaries, rules, and orientation of the national project, women serve as symbolic bearers of the nation, "but are denied any direct relation to the national agency" (Ibid, 354). As Himani Bannerji explains, white
women in Canada have a contradictory status in terms of their participation in the construction of "Canada." The struggle for enfranchisement of white women is a good example:

Their protracted struggle for enfranchisement, for inclusion in the nation, is marked by the fact that their gender was a barrier to them in spite of their status as mothers and daughters of the Canadian white male "race." Although Canadian suffragists such as Nellie McLung, following their White U.S. sisters, resented Chinese and non-White enfranchisement, they themselves were considered to be second-class citizens. Privileged by class and race, but handicapped by gender, their situation exposes the fact that citizenship does not provide automatic membership in the nation's community. Living in a nation does not, by definition, provide one with a prerogative to "imagine" it (2000:66).

In this case, women were presented as the 'guardians of the white race,' although they had no political authority and power. In Maillardville, the traditional nurturing roles given to women as mothers, teachers, nuns, and nurses must have also followed this patriarchal discourse. As mothers, they were most certainly the reproducers of the white race.

The uneven gendering of national citizenship is well illustrated by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (1989) when they argue that there are five major ways in which women have participated in nationalism (cited by McClintock, 1995: 355):

— as biological reproducers of the members of national collectivities;
— as reproducers of the boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on sexual or marital relations);
— as active transmitters and producers of the national culture;
— as symbolic signifiers of national difference;
— as active participants in national struggles.

Thus, nationalism cannot be understood without analysing race and gender inequality. In the case of Maillardville, for instance, it is very telling that the (white) wives of French-Canadian men followed their husbands to British Columbia. Indeed, French-Canadian men were encouraged to settle with their families and form a community. On the other hand, Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian men, as indentured labourers, found
incredible barriers to bringing their wives and children to Canadian soil. In this context, the white settler society required white women in order to be created; white women were the boundary markers of the racial order.

In the context of the colonization of British Columbia in the nineteenth century, Adele Perry (2001) explains how white women came to represent the solution to turning a small, disordered, inter-racial, and homosocial community into a respectable white, patriarchal and middle-class colony. As a "well-worn imperial panacea" (4), white women were constructed as the saviours of the nation. In the colonial project, they allowed the avoidance of miscegenation and they brought moral respectability into the colony. Not only would white women address the 'problem' of gender organisation in British Columbia by eliminating the widespread practice of white-Aboriginal conjugal relationships, but they would also "compel white men to reject the rough homosocial culture of the backwoods in favour of normative standards of masculinity and respectability" (140). Thus white women also became a tool to promote heterosexual and monogamous marriages, and the "taming" of men to domesticity.

In the same vein, Ann Laura Stoler (1997) introduces the idea of "sexual control" in twentieth-century British colonial cultures to establish racial boundaries between the white colonisers and the non-white colonised people. Sexual control in the British colonies was introduced to prevent or stop "miscegenation." While "concubinage" between white colonisers and colonised women was at first encouraged by colonial authorities, it was discouraged as many children born of mixed-race unions started to threaten the clear-cut racial hierarchies placing white males on top. In other words, "concubinage 'worked' as long as the supremacy of Homo Europeaus was clear" (350). The sexuality of poor white women also had to be regulated, controlled, and policed. Once again, there is no doubt that the same policing of the sexuality of working-class women happened in Maillardville. According to marriage records in Maillardville, family
names show that there were no unions between French-Canadian women and non-white men between 1911 and 1950 (see Spagholo and Lévesque, 1980). Along with the 1912 “White women’s labour law” that prohibited Asian employers from hiring white women in their laundries, restaurants and other businesses, interracial marriage between the two groups was inconceivable in British Columbia (Backhouse, 1999: 145).

3.7 Perspectives on nation building: gendered myths and Marxism

In regard to nation-building, I agree with Eva Mackey that it is a dual process (2002: 23). On one hand, it implies the physical management of populations -- dispossession and cultural and physical genocide of Aboriginal peoples, migration of (white) French Canadians to British Columbia, and restrictive immigration laws for Asian labourers, for instance. This physical management is accompanied by differential access to the wealth and resources of the society. For instance, in Maillardville white French Canadians could own land, but non-white immigrants and Aboriginal people could not. On the other hand, nation-building necessitates the creation of a national identity based on different myths (the myth of the frontier, the myth of the two founding nations, mythologies of benevolence and tolerance, and today’s idea of multiculturalism). All those myths are gendered.

For instance, the myth of benevolence often refers to the gentle Mounties who brought “peace and order” to the “Wild West” rather than violence and bloodshed. Even if this history of the past is problematic, it still serves as a hallmark of the Canadian nation (Mackey, 2002). The Mounties are masculine figures used to identify what is Canadian abroad:

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35 I also wonder if marriages were prescribed along linguistic lines. At this point, it is difficult for me to evaluate if it was the case that French Canadian women were strongly encouraged to marry French Canadian men to ‘protect’ the ‘French Canadian race.’ Because many French speaking men and women from Quebec might have English last names, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which inter-linguistic marriages occurred using the records available to me at the moment. I hope that my future archival research will shed more light on this issue.
Canada's racist patriarchal nature is further exemplified by the fact that it is so often culturally represented abroad by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on postcards manufactured for tourist consumption. A secret police that is publicly advertised as "Canadian culture" — quite a plug for white masculinity (Bannerji, 2000: 73).

In that sense, masculinity is equated to whiteness and "Canadianness." In Maillardville, the celebration of the First Police Officer in one of Antonio Paré's books, and the location of the museum in the house that belonged to the Manager of the mill, are telling. Today, these authoritarian white male figures are used to represent Maillardville's past.

In the myth of the Mounties, the land is also a strong marker of the nation. For nation-building to happen, there is an inevitable progression from "savagery" to "civilization". In this case, the territory is presented as terra nullius, and the myth of the frontier illustrates this idea well (Furniss, 1997/1998): (male) white settlers confront an empty and "uncivilized" land that they finally conquer and inhabit. Elizabeth Furniss explains this myth:

North America is presented as an empty, unoccupied wilderness where land is free for the taking and resources are abundant. History is seen as a process of the continual recession of the frontier as European settlement pushed westward. The moral and symbolic landscape of the frontier is one of boundaries: the encounter between civilization and wilderness, man and nature, and Whites and Indians (although there are many metaphorical variations) (Furniss: 1997/1998: 10).

I find the use of this myth compelling to understand the multiple significances of the term "pioneers" to define French Canadians who settled in Maillardville.

Antonio Paré is the grandson of the first chief of police in Maillardville, Chief Emeri Paré. Antonio is also the son of Hélène Paré, one of the women interviewed by Cheryl Pierson in 1972. A local historian, Antonio has researched extensively Maillardville's past. The Mackin House Museum in Coquitlam has a room called the Antonio Paré's Room dedicated to the history of Maillardville. Located in the basement of the small museum, this room contains more than 700 photographs pertaining to Maillardville and Fraser Mills. The photos were collected by Antonio.
Moreover, McClintock argues that this empty ("virgin") land is often feminized as the white male colonizer tries to penetrate it (1995). This vision of the land certainly erases the presence of Aboriginal peoples. As McClintock demonstrates, the colonial contest implies geographical progress (as a new space is discovered) but at the same time, regression in historical time (as Aboriginal peoples inhabiting the land are represented as "archaic" and "primitive"). The undeveloped land and the uncivilized Aboriginal people become part of an anachronistic gendered space — they refer to "an anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire" (30). Along with women and working-class people, the colonized people are also placed in an anachronistic space, putting the white male at the top of the hierarchy.

I discovered that I cannot deny the fact that white Francophone settlers (albeit less white than their Anglo-Canadian counterparts) were brought to what became Maillardville in a specific historical conjuncture, to make British Columbia a “white man’s province” (Roy, 2003). The making of Maillardville was linked to concrete material consequences as the labour force in the mills was racially stratified, with white English-speaking men (Canadian, American, and British) at the top of the hierarchy and men of colour at the bottom. In this manner, access to the resources in Maillardville was carefully stratified along lines of gender, race, and class. As McClintock argues:

The story is not simply about relations between black and white people, men and women, but about how the categories of whiteness and blackness, masculinity and femininity, labour and class came historically into being in the first place (16: 1995).

Thus, I aim to tease out specific constructions of the French Canadian community in Maillardville, and, by extension, question and challenge the idea of the Canadian nation. In doing so, I will pay attention to the interrelations of race, gender, class, and sexuality.
3.8 Conclusion

In summary, secondary sources pertaining to Maillardville and its histories are extremely limited. The few secondary sources available are uncritical when it comes to issues of race, gender, and sexuality. Some work has been done on social class (Williams, 1982 and Villeneuve, 1979), but no previous work has studied the interrelation of race, class, gender, and sexuality in a thorough and thoughtful manner.

The most comprehensive work was done in 1956 (Stewart) and no university academics have investigated the histories of Maillardville for the last twenty years. On the other hand, I found non-academic work on different websites, popular histories by local historians, and a museum that offers valuable archival material. Although these primary sources are often accompanied by uncritical interpretations that glorify the pioneers and perpetuate the myth of the frontier, they remain extremely productive for archival research. These sources will constitute the data to be explored.

I have argued that an investigation into the multiple representations of Maillardville necessitates a theoretical framework that allows me to look simultaneously at social inequalities and explore how these hierarchies are mutually entwined. The theoretical work adopted by Parr (1995) in gender history and McClintock (1995) on British Colonialism will inform my analysis, which aims to deconstruct the making of Maillardville as a white, patriarchal French-Canadian community. Feminist theorists of nation building (including Himani Bannerji, 2000; Adele Perry, 2001; Ann Laura Stoler, 1997; Eva Mackey, 2002; and Roxame Ng, 1993) will also help to frame my understanding of the nation and allow me to tease and map out how French-Canadian nationalism was gendered, sexualised, classed, and racialized.

In brief, this study of Maillardville is part of a social justice project to help end racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism. As I want to explore the maintenance and reproduction of a white, Catholic, and patriarchal society during the decades preceding
the Second World War, I wish to show how this social construction excluded, silenced, and marginalized others — the ones who did not fit the mould. My aim is to analyze the French-Canadian identity and understand the role it played, and continues to play, within contemporary francophone groups, not only in British Columbia, but also in Canada.
IV (WHITE) FRENCH CANADIANS IN FRASER MILLS:
Racialized Spaces, Identities, and Nation Building

On September 27, 1909, a first contingent of French Canadians arrived in Fraser Mills, British Columbia. Considered expert lumbermen, the francophone labourers had been recruited by the Fraser River Lumber Company — which became the Canadian Western Lumber Company in April 1910 — to displace already employed Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian workers. It is believed that forty families, including eighty-four working men, arrived at Fraser Mills that day (The British Columbian, Sept. 28, 1909 cited by Stewart, 1956: 46). A few months later, the Canadian Western Lumber Company repeated the experiment, recruiting another group of French-speaking eastern lumberjacks. A report in The Western Lumberman newspaper details the story in an article headlined “French-Canadian Millmen Flocking West”:

Early in April last Father O’Boyle again left for Quebec, where he found many eager to make the trip West, having heard of alluring reports from friends and relatives in the first party. With very little delay forty-nine families, comprising 166 French-speaking Canadians, were selected by Father O’Boyle and supplied with tickets for the special train engaged to carry them and their household effects on their long journey westward. Fraser Mills was reached Saturday night, May 28th, and on Monday morning the seventy-three expert millmen in the party went to work in the big mill in company with their counrymen, displacing a large batch of Hindus. Twenty more French-Canadian families, who could not complete arrangements in time to leave with their friends, are expected toward the end of the summer, and their arrival will be the signal for the disappearance of the small number of Hindus still employed.

37 The estimated number of French Canadians who arrived in Fraser Mills varies, depending on the source. The British Columbian newspaper reported that thirteen train cars left Montreal on September 23, 1909, transporting 500 French Canadians (including 110 male workers) (Stewart:46). At any rate, in October 1911, the company’s payroll book indicated that 86 French Canadians worked at the Canadian Western Lumber Company (Stewart: 57).

The motive behind hiring French-speaking workers needs to be located in its historical framework. Hiring French-Canadian labourers from Québec and Ontario\textsuperscript{39} was part of the highly racist, white supremacist context of early twentieth-century British Columbia. Several examples further contextualize the institutional racism engrained in Canadian laws and institutions. For instance, in 1886 the Canadian government imposed a head tax of $50 on Chinese Canadian labourers. The intent was to prevent "too many" Chinese workers — who had previously worked to build the CPR — from staying in Canada (Roy, 1989: 61). The head tax was raised to $100 in 1901, and then to $500 in 1902 (Kobayashi and Jackson, 33). On January 8, 1908, in the same spirit of racism and xenophobia, the Canadian government introduced the "continuous voyage" regulation. This new law was created to refuse entrance to the country to the Japanese who travelled via Hawaii (Roy, 1989:212). The continuous passage rule also made it virtually impossible for South Asians to immigrate to Canada. Indeed, the Canadian government advised the only company providing a continuous journey from India to Canada — the CPR — to stop selling tickets to potential South Asian immigrants (Bolaria and LI, 1988: 170; Walker, 1997: 225-226 quoted in Dua, 2003:52). Following these racist laws, hiring French-Canadian labour was in accordance with the desire of the economic and political elites to make and keep the province "white."

This desire not only lead to restricting the immigration of Asian and South Asian people, it also meant that the white and British majority needed to police the internal boundaries of British Columbia (Harris, 1997: 269), maintaining a racial hierarchy. Consequently, the Asian population living in British Columbia faced social and economic exclusion. For instance, Japanese, Chinese and South Asians were disenfranchised, and often not allowed to purchase Crown land or logging licences during the first half of

\textsuperscript{39}Workers from Québec came mainly from Hull, Sherbrook, Montréal and the Québec City area (Québec, Lévis and Montmagny counties). The French Canadians from Ontario were recruited in Ottawa and Rockland.
the twentieth century (Ibid: 269). Considered "the less desirable immigrants," the "Orientals" also occupied the lowest-status jobs and lived in ghettoized spaces — without their families — "in a masculine environment of multiple-unit dwellings in the oldest parts of the inner city" (McDonald: 1996:201).

Keeping British Columbia "white" also necessitated the disenfranchisement, displacement, and dispossession of Aboriginal people. As Cole Harris points out, "the indigenous other would be tucked away, given as little land as possible, marginalized in its own territory" through the implementation of Indian reserves (Ibid: 271). In this sense, the desire to create a white settler society in British Columbia necessitated a marking of the space, dividing the whites from the racial others.

In this chapter, I will consider the narratives of French-Canadian men and women within this context — the making of British Columbia as a white settler society. More precisely, I explore the ways in which these particular French Canadians remembered and made sense of their arrival in the company town of Fraser Mills, and their subsequent establishment in what became Maillardville. How was the west imagined and perceived? How was the (white) French Canadian identity constructed in opposition to non-white and Anglophone identities? How were whiteness and non-whiteness depicted? How was the space racialized in and beyond Fraser Mills? In the interviews by Cheryl Pearson and Frankie Johnson in the early 1970s, every interviewee remembers the past differently — there are twenty-three different versions of what Fraser Mills and its surroundings looked liked at the beginning of the twentieth century — but there are nonetheless common themes that can be analyzed.

There is, for instance, a common understanding that the area of settlement — the actual piece of land that became Maillardville — was an empty space in the midst of the wilderness. To understand this construction of an untamed and uninhabited land, I refer to Furniss' framework of the myth of the frontier (1999). The various themes used
in the frontier myth — an empty land, the arrival of “pioneers,” and the progress of civilization, for instance — are all extensively evoked at one point or another by the interviewees. In conjunction with the idea of the “terra nullius,” the interviewees (re)imagine their identity initially in a binary framework, where Japanese, Chinese and South Asian workers constitute the opposite (inferiorized) “others.” Within this binary, the physical force of the white French-Canadian men is typically evoked to construct distinctive racial and gender identities. The racialized and linguistic organization of the space in and beyond the mill also generates much discussion. Many interviewees recount how quickly they left the company site to live in Maillardville “on top of the hill,” while Japanese, Chinese and South Asian labourers stayed in “Japtown,” “Chinatown,” and “Hindutown,” down below.

In this chapter, I consider the discourses around the myth of the frontier, the opposite “others,” and the creation of racialized spaces in order to shed light on processes of nation building, colonisation, and identity formation within the transplanted French-Canadian community.

4.1 “There was nothing here”

When Marie-Rosa Dicaire was a little girl, she heard stories about the west. British Columbia was enigmatic and far away, a place where there was no God. It was, in fact, such a hostile place that when her dad, Hormisdas Hammond, left Ontario for British Columbia in May 1910, the rest of the family stayed behind. Along with 72 other French-Canadian men, Hormisdas had been recruited by Fraser River Sawmills to work in Fraser Mills. At that time, Marie-Rosa’s mother, Anna Trottier, was expecting a baby. There was no way she would follow her husband on such a perilous adventure.

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40 The Western Lumberman reported that 49 families, comprising 166 French Canadians, reached Fraser Mills Saturday night, May 28th, 1910, and that Monday morning 73 “expert millmen in the party” went to work (The Western Lumberman, July 1910, Vol. 7, No. 7: 19).
Following the advice of her own mother, Anna waited until she had given birth before undertaking the seven-day train trip to Fraser Mills. This is how Marie-Rosa remembers what happened:

My mother was expecting a baby in May 1910. And then her mother wouldn't let her take that big long stretch there. She was expecting a baby, there might be no doctor, there was supposed to be no God, there was nothing. There would be nothing here, you know, wild country, just like the Indians (Frankie Jonhson, Interview with Arthur and Marie-Rosa Dicaire, 1973)

The idea that there was “no God” in British Columbia is also mentioned by other participants. It coincides with the Christian belief that Aboriginal people were “heathen,” therefore “uncivilized” (Greenwell, 2002). This view denied the rich and varied spiritual beliefs and social orders of the First Nations. In other words, because Aboriginal people were not Christians and not of European origin, they were considered “heathens,” dangerous, and barely human.

Given what she had heard, it is not surprising that Marie-Rosa believed she encountered in British Columbia a wild, empty land. When asked to give a description of what Maillardville looked like when she first arrived, Marie-Rosa answers with two words: “Forest, forest.” Later on, when Cheryl Pierson asks what Brunette Street — the main street in Maillardville — looked like when she first saw it, her husband, Arthur Dicaire, gives a similar answer: “All bush, all bush.” Marie Rosa and Arthur Dicaire are not the only ones who remember the area that became Maillardville as a wild, empty space. Like those of many other interviewees, their narratives of the land echo the major themes of the myth of the frontier.

According to Elizabeth Furniss (1997/1998), this myth assumes that Canada was an empty land before the arrival of the Europeans. The underlying assumption is that the

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41 Marie-Rosa Dicaire was interviewed twice. In 1972, she was interviewed alone by Cheryl Pierson and in 1973 with her husband by Frankie Johnson. Part of the 1972 interview was conducted in French.
history of Canada is linear, moving from 'wilderness' to 'civilization,' on the inevitable road to 'progress,' guided by the white man's hand. From the idea of the discovery of the empty land, to the arrival of the pioneers, to the establishment of a colonial settler society, the myth celebrates a certain version of history. The story that is told includes various standard themes:

The story begins with the settlers' journey to the wilderness and their cultural, moral, and material regression to the more "primitive" conditions encountered there. The frontier experience involves a series of encounters with morally opposed forces, the most important being civilization and wilderness, humans and nature, and whites and Indians, although there are many metaphorical variations (Furniss, 1999: 17-18).

Thus, according to the myth of the frontier, the white settlers have to overcome a hostile environment — the empty wilderness — to achieve "civilization." As I read the transcripts of the interviews with the Maillardville residents, I found these same narratives of the "conquest" of the wilderness.

In the interviews, many of the respondents recall undertaking a long and difficult journey by train to British Columbia from Québec and Ontario. For instance, when asked if she remembered anything in particular about the journey, Marie-Rosa responds:

Well, it was only wilderness everywhere. That's all there was, wilderness. And you think like the canyon coming on the train [...] But there a place, my goodness, that the train passed, you thought the train was going to fall in the water. We were closing our eyes. And you know the curve, you'd meet a curve and you'd see the engine and us were in the back. It's like that, you know. Today it's beautiful compared to what it was then. It was a rough trip, you know (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Marie-Rosa Dicaire, 1972).

Not only is the journey to British Columbia recounted as a "rough trip," but the arrival at Fraser Mills is also remembered as a difficult experience. Many of the French-Canadian travellers recall the harsh conditions that awaited them. Among the second contingent of workers that arrived in 1910, some families had to stay on the train in cars for a couple...
of days (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Arthur Laverdure, 1972), while others resided in the company store until the little company houses, often referred to as “shacks,” were ready to live in (Interview with Marie-Rosa and Arthur Dicaire).

On this matter, Hercules Lamoureux relates the story of his family arriving in Fraser Mills in May 1910 with the second group of French Canadians. His father needed employment, and coming west was the best option to overcome poverty. Being only two years old at the time, Lamoureux had no memories of the trip or the arrival at Fraser Mills. However, he explains in his interview how his mother was “very disappointed when they got off the train.” What follows is an excerpt of the dialogue between Hercules Lamoureux and Cheryl Pierson:

**Mr. Lamoureux:** [...] And then, they come out here and my mother was very disappointed.

**Cheryl Pierson:** Why was she disappointed?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, it was so primitive. And all they had was they had to stay above the company store for a few weeks till they were building homes for the people then. And, all they had was a two-room cabin to go into and they did move into. This was at Fraser Mills then. They stayed down there about a year and after that my Dad decided to build his own home. He built his home. He built a store and a home at the same time right on Pitt River Road in Maillardville. The store’s still up there now. (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Hercules Lamoureux, 1972)

Here the path to civilization is a harsh one and it is realized through the hard work of the “pioneers.” Indeed, while the men built their homes in Maillardville, they also had to work for pay 10-12 hours a day, six or seven days a week (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Ida Beaudoin Proulx). While the men and women interviewed focus mainly on the men’s work in building homes and clearing the land, there is also an acknowledgement that “everybody helped.” However, women’s work is generally minimized. Most of them moved into their homes before they were even finished (Ibid). Not only did they build their homes, the settlers also built a church and a school. Jean-Baptiste Dicaire, who
arrived in Fraser Mills on September 27, 1909, with the “first bunch” of French Canadians, explains how the building of the houses happened in Maillardville:

On Sunday, we used to come up here with a cross-cut saw from the Mill. They used to lend us some cross-cut saws. We come up here and cut up the logs and thing like that. [...] We got into our home on the first of April 1910 with just a little bit of roof, no window, no doors, nothing, no chimney, no place for a stove. The stove was outside on a piece of rock, and we were living in those places till we got it built up to stay in (Cheryl Pierson, interview with Jean-Baptiste Dicaire, 1972).

While I do not question the difficulties encountered by the men, women, and children who settled in Maillardville in 1909 and 1910, I find this construction of history problematic. The grand narrative of the “pioneers” necessarily excludes other groups. In these accounts, for instance, displaced Aboriginal communities who had lived nearby, or even on the exact same land as the “pioneers,” are not mentioned at all.

For instance, in the winter of the early 1820s, there were Kwantlen villages just upriver from what is now known as New Westminster (Harris, 1997: 69). Indeed, the Fraser River, “one of the largest reservoirs of food on the continent, drew [Aboriginal] people from afar, and supported many more people than lived along it in winter” (Ibid: 71). By 1877, the Kwantlen villages at New Westminster had disappeared; Native people had been dislocated by the Royal Engineers in 1859 (Ibid: 90). However, it is estimated that, in 1877, there were some 300 Aboriginal people (probably Kwantlen) still living in New Westminster (Ibid). By then, however, the Kwantlen were living in “frame shacks” at the fringe of the city, near the two canneries that employed many Aboriginal women (Ibid). By 1909, when the French Canadians arrived in British Columbia, Natives from the Kwikwetlem First Nation lived in two reserves in the Coquitlam District — the same District where Maillardville was to be located. Members of the Coquitlam Band, the Kwikwetlem, had been forcibly tucked away in reserves in the early 1860s (Harris, 2002: 325) as a result of policies enforced and approved by the Canadian state.
The myth of the frontier implies that the land is “free” and its abundant resources are readily available for the white settlers. As he narrates his arrival in the small settlement of Maillardville in 1917, Leo Canuel, then a 12-year-old boy, remembers the abundant natural resources available. He presents an almost paradisiacal view of the young French-Canadian town:

Miss Pierson: Describe your impressions of Maillardville when you first got here.

Mr. Canuel: Well, it was cold when we came here two days, three days before Easter, Good Thursday. And we left Kenora at about 35 below and about 8 feet of snow. And there was snow all the way down and when we got to Maillardville, it was all nice green grass and it was a really spring time and the creeks and the brooks were going at full swing all over. So it was a new world entirely. It wasn’t like today at all. It was all bush, all big trees and there was creeks at practically every block of the town. There was four whereas now there’s only one. There was four at that time and there was an awful lot of trout in them, where it took you about ten minutes to get all the trout you wanted for a good supper or dinner (Cheryl Pierson, interview with Leo Canuel, 1972).

Furniss argues that “[a]t heart, the frontier complex consists of a form of historical consciousness — an awareness of history — that is culturally conditioned and deeply influenced by Canada’s colonial heritage” (17). According to Furniss, this historical consciousness defines certain rules and assumptions that determine “truths” about the past. For instance, in the stories told by the interviewees, the land surrounding Fraser Mills is presented unproblematically as ‘empty’ even though the area had already been inhabited by Aboriginal peoples. The assumption that the space was unoccupied and unused prior to the settlement of the French-Canadian workers is understood by the speakers as a statement of truth.

Like the concept of the “grand narrative” (Stanley, 1998), the myth of the frontier excludes non-white peoples from the building of the nation. In the stories told about Maillardville, Aboriginal peoples have no part in the construction of the nation or the community. Indeed, they are almost never mentioned by the settlers — and when they do appear, they are perceived as a threat to the settlement. Marie-Rosa Dicaire recounts
hearing stories of “Indians” living in the west, and Marie Lizée, who came to Maillardville in 1917, also reports hearing many stories about “scary Indians” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Marie-Lizée, 1972). Yet neither makes reference to meeting any.

The fact that French Canadians are able to tell their life histories in B.C. between 1909 and 1939 without having to even mention the presence of Aboriginal people is also a direct result of colonialism. As Cole Harris explains it, “colonialism — in its settler form — is the displacement of people from their land and its repossession by others” (xxiv: 2002). Through a system of reserves, British Columbia succeeded in relocating Aboriginal peoples to lands perceived to have little commercial value, restricting them to areas that were often insufficient to meet the needs of their communities.

In the early twentieth century, this colonialist order meant that a band like the Coquitlam, which lived on two small reserves in the Coquitlam District, barely had enough land to live on. On January 8th, 1915, Coquitlam Chief David Bailey testified to the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission, explaining that the land attributed to his people was not only too small, but it was also inappropriate for cultivating vegetables or raising cattle.42 Chief Bailey also raised the issue of pollution in the Coquitlam River: “We used to have our drinking water from the Coquitlam River, but as it is now populated by the whites, our said river is unfit to be used for the house purpose for the City of Coquitlam is dumping everything dirty and filthy into the river and other places.”43

Because Aboriginal peoples were confined to reserves, French Canadians could erase them from the geographical and imagined space of Maillardville. In addition, Aboriginal peoples did not find work at the lumber mill alongside French Canadians — they were not employed by Fraser Mills at all. The 1910 Census of Fraser Mills, divided

43 Ibid.
according to racial categories, records no Aboriginal people living there.\textsuperscript{44} A colonialism that confines Aboriginal peoples to certain spaces, isolating them from whites, helps explain their near absence from the interviewees' narratives.

While French Canadians remember their arrival and settlement in British Columbia, using the metaphors and symbols of the ‘empty’ frontier, they are not the only ones to do so. The narratives in \textit{The Western Lumberman} newspaper echo the same myth-making. Talking about the arrival of the French Canadians in Maillardville, Father O'Boyle praises their qualities. Under the subtitle “Right Stamp of Men for the West,” Father O'Boyle is quoted in a report celebrating the unique qualities of the French Canadian men:

They are the men essential to British Columbia. The ordinary European immigrants come from the old world cities. They crowd our Canadian cities. British Columbia wants men who will go to her unexplored and uninhabited areas. The French-speaking Canadian is this man. He will camp in the woods, and live on hard tack until the railways and civilization arrives. He is the coureur des bois of Canada (Western Lumberman, 1910, cited by Stewart, 1956, p. 54).

This quote epitomizes the myth of the frontier, where pioneers go to “unexplored and inhabited areas.” The myth appears in one way or another in every interview. As cited earlier, the Maillardville residents explain how, through determination and hard work, overcoming harsh conditions, they built homes for themselves. They cleared the land, one stump at a time, and brought civilization with them. It was an environment of working long hours and then some more. According to many of the interviewees, the-French Canadian men of Maillardville worked between sixty to seventy hours a week at the mill, while managing to build their homes in their “free” time.\textsuperscript{45} The French-Canadian women

\textsuperscript{44} 1\textsuperscript{st} Census of the Fraser Mills Townsite, taken on June 29, 1910, p.13. The 1910 Census of Fraser Mills is on display at the Mackin House Museum.

\textsuperscript{45} All of the interviewees who remember how many hours their parents or themselves worked at the mill mention that a regular work week was 10 to 12 hours a day, six to seven days a week. Other historians have also confirmed these working conditions in British Columbia sawmills at the
cared for, clothed, and fed large families, according to the gendered roles ascribed to them.

However, I question how and why these narratives eliminate other groups who were actually working in Fraser Mills from both life and the imagination. Why are Japanese, Chinese and South Asian workers excluded from the “pioneer” group? They too worked at the mill and endured similar conditions. Interestingly, the view of Fraser Mills and its surrounding areas as an empty land, as illustrated in the framework of the frontier myth, is full of contradictions. While the interviewees say there was nothing but forest, bush, and stumps in and around Fraser Mills, they also describe in lengthy detail the many Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian labourers already living and working at the mill when they first arrived in British Columbia. How can the land be “empty wilderness” and simultaneously populated with all these “alien” men?

4.2 “Everybody got along well together”

Alfred Sauvé is unsure of the exact date when he arrived in British Columbia in 1910. However, he remembers “lots of Hindus” when he first saw the company town of Fraser Mills (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). When Cheryl Pierson asks “if there was a lot of people” when he arrived, his answer is telling: “There was nobody here, when we come up here, was hardly anybody. Was lots of Hindu, though. Oh my God! Hindu, Jap and Chinamen down the mill” (Ibid). Alfred’s memories of his arrival at Fraser Mills are not exceptional. Indeed, the interviews reveal extensive discussions about these “other

46 The 1910 Census taken on June 29th indicates that there were 66 Japanese, 24 Chinese, and 172 “Hindus” working at the mill that year.
47 Alfred Sauvé hesitates on the exact date of his arrival at Fraser Mills. He finally says that he arrived in September 1910, but does not know precisely which day of the month. From his interview, it seems that he would have travelled with the second group of French Canadians. Indeed, he talks of a special train with French-Canadian families. If this is the case, he would have arrived on May 28th, 1910.
nationalities" — the Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian labourers who were already living and working in Fraser Mills, but were considered to be "nobody."

Interestingly, the discussions and memories pertaining to the Asian and South Asian workers operate in conjunction with the myth of the "empty and underdeveloped land." Along with the idea that there was "nobody" here and the land was "vacant" — as Marie-Rosa Dicaire puts it, "C'était pas découvert" (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972) — the participants cannot ignore that indeed there were other people in Fraser Mills prior to their arrival. The company's own payroll records reveal that 13 Chinese, 27 Japanese and 63 "Hindus" worked at the mill in 1908 (Meyers William, 1982: 8). Two years later the town's first census records 24 Chinese, 66 Japanese and 172 Hindus living in Fraser Mills — accounting for more than a quarter of the inhabitants (262 out of 943 people). 48

According to the 1910 census, 306 French Canadians lived in Fraser Mills at the time, including 110 men, 52 women, and 144 children. 49 Given these numbers, it is clear the Chinese, Japanese, and East Indian workers constituted a significant proportion of the workforce.

In the interviews, many comment and reflect on these "others." For the French-Canadian men and women, the Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian workers all fall under the stereotypical label of "Oriental." While the interviewees often describe the Asian and South Asian labourers as "weak," somehow not fitted for the physically demanding work of the mill, they also portray the French-Canadian workers as "tough," "physically strong," and "experienced mill men." In this binary framework, the women are excluded from the narratives, and the "Orientals" are pictured as "strange" and "scary"

48 The first census of Fraser Mills was taken almost a year after the arrival of the first contingent of French Canadians (on September 27th, 1909) and more than a week after the arrival of the second group (on May 28th, 1910). French-Canadian adult males were listed as such in the census, along with their unnamed wives and children.

49 These figures are approximate. There are based on the number of people who had French-Canadian sounding last names.
people. In spite of these narratives, most of the interviewees say there was no racism in Fraser Mills. It is also important to note that the binary framework attributing opposite qualities to French Canadians and “Orientals” is flexible: there are multiple variations of the oppositional categories. What remains constant, however, is the dual character of the framework where there is an essentialist “French Canadianness” constructed as radically different from — and superior to — a strange and exotic “Orientalness.”

The process of ascribing particular characteristics to a group of people supposedly sharing a common ethnic and cultural background has been called a process of “racialization” (Miles in Creese and Peterson, 1996: 117, and Kobayashi and Jackson, 1994: 35). A material and ideological process, the racialization of a particular group also frequently justifies its oppression. In the context of migrants integrating into the labour force, for instance, Miles contends that processes of racialization legitimize the exploitation of the negatively racialized newcomers (Kobayashi and Jackson, 1994: 35). Referring to slavery in the Caribbean in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Miles writes:

[...] in all these instances of unfree relations of production, through a process of racialization, racism became an ideological relation of production: that is to say, the ideology of racism constructed the Other as a specific and inferior category of being particularly suited to providing labour power within unfree relations of production. Racialization and racism were thereby ideological forces which, in conjunction with economic and political relations of domination, located certain populations in specific class positions and therefore structured the exploitation of labour power in a particular ideological manner (Robert Miles, 2000: 141).

In the context of Fraser Mills, the concept of racialization is particularly useful, since in ascribing negative attributes to Asian workers, the interviewees made sense of social inequalities, rationalizing them. For instance, the supposed “weakness” of the “Orientals” not only justified the hiring of French-Canadian workers, but also legitimized higher wages and property rights for whites. These processes of racialization also mean that
the racial other is homogenized. For instance, as others have pointed out, South Asians were all referred to as "Hindus" or "Hindoos," even if most of them were, in fact, Sikhs from the Punjab (Barman, 1996: 146 and Kobayashi and Jackson, 33). Given the fact that there was a company-built Sikh temple in Fraser Mills, there is no doubt that many of the so-called "Hindus" — if not the majority of them — were Sikh (Canada's Digital Collections). But, along with Japanese and Chinese labourers, these Sikhs were often simply referred to as "Orientals," which became a pejorative, racist term to designate and subordinate the racial other.

In his influential work on Orientalism, Edward Said historically contextualized the idea of the "Oriental" (2003), and demonstrated how the concepts of the "Orient" and the "Oriental" have been imagined and created by and for European fantasies from the late eighteenth century on (Said, 1994). These European representations of the Orient — which may be the Far East, all Asia, or the Middle East — and its people have been embedded in relations of power where Europe dominates. As such, the inferiority of the "Orient" is opposed to the superiority of the "Occident." While the Oriental is constructed as "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different;" the European is presented as "rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'" (Ibid, 40). Said concluded that "orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”) (1994: 43). I perceive that this dual conception of "us" versus “them” as also at work in the interviews with the French Canadians of Maillardville.

Following Said's ideas, Stuart Hall maintains that identity is constructed through opposition (2000, 146-147). Indeed, there is no "self" without an "other." According to Hall, identity is always constructed through "splitting between that which one is, and that which is the other" (Ibid: 147). In the context of 1950s' England, Hall illustrates how the symbolisation of the English identity — the cup of tea — could not exist without the
"others." The tea itself comes from Sri Lanka and India, and the sugar is produced in the Caribbean. In this context, when Hall immigrated to England from Jamaica in the 1950s, he felt that he was "the sugar at the bottom of the English cup of tea" (Ibid: 147). Hall concludes that identity is better understood in terms of difference rather than sameness:

The notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same, is nonsense. As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the Other. What is more is that identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation. It is always within representation (Ibid: 147).

This understanding of identity as based on complex intersecting discourses of difference — as processes of othering through representation — is extremely fruitful to explore how the interviewees perceive and construct their "French Canadianness" in opposition to "Orientalness."

For instance, when Cheryl Pierson asks Rodolphe Boileau why the Fraser Mills' company recruited French-Canadian men at the beginning of the twentieth century, the seventy-four-year-old man offers the following explanation: the company needed good mill workers, and the French-Canadian men were perfect for the lumber industry. Boileau came to Fraser Mills in 1910 with the second contingent of French-Canadian men and women. A boy of about 12 years old when he arrived in Fraser Mills, he started to work for the company only four years later. He worked at Fraser Mills until he retired at 65 years old. For him, there is no doubt that the French-Canadian workers were an ideal labour force. In an exchange with Cheryl Pierson, he explains his point of view:

**Miss Pierson:** Why did they want to get French-Canadian mill workers here?

**Mr. Boileau:** Because they knew they were good trade, you know, good workers in the mill, like my father and others, all those. They could work in the mill, at any job, pretty near.

**Miss Pierson:** They were experienced, then?

**Mr. Boileau:** Experience, yeah. (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Rodolphe Boileau, 1972)
Indeed, all of the participants, in one way or another, perceive the men from back east as physically strong, tough men. Hercules Lamoureux reveals that he was given his first name in honour of the legendary Greek hero Hercules, since his parents thought he would be a "big man," like his dad and uncles. Interestingly, Hercules tells Cheryl Pierson that he turned out to be a small, short man. However, he, too, sees the French-Canadian men as tough. When Cheryl Pierson asks how his father managed to work ten hours a day, six or seven days a week, in the early 1900s, his response is very telling: "By golly, I don't know. They were healthier, they were tougher" (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Hercules Lamoureux, 1972).

This construction does not operate in a vacuum. Like the symbols of the English identity, based on Caribbean sugar and Indian tea, though the French Canadian was looked down on by the English, he is "tough" in comparison to a "weak" counterpart: the "Oriental," the even more marginalized "Other." Like Aboriginals in the frontier myth, the Asian Other "provides a mirror opposite to, and facilitates the construction of, the settler's own self-image" (Furniss, 10). Here the French Canadians are presented as experienced, hard workers, known for their work in the logging industry. On the other hand, Asian peoples are portrayed as less suited for the work of the mill.

Using this binary framework of "us" versus "them," Arthur Coutu explains why Fraser Mills decided to recruit in the east. Like Rodolphe Boileau and Hercules Lamoureux, he believes the men from the east were stronger and tougher than the "Others." From 1892 to 1902, the mill remained idle due to financial difficulties (Meyers, 1982: 2). It reopened with new ownership in 1905 (ibid), and for Arthur Coutu the reopening was closely linked to the recruiting of French Canadians. This is how he explains what happened:

Then, they figured they didn't have the right man or something... anyway, when they open up, that's when they send back East for those experienced millmen...
there was quite a few there who had an experience with sawmill, and ah, that helped the company (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Arthur Coutu, 1972).

Here, the “wrong man” refers to the Japanese, Chinese, or South Asian worker. For Arthur Coutu, these men were not very good workers in the mill:

...those fellows, they [the Asian and South Asian workers] wasn't very good around machinery, at first, towards the last, after a few year the youngest fella were all right... but ah, the climate was hard on them, the Hindu especially, couldn't stand the cold.

The idea that southern peoples were less resistant to colder climates was commonplace at the beginning of the twentieth century in Canada. Indeed, it is in line with what Eva Mackey called the “icy white nationalism,” adopted by the Canada First Movement (Mackey, 2002: 30). A political party that originated in 1868 soon after Confederation, the Canada First Movement promoted a nationalism that linked environment to character (Ibid.: 30). In this view, Canada’s northern location and cold climate placed it in a superior position in relation to southern nations. Most importantly, according to this identity, a distinction exists between superior (French and English) “northern races” and inferior “southern races.” 50 As Mackey explains, “a corollary to the idea of the northern race as superior was the construction of the South as other: inferior, weaker, and also essentially female” (Ibid.: 30). This vision of the ‘weak Orientals,’ expressed by many interviewees, correlates with the idea of an inferior, effeminate, and feminized worker.

These discourses were also echoed in The Western Lumberman newspaper. For instance, a 1909 article entitled “Weaknesses of Oriental Labor” states that Chinese workers are “weak physically, and as a rule are only fitted to certain light labor.” 51

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50 Interestingly, the United States was considered to be inferior to Canada because of its Southern location and the presence of the “Negro race” (Ibid: 31).
51 The Western Lumberman, March 1909, Vol. 6, No. 3, p.35.
same vein, the article claims that the “Japs are the best workmen, but fall far below the white man.” According to the same piece, the “Hindus” are the worst:

The mills are having constant trouble with the Oriental, especially the Hindus. Tuberculosis has made ravages among the Hindus, many of them being incapacitated from work for long periods.

Once illness overtakes an East Indian, a substitute slides into his place. As they look so much alike, the “boss” does not know of the change until his foreman tells him that the man on the job is “no good” — then the change is discovered.52

In a 1910 article, The Western Lumberman claimed that at Fraser Mills, “one Quebecker does the work of about two Hindus.”53

While the stories told by the interviewees (re)produce racialized identities, these narratives also create distinctive gender subjectivities. Indeed, the binary framework opposing the strong French Canadian to the weak Oriental is highly gendered. In this dual vision, women are excluded. Only the differences between men, the construction of masculinities, count to create distinctive racialized groups. The French-Canadian identity refers primarily to “strong men,” and not to “strong women.” Indeed, while there is some mention of French-Canadian women working hard at home, it is mainly the public, physical work of the men that is praised (at the mill, building houses, and clearing the land, for instance). In the same vein, Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian women are completely erased from the processes of identity formation.54

This patriarchal ordering is not uncommon in the construction of racialized and national identities. In their study of the portrayal of Chinese Canadians in The Vancouver Sun newspaper, Gillian Creese and Laurie Peterson found that “women were rendered all but completely invisible in processes of community formation” (1996: 122). Creese and Peterson compared how Chinese Canadians were represented in the news during

52 Ibid.
54 According to the 1911 Canadian Census, there were very few Asian women in Fraser Mills.
the 1920s and the 1980s. They found that in the two periods, the news focused mainly on Chinese men, and presented a highly one-dimensional and stereotypical portrayal of the Chinese community. In the 1920s, Chinese men were portrayed as criminal — involved in gambling, drugs and alleged crimes towards white women. Because they worked for lower wages, they were seen as an economic menace — unfair competition — to the livelihood of white working-class men (129). Even though there were small numbers of Chinese women in Canada in the 1920s (and earlier), the newspaper ignored them completely. Creese and Peterson observe that in that period, media discourses were such that "gender and race were normalized (though rendered invisible) as white and male" (127). In the interviews, I found a similar pattern, where "French-Canadianness" is equated with maleness as the norm.

Along with the idea that the "Oriental" men were physically weaker, there is also a paradoxical narrative of fear and suspicion towards them. Indeed, many interviewees recall being afraid when they arrived in Fraser Mills. Ida Beaudoin Proulx remembers how her mother was scared of the “Hindus.” Interviewed by Cheryl Pierson, she remembers how her mother reacted to moving to British Columbia:

**Miss Pierson:** Describe the reactions of your mother towards coming to B.C.

**Mrs. Proulx:** Oh, she didn’t like it. And on the way, I don’t know, just before we got, it was in B.C. somewhere, I don’t know just where, there was some Hindus. And you know, they were on the platform of one station, I don’t know just where we were. And mother didn’t want Dad to go out because she says, “You never know what they’re going to do.” You know they were different from us, weren’t they? And she didn’t want him to go on the platform. But when we come out here, we found out there was lots of Hindus.

Like others, Ralph Duplin acknowledges that, when he arrived in 1910, he had never seen any "Hindus" before. Interviewed by Cheryl Pierson, he says:

...and then we get out here, we run into these East India... the Hindus, you know. They had a couple of hundred, they had about 500 working at the mill here, at the time. That was all new to us, because back East, we didn’t see any of them. (Interview with Ralph Duplin, 1972)
Asked if he was scared of the “Hindus,” he laughs and replies: “No, not but, you know, very weird kids.” In all these narratives, the “Others” are presented as being fundamentally different from the French-Canadian group, and as a result possibly harmful, or if not, kind of “weird.”

In this context of fear towards “others,” Jean-Baptiste Dicaire describes how the French-Canadian men were not afraid to fight. In the following interview excerpt, he describes his first encounters with the others — Japanese, Chinese, and East Indian workers — upon his arrival in Fraser Mills:

Mr. Dicaire: [...] when we arrived, we were surprised, we were kind of scared.

Miss Pierson: Why is that?

Mr. Dicaire: Well, there was all Chinamen, Hindus, and Japanese that met us, but they were friendly. They couldn’t say, they couldn’t understand what we say and we couldn’t understand them either, but we got friendly with them right away, because they come to meet us, you see. And the company says everything is ok, don’t be afraid, so we were just prepared you know. We thought something was going to crash, but the French Canadian is not afraid to fight. He likes to fight, you know. That’s his nature, fight. He like to get into a brawl every once in a while. (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Jean Baptiste Dicaire, 1972)

Interestingly, Jean-Baptiste Dicaire remembers how the two groups were friendly right away. The idea that everyone got along well comes back in many interviews.

Along with narratives of fear, as well as a binary framework that places French Canadians in a position of superiority, there is also an understanding that there couldn’t possibly have been racism at work in Fraser Mills. Some interviewees, such as Marie-Rosa Dicaire, even go as far as to insist that “there was no discrimination” against Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian workers. Discussing the working conditions at the mill, Marie-Rosa Dicaire says: “No, there was no discrimination, no. If there was a raise, they [Chinese, Japanese and South Asian workers] had a raise, too.” Yet it is well documented that non-white labourers were paid less than their white counterparts at the
In 1934, for instance, even though the Fraser Mills Company had started to increase wages, the minimum salary for whites was 35 cents per hour, and only 25 cents for "Orientals" (Roy, 2003: 286).

Others are more ambivalent when it comes to racial discrimination. When Arthur Laverdure describes how the work force was organized at the mill, he says, "It didn't matter a damn to anybody whether he [the boss] was black, white, or green then. He was the boss. That was it" (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Arthur Laverdure, 1972). He explains that in some cases, the Asian and South Asian foremen, while generally supervising their "own class of people" also had a "few white men working underneath them." (Ibid.)

Laverdure arrived in Fraser Mills in 1909 with the first group of workers. Like many other French Canadians, his family left Québec to escape poverty. He started to work at the mill at sixteen years old and was a union organizer during the 1931 strike. He tells Cheryl Pierson that some jobs in the mill were not given to "Chinese" and "Hindus." In the following exchange, Pierson asks Laverdure if the labour in the mill was organized by "nationality":

**Miss Pierson:** Well, in the early days, did they all have their particular section in the mill?
**Mr. Laverdure:** No... they work all together. They were all mixed up.
**Miss Pierson:** So side by side with a...
**Mr. Laverdure:** Side by side with a white man
**Miss Pierson:** ...with a Chinese man with a Greek man or a...
**Mr. Laverdure:** 'Course there was some more physical job that they wouldn't put the Chinese on, there... or the Hindus, not too much, either. But the Hindus and Chinamen, more or less, common labour, you know.

Some interviewees, like Maurice Thomas, report never even considering whether racism was at work in the mill. As a boy in the 1930s, Thomas, who was born in 1920 in Maillardville, recalls playing with the Chinese and Japanese children from Fraser Mills.
Miss Pierson: Well, as a little boy, what would you think of, you know, you'd go down [in Fraser Mills] and there would be all of these different nationalities and... what sort of impression would it make on you?

Mr. Thomas: Oh no, we thought nothing of it. We thought they were just one of us. I don't recall any difference between the low Japanese fella we used to play with or Chinese. We didn't associate too much with the East Indians because there was very few of them. But, the Japanese, we used to play baseball. We used to have a baseball team and the Chinese, some of the young fellows and girls they went to Millside School, and they attended Millside School, but they associate with everyone else. We never thought of any racial discrimination. (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Maurice Thomas, 1973)

Following the common hegemonic discourse that Canada is a tolerant and benevolent nation (Mackey, 2002 and Bannerji, 2000), the participants argue that everyone got along well together in Fraser Mills. Some, such as Jean-Baptiste Dicaire and Arthur Coutu, say they used to know how to speak “Hindu” (both were interviewed separately by Cheryl Pierson, 1972). For many, the fact that they could learn the “Hindu’s” language is a sign that everybody was “friendly together” in the company town (Jean-Baptiste Dicaire interviewed by Cheryl Pierson, 1972). It is likely that emerging Canadian discourses of multiculturalism in the 1970s might have influenced the narratives of the interviewees. As opposed to the overt racism of the beginning of the twentieth century, openly racist comments might have been more reproachable and unacceptable by the early 1970s.

Scholars have pointed out that whites have often had difficulty in reflecting on their privileged position in the racial ordering of society, as well as in acknowledging their racism (Frankenberg, 1993, Stanley, 2000, McIntosh, 1995). Timothy Stanley illustrates the phenomenon of “white denial” in Canada:

55 Although I am using the term “white” people here, I am conscious that whiteness is a non-homogeneous fractured category of analysis. In fact, as I will argue in Chapter 5, French Canadians living in Maillardville were not as “white” as English-speaking Canadians. Their class and linguistic status, among other things, made them less “white” in a dominant Anglo-Canadian society.
This phenomenon is particularly common in English Canada where the myth that there is no racism endures. Whether in public controversies surrounding specific allegations of racist actions, in private conversations, or in academic studies, many people speak either of racism as existing elsewhere (in the United States, for example) or of racist incidents in Canada as unfortunate exceptions to otherwise civilized and tolerant norms (Stanley, 2000: 81).

Here Stanley refers to “English Canada,” a term I find problematic due to the diverse backgrounds of the English-speaking people who live in Canada. In fact, what is now “English Canada” encompasses people from a variety of origins (Europeans and non-Europeans, white and non-white). The term also assumes an opposite French Canada. To me, this dual vision excludes First Nations, and non-francophone and non-anglophone peoples. However problematic the term “English Canada” is, I still find Stanley’s contribution on white denial useful to deconstruct relations of power in Fraser Mills and Maillardville.

While most of the respondents deny that there was racism, a few do refer to direct acts of physical violence that seem to contradict that view. For instance, in his interview with Cheryl Pierson, Leo Canuel discusses various incidents of anti-Asian racism. From cutting the “pigtails” of the Chinese “once in a while,” to “knocking out a Chinaman” for 50 cents, Leo Canuel remembers the fights between French-Canadian and Asian workers:

I was wrestling at the mill one day, I beat the hell out of a Hindu, and by God, I had to beat a whole gang before they were satisfied. And that’s the way it went. There was no law until 1927, 26 or 27 against beating up Orientals so the guys would give me 50 cents for knocking out a Chinaman and I took the 50 cents and I thought I was a damn good man. And we’d get on top near the time office and knock down four, five Chinamen and then get 2 dollars extra, see? Now, the Chinese had pigtails, they were good workers at their job. And they had pigtails and every once in a while young guys would cut their pigtails off and think it was a hell of a sport, see? (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Jean Baptiste Dicaire, 1972)

Leo Canuel is the only interviewee who refers in such detail to the “fights” between French Canadian and Asian workers. While I have not been able to verify if his account
is accurate, I did find several references to the “fighting nature” of the French Canadians (referred to by Jean Baptiste Dicaire in his interview on p. 78) in The Western Lumberman. For instance, in a 1909 brief praising the “excellent service” of the French-Canadian “timber men,” The Western Lumberman mentions how “[t]hey [the French Canadians] are hard workers, also hard fighters.” Given the anti-Asian racist climate of the time, it would not be surprising that fights erupted between French-Canadian and Asian workers.

Interestingly, Leo Canuel also reveals that French Canadians were often not punished for being involved in fights. He remembers that “the white man was always on your side, so you’re always, actually if you was good at it, you were always a hero” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Leo Canuel, 1972). What I find the most compelling is Leo Canuel’s self-reflexivity when it comes to racism. For him, prejudice against the “Hindus,” the Japanese, and the Chinese needed to be contextualized at a societal level. Leo Canuel argues that prejudice was “built more or less by the political situation of the country [where] a black was a black and a yellow skin was a yellow and then more or less [due] to a lack of understanding of the situation” (Ibid). But on a more personal level, he also explains how he felt about racism:

I, myself, I know a Chinaman was a Chinaman, until ah 1930s, until I started to know a hell of a lot better, a Chinaman was only a Chinaman and that’s all there was to it. It was to beat the hell out of him and send him back to his country. And, he was a human being just like everybody else (Ibid).

It seems clear from this excerpt that in Fraser Mills, just as in the rest of British Columbia at the time, the Chinese did not have the same right to live in Canada.

In brief, the interviewees’ narratives illustrate how the identity of the French-Canadian newcomers in Fraser Mills was formed in relation to the construction of an

56 The Western Lumberman, November 1909, Vol. 6, No. 11, p. 13.
“out-group” — the “Orientals.” This process of racialization normalized a tough “French-Canadian maleness,” as opposed to a weak (feminine) “Orientalness.” In the process, women (both French-Canadian and Asian) were excluded from the narratives. While most of the respondents denied that there was racism in Fraser Mills, many do refer to feelings of fear and suspicion towards the “Orientals.”

However, racism did not just operate on a discursive level, or entail only fear. On this matter, Said argues that orientalist narratives have concrete material manifestations. For instance, he illustrates how orientalism, as a hegemonic discourse, justified the British occupation of Egypt at the turn of the twentieth century. Analyzing the narratives of Arthur James Balfour and Lord Cromer, Said shows how the British occupation of Egypt was validated through a discourse of European superiority over the “East”:

The argument, when reduced to its simplest form, was clear, it was precise, it was easy to grasp. There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power (Said, 1994: 36).

I argue that similar processes operated in British Columbia when French Canadians established themselves in what became Maillardville. Indeed, while French Canadians were allowed to buy land and received assistance to build houses for themselves, Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian labourers were confined to bunkhouses on mill property. This racialization of bodies is accompanied by a racialization of space.

4.3 Maillardville, “Japtown,” “Chinatown,” and “Hindu town”

Between 1909 and 1939, the organization of space in and around Fraser Mills reflected a racial ordering — one where whites occupied the top of the hierarchy, Asians the bottom. In the following excerpt, Arthur Laverdure discusses how the company town was divided:

57 For a detail account of Balfour and Cromer’s role in the British occupation of Egypt, see Said, 2000: p. 31-49.
Well, you see, the townsite... they had the townsite here, but it was only on the main street in a couple of rows down, and they kept it for the white man, you see, like, the English, and the Irish, and the Scotch... whatever he was... and, they put all the Oriental at the back end of the mill. I guess they didn't want them to mix, or something or other, you know... them days... and the Chinaman was kept by themselves, and they Hindus kept with themselves, the Jap was kept with themselves, and so is the Greek... And nobody mixed up to another. (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Arthur Laverdure, 1972)

The spatial organization of the mill reflected the racial ordering of British Columbia at the time. It is well documented that Japanese, Chinese, and South Asians, along with First Nations, occupied the lowest ranks of British Columbian society at the beginning of the twentieth century (see for instance, Dua, 2003, and Ward, 2002). In the province and the country (as well as in Fraser Mills), Asian people were considered members of inferior races “not fitted for Canadian citizenship” (Dua, 2003). In the “West Beyond the West,” historian Jean Barman illustrates how, during the population explosion of British Columbia between 1886 and 1914, the “less desirable as immigrants were the Asians, not just Chinese, but also Japanese and East Indians” (1996: 145). Barman notes that even though the Japanese arriving in the 1890s did not identify with the Chinese, both groups were seen as a “single Oriental menace” by white British Columbians (Ibid.). In 1875, during the first session of the provincial legislature, Chinese and First Nations were stripped of their voting rights (Dua, 2003: 46). Twenty years later, in 1895, Japanese and East Indian immigrants arriving in British Columbia in small numbers were provincially disenfranchised (Barman, 1996: 145). Given this context, it is not surprising that Asian workers, most of them indentured labourers, were relegated to “the back of the mill.”

Interestingly, within this racial hierarchy, the Greeks (along with the Norwegians) are located in the middle, above Asians but below whites. In the United States, David Roediger refers to the term “not-yet-white ethnic” to describe European immigrants who
were not (yet) considered white due to their ethnicity. Among others, Roman Catholic
Irish, Italian, Hungarian, and Jewish immigrants "were historically regarded as nonwhite,
or of debatable racial heritage, by the host American citizenry" (2002:329). For instance,
Italians were equated with Blacks. A 1898 debate over the disenfranchisement of Italians
in the United States included the following statement: "...according to the spirit of our
meaning when we speak of 'white man's government,' [the Italians] are as black as the
blackest negro in existence." (Cunningham, 1965:34 and Barrett and Roediger: 1997: 9
quoted in Goldberg, 2002: 244).

In the Canadian context, "the Levantine races," which included Greeks, were
classified as non-preferred categories of immigrants (see J.S Woodsworth's
However, as Barman points out, Greeks and other continental Europeans (including
Norwegians) could be assimilated and thus had the potential to become "good Canadian
citizens" (1996: 142). French Canadians also occupied an intermediate position. Being
Catholic, working-class, and French-speaking, they were located below white English-
speaking British Columbians, but above the "Oriental" workers.

In terms of space, I argue that the making of Maillardville reproduced this racial
ordering. Indeed, while French-Canadian families "moved up the hill" to build what
became Maillardville, Japanese, Chinese, and East Indian workers had to stay 'down' in
Fraser Mills, living in large bunkhouses, in what was known as "Jap town," "Chinatown,"
and "Hindu town." This racialization of the space is in line with the making of a white
settler society. As Sherene H. Razack writes:

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

In the context of the making of Maillardville, French Canadians — although not as white as English-speaking Canadians — were still allowed to own land in British Columbia. Located “on top of the hill,” just north of Fraser Mills, Lot Forty-Six, District of Coquitlam, had been purchased by the Fraser Mills Company, and made available to French Canadians to acquire property and build houses, a well as a school and a Catholic church (Meyers, 1982:15). In the following excerpt, Ida Beaudoin Proulx remembers the various places where she lived after arriving in British Columbia:

Well, we were a few days on the train, I believe. And then, we moved into the yard of Fraser Mills. There was a great big, I don’t know, I think Hindus used to live there before, great big, I wouldn’t call them a house, you’d have to call them sheds. And we stayed in there until we got some, down Fraser Mill, there, on the flat, they got some houses, little four rooms, and everybody got one of these little houses. And then, most of them had bought this half acre land for a hundred and fifty dollars — they paid for it. And that, you paid five dollars a month, you didn’t have to pay it cash. You paid five dollars a month. And the taxes were only eight dollars a year [...] There was no house, there was no school, even the sidewalk wasn’t there. No roads, bears around the house, you know, sure in the bush. (Pierson, Interview with Ida Beaudoin Proulx, 1972).

From the arduous days spent in the train wagons, to living in the "shacks" that used to host “Hindus,” to inhabiting a tiny company house, to finally building a family home up the hill, the space was socially constructed according to racial inequalities. In this sense, I agree with Sherene Razack, when she writes that “the constitution of spaces reproduces racial hierarchies” (2002: 1). The sequence of dwellings described by Ida Beaudoin Proulx reflects a clear ordering of space that benefits the French-Canadian group. Indeed, she and the other French-Canadian interviewees did not stay long in the “shacks” for the "Hindus." This "racial space, that is, space inhabited by the racial
Other, was not designed by the Fraser Mills Company to host French Canadians.
Instead, Ida Beaudoin Proulx and her family, along with other French Canadians were soon able to live in their own homes in what became Maillardville.

In this context, Harris writes that the geographies of British Columbia have been constructed through the drawing of racial boundaries (1997: 268). He shows that a white and British population policed its boundaries in different ways. Indeed, building a white and British British Columbia meant that the bodies of the “others” — the non-whites — needed to be controlled spatially. Harris explains:

Such a project could only involve keeping others out, or if this could not be done, containing them in as little space as possible. Boundaries became exceedingly important: the boundary of a colony (later Canada) could be used to exclude immigrants, and, internally, boundaries could be used to separate those who were welcome because they were civilized, and those who had to be put up with because they were not. In drawing these latter boundaries, it could seem a moral duty, from the perspective of the civilized, to be as parsimonious as possible with the uncivilized (Ibid.: 268).

As mentioned earlier, on a national level, keeping the “non-desirable” immigrants out translated into legislation that limited and eventually prohibited the entrance of Asian peoples to Canada — the Head Tax on Chinese immigrants, the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act, and the law of the continuous journey to exclude Japanese and South Asian immigrants are only some examples. In Fraser Mills, hiring French Canadians was part of a strategy to keep the “others” out. In a 1909 Western Lumberman article entitled, “French Canadians to Replace Orientals,” the racist reasons behind recruiting French Canadians are clearly outlined:

Many citizens of Vancouver, to whom Hindus, Chinks and Japs are non-persona grata, have been saying complimentary things about the proposal made by the Fraser River Lumber Company Limited, to substitute French-Canadians from Quebec for the many Hindoos now employed, these foreigners at present constituting about one-half of the force engaged at the firm’s mills, near Westminster, whilst many others of that ilk are to be found in the firm’s numerous logging camps. To the credit of the management be it said, the hiring of Hindoos has from the outset been regarded as an unpleasant necessity. […] The

58 I borrow the idea of the racial space from Sherene Razack, 2002: 12.
company anticipates having to pay larger wages to the French-Canadians than they have been paying to Orientals, but they also expect to secure much better work, while at the same time furnishing employment to a much better class of people, who will spend their money here (The Western Lumberman, August 1909, Vol. 6, No. 8, p. 13).

In spite of this racist discourse, the company continued to hire Japanese, Chinese, and East Indian labourers in significant numbers. In 1931, for instance, 66 Chinese, 56 Japanese and 29 South Asians were working in Fraser Mills, forming together almost a quarter of the workforce (151 workers out of 653). According to Jean Meyers Williams, “while the management [of Fraser Mills] gave lip service to the popular cry for elimination of Oriental labour, it would remain an important component of the labour force throughout the First World War and the interwar periods” (1982:7).

However, this labour force, considered not white, faced the internal boundaries of the company town. Japanese, South Asian, and Chinese labourers lived in ghettoized spaces; excluded from white neighbourhoods. On this matter, Harris explains how Chinatown and Japtown came into being: “The prejudice of the majority, coupled with the minority’s protective response and tendency to gather together, created Chinatowns and Japtowns: racialized ghettos on cheap land at the least inviting edge of frontier towns” (197: 270). In his interview, Leo Canuel tells Cheryl Pierson about this construction of racialized spaces in Fraser Mills:

They would build up a town and call it Japtown, Chinatown. That's where the words come from Chinatown, Japtown, Greentown, Hindutown, it's all as a book. They would concentrate themselves because the other people would not accept them, see? They were not into, not even talk to each other. Well, should at that time a girl go out with a Chinaman, I think the rest of the community would had hung him. (1972)

Here, Leo Canuel refers to the anxieties related to “miscegenation.” Interestingly, he is the only interviewee who mentions this fear of “inter-racial” mixing. In British Columbia, popular miscegenation theories held that “the offspring of an intermarriage between an Oriental and a white invariably results in a lower and inferior type than either of the
present race” (H.H. Stevens, MP, Conservative, Vancouver City, quoted in Roy, 2003:32). In early twentieth-century British Columbia, a moral panic around the dangers Asian men posed to white women prevailed. Indeed, white women were seen to be in need of protection from the “immoral” and “depraved” Asian man (Ibid:43-45). While Leo Canuel is the only one to mention fears of miscegenation, I believe this racist doctrine certainly must have had an impact on French Canadians. Indeed, records show that no marriages between whites and Asians were celebrated at the Notre-Dame de Lourdes Church (Maillardville’s only Catholic church at that time) between 1911 and 1950 (Spanolo and Levesque: 1980).

Confirming the prevalence of racialized and segregated spaces, all the interviewees acknowledge that they did not have much contact with Asian people. For the men, contacts were limited to interactions with fellow Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian workers on the mill’s site. For the women, there was even less contact. Only a few women mention buying fruits and vegetables from Chinese farmers living outside Fraser Mills. Moreover, according to the interviewees, none of the workers from Asia and South Asia were included in their social activities. For instance, while there were English, Irish, and Scottish women and men going to the French-Canadian dances, no one racialized as non-white appears to have been present.

These findings are not unique to Maillardville. In her book entitled The Oriental Question, Patricia Roy demonstrates that Asian people did not associate with whites during the first half of the twentieth century in British Columbia. Roy explains that white Canadians overwhelmingly believed that “Asians were inassimilable” (2003: 26). The habits, customs, and standards of living of the Japanese and Chinese people were too different from those of the whites to allow the two groups to socially mix together (Ibid).

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59 Some French-Canadian women who worked in the canneries in the summers also mention that there were Chinese, Japanese, and Aboriginal labourers.
The notion of "inassimilability" persisted partly because Asians and whites had limited contact outside economically competitive situations. [...] Some theatres denied Asians admission or "herded" them in special seats; Vancouver's Crystal Pool permitted "coloured races" to swim only at specified times. Asians and whites met in integrated athletic leagues, but baseball teams such as the Asahi of Vancouver (who also had a basketball team), the Taiyos of Victoria, the Royston Japanese, and Vancouver's Chinese Students' soccer team, formed along racial lines. Interracial, postgame social gatherings were rare (Roy, 2003: 27)

From the interviews, it is clear that Maillardville's French Canadians, like other white British Columbians, did not have much social contact with Asian and South Asian people between 1909 and 1939. Like other French-Canadian men, François Leroux reports that he did not "associate" with "them" outside of the workplace:

**Miss Pierson:** Can you tell me about some of the other people, some of the other nationalities who worked at the mill?
**Mr. Leroux:** Oh yes, there was some Swedes, and there was Hindus and Chinese, and...
**Miss Pierson:** How did you get on with these people?
**Mr. Leroux:** Seemed to be all right. I never had no troubles with any of them.
**Miss Pierson:** Did you associate with them? Did the French people associate with...?
**Mr. Leroux:** Oh, not very much.
**Miss Pierson:** Anybody?
**Mr. Leroux:** No, we meet them at work, talk to them little bit, you see, but I mean we didn't go over their place very much, like unless you had to.

François Leroux's description of his relationships with the "other nationalities" is in line with the experiences of others in Fraser Mills. While most of the interviewees agree that they did get along with Asian and South Asian peoples, it is clear that their relationships with Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian labourers were quite limited.

4.4 Conclusion

The stories told by the Maillardville interviewees epitomize the myth of the empty frontier, where whites are presumed to be the bearers of "civilization," the most entitled to the land. Within these narratives, the experiences of First Nations, such as members of the Coquitlam Band, are dismissed. In early twentieth-century British Columbia, while Aboriginal peoples are tucked away on Indian "reservations," French Canadians are
supported by the Fraser Mills lumber company to establish themselves, and encouraged to build a community surrounding a school and a church, implying family life and reproduction.

Along with the myth of the frontier, the construction of the racialized "other" justifies the hiring of French Canadians at the mill. While French Canadian workers are represented as 'tough' men, so-called "Orientals" — Japanese, Chinese and South Asian labourers — are imagined as being physically "weak," somehow less efficient labourers. Embedded in gendered hierarchies, this binary framework excludes women — both French Canadian and Asian — from processes of collective identity formation.

Together, the myth of the frontier and the racialized and gendered construction of the Oriental "other" are both reflected in the organization of the space, which in Fraser Mills reproduces social hierarchies. While the mill allocated Lot Forty-Six, District of Maillardville, to French Canadians, Japanese, South Asian, and Chinese male workers — mostly indentured labourers — were forced to live in the company town's bunkhouses. Drastic immigration laws prevented Asian women from establishing themselves in Canada, discouraging a natural increase in the number of Asians through reproduction.

This chapter has illustrated how racist discourses and practices benefited French Canadians in comparison to other groups perceived as inferior — First Nations and Asian peoples. However, even though the French Canadians occupied a privileged position in the colonial order — as colonizers in BC — their (fragile) state of whiteness was fractured along class, gender, linguistic, and religious lines. For one thing, French-Canadian women did not benefit equally with men from the establishment of a white settler society in British Columbia. Also, the French Canadians who settled in what came to be known as Maillardville were mainly poor, uneducated men and women. They were also French-speaking, Catholic, and had large families, which made them part of an
inferior (ethnic) group within an Anglo-dominant society. Through the narratives of the interviewees, I will explore in the next chapter how class, associated with language and religion, complicated the status of the French Canadians of Maillardville.
Looking through the Mackin House Museum collection of historical photographs, I found the first census ever taken at Fraser Mills. Almost hidden from the glance of visitors, the tiny book discreetly hung in a corner of the Antonio Paré Room. What fascinated me about the thirteen-page document was how much it seems to tell about the interlocking gender, racial, and sexual hierarchies of the small company town at the turn of the twentieth century.

The following table is a reproduction of the last page of the document:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brought Forward</th>
<th>497</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boarders at the Hotel</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarders at the Club House</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegians</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House n°95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.W. Weiler</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olaf Forsdal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White men</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Arrivals[^62]:</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 1\(^{st}\) Census of the Fraser Mills Townsite (taken on June 29, 1910, p.13)

\[^60\] The document dates from June, 29\(^{th}\), 1910.

\[^61\] The Antonio Paré Room is a room in the Mackin Museum dedicated to the history of Maillardville. Located in the basement of the small museum, this room contains more than 700 photographs pertaining to Maillardville and Fraser Mills. The photos were collected by Antonio Paré, a Maillardville’s native. For more information on Paré, see footnote 36, p. 54.

\[^62\] I find intriguing the category “Lost Arrivals.” At this point, more research is needed to elucidate the meaning of this term.
According to the “first census of the Fraser Mills Townsite,” there were 615 “white men,” 66 “Japanese,” 24 “Chinese” and 172 “Hindus” living in the small company town in 1910. Interestingly, the French-Canadian men, women, and children who lived and worked in Fraser Mills — roughly 300 people — all fell under the “white men” category. These French Canadians, along with other “whites” — those with Irish, British, or Scottish last names, for instance — have 12 of 13 pages dedicated to them. Indeed, the first 12 pages of the census enumerate in detail the composition of each white man’s household. In this patriarchal order, most women — except for the few non-married ones — and all children went unnamed. Wives were recorded as “Mrs,” carrying the last names of their husbands. A typical example is the recording of household “n°48,” inhabited by a French-Canadian family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House n°48</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mederic Laverdure</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Children</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 Household n°48

Here, only Médéric Laverdure, a French-Canadian labourer who arrived in Fraser Mills in 1909 (Paré, 1996; 28), has his full name recorded.

On the other hand, Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian workers remain unnamed, appearing solely on the last page of the census, their presence simply recorded with a racialized epithet — “Chinese,” “Japanese,” and “Hindus.” The census provides no further information on these workers. In this racist order, there is no need to

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63 I am still waiting to obtain a photocopy of the original document from the Museum.
64 This number is only an approximation. I counted 307 apparent French Canadians with “French sounding” last names living in Fraser Mills in 1910.
65 The fact that the accents on his first name were not recorded is not surprising, as his name was probably anglicized by Census takers. According to Church records, his first name was Médéric (Spagnolo and Lévesque, 1980:23)
report who “they” were as individuals. In the same vein, the “not yet white” Greeks and Norwegians also went unnamed — presumably not “white enough” to deserve any attention. Interesting, too, is the fact that the boarders at the Fraser Mill hotel and Club House, most likely single men, were also not individually recorded. In this heteronormative and patriarchal society, single men — both white and non-white — were considered, like women, not fully “persons”, and outsiders, hence unworthy of being named.

This marginalization of Asians and South Asians in particular occurred within the greater context of a white supremacist society, one where those conceived as “white” could, as has been seen, benefit from social inequalities. This is not to say that all people racialized as “white” profited equally from this racial order. Indeed, as many have argued, whiteness is a social construction and, as such, it is not a monolithic and static category (see, for instance, Hartigan, 2001; Frankenberg, 1997; and Hage, 2000). David Theo Goldberg describes whiteness in these terms:

"Whiteness" then is not some natural condition, phenotypically of blood or genetic or intellectual superiority but the manufactured outcome of cultural and legal definition and political and economic identification with rulership and privilege. If we go by history — and in this instance what else is there to go by? — then whiteness definitionally signifies social superiority, politically equated with control, economically equals property and privilege (2002: 243).

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66 This practice was not unique to Fraser Mills. For instance, Jean Barman observes that in the 1881 and 1891 British Columbia manuscript census, Chinese and Aboriginal people went unnamed, or were assigned invented last names. Many of the Chinese labourers who were allowed into Canada to build the railway were simply given the surname “Ah” (Barman, 2004:133).

67 For a discussion of the racialization of Greeks and Norwegians as “not-yet-white” ethnics, see Chapter IV.

68 According to an article in The Western Lumberman, the hotel at Fraser Mills was reserved for “the accommodation of unmarried employees,” while the Club House was reserved for office staff. (December 1910, Vol.7, No. 12, p. 28).

69 I will explore the interlocking relations of whiteness and heteronormativity in greater detail in Chapter VI.
Whiteness, then, needs to be understood as a fluid and fractured category "that is historically, geographically, and socially contingent and made up of various gradations and meanings" (Satzewich, 273: 2000). Here, the "various gradations and meanings" of whiteness signify that one may be "more or less white," according to one's gender, sexuality, social class, linguistic ability, accent, or religious affiliation. In this sense, Goldberg argues that the powers and privileges associated with whiteness require qualification:

Clearly, the racial powers and privileges of whites are magnified or tempered by class position, gender, even the standing of and within a nation-state. Thus those otherwise considered as white in the scheme of common sense and who occupy a social position of disprivilege or disempowerment become referenced precisely as less or other than white. They are characterized with the likes of "white niggers," or "half-niggers," as "temporary Negroes" (Dollard, [1937] 1988), "hunky" (Hungarian), "dago" (Italian and Spanish), "polka" (Poles), "spicks" (Spanish) and "kikes" (Jews) (Ibid., 243-244).

In Fraser Mills, this means that even though French-Canadian men and women were recorded as "white men" by census takers, this whiteness may not have been all that evident and straightforward in their everyday lives.

In this chapter, I will explore the complexities and contradictions of whiteness through the discourses of the 23 French-Canadian men and women that Cheryl Pierson interviewed. I conclude that these French Canadians, who moved to Fraser Mills at the beginning of the twentieth century, occupied a liminal "third category," somewhere between whiteness and non-whiteness — as "colonizers" and "colonized" at the same time. Even though these French Canadians were de facto Canadian citizens — thus entitled to purchase land, and (for the men) vote in elections — they were also working-class, poor, Roman Catholic, and French-speaking — all attributes that made them inferior in the eyes of English-speaking Canadians of British descent. As the opening quote of this chapter from Albert Memmi suggests, we must remember that all domination is relative and specific. Indeed, even though French Canadians enjoyed a social and economic status superior to that of Asian, South Asian, and Aboriginal peoples, they were also inferiorized culturally, economically, politically, and socially.
within the Anglo-dominant society of British Columbia. Of course, not all French Canadians were equally ranked within this order of dominance, or as Goldberg puts it, by the rules of the "racial state" (2002). For instance, Chief of Police Emeri Paré, who was educated, spoke English, and belonged to the middle class, was probably closer to whiteness than Marie Lizée, a mother of eight who spoke only French when she first arrived in Maillardville in 1933.

In this chapter, I analyze the discourses of the interviewees to illustrate how the French Canadians of Maillardville occupied a space that disrupts the white/non-white duality, as well as complicating the colonizers/colonized dichotomy. For instance, in exploring the interviews, it is clear that French Canadians were indeed inferiorized and othered by those the interviewees call "the English." Constructed and nicknamed as "Frenchies" or "Peasoups," the French Canadians were often depicted as "happy poor" and obedient workers, revealing how the working-class status of the French Canadians, along with their Roman Catholic faith and French language, tainted their "whiteness." Overwhelmingly poor, with little formal education, and concentrated in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs at the mill, the French-Canadian labourers must have endured difficult living conditions in a world where they were conceived as relatively white, but not completely white. Exploring language issues more specifically also sheds light on the complicated racialization of French Canadians. Here, the exploration of narratives pertaining to the French language and French schooling — which include the Anglicization of French names, the necessity of learning English, the struggle to remember French, and the connection to the Church — illustrate how whiteness was indeed fractured in Maillardville.

Finally, given that whiteness is also a self-ascribed identity, it transpires that the interviewees considered themselves as radically different from white Anglo-Canadians at times, but not always. While in the previous chapter I analyzed how the French
Canadian identity and community were imagined and constructed as essentially different — and superior — to the (imagined) "Oriental," here I propose to trouble this dichotomy by considering the uncomfortable Otherness ascribed to them by Anglophones of British stock.

5.1 "Peasoups" and "Frenchies"

Marie-Rosa Dicaire left school in grade five. She was about 12 years old at the time, and remembers her mom telling her that she was old enough "to go earn the money, to hire myself, to go to work, to help the family live." (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Marie-Rosa Dicaire, 1972). Dicaire found a job as a domestic worker for a Mrs. Cornish, an Anglo-Canadian woman living in Fraser Mills. This is where she learned how to bake white cake with "beautiful butter icing." It is also where she learned to speak English.

In 1914, the fact that Dicaire had to work for wages for an "English" woman belonging to "une classe plus haute" was no coincidence. That Mrs. Cornish's husband happened to be the foreman of the sash and door factory was no surprise either. Indeed, at the time, most of the foremen at Fraser Mills were Americans or Canadians of British, Irish, or Scottish origin (Williams, 1972: 36). The vast majority of the French-Canadian workers, on the other hand, were concentrated in semi-, or non-skilled labouring jobs, and thus worked alongside Chinese, Japanese and South Asian indentured workers. (Williams, 1972: 40). The gendered and racial division of labour in Fraser Mills reflected the social hierarchies of the province. Here, French Canadians occupied a complicated racialized position that located them somewhere between whiteness and non-whiteness.

Indeed, male French-Canadian workers were deliberately recruited by Fraser Mills not only to work in the sawmill industry, but also to "colonize" the province. While the mill's Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian workers — who arrived in B.C. as indentured labourers and faced exclusionary immigration laws when they attempted to bring their families to Canada — French-Canadian men were encouraged to move to the
West Coast with their wives and children to settle permanently. As mentioned earlier, the company sold one-acre lots to every married French-Canadian man that wanted one, and furnished the lumber needed to build a Roman Catholic church, a school, and a rectory. However, despite this “colonizer status,” the French Canadians of Maillardville were still considered socially and culturally inferior. These families were, after all, settling in British Columbia, where whiteness was equated with being male and of British origin, as well as heterosexual and middle-class (see Perry, 2001; Harris, 1997; McDonald, 1996; Valverde, 1991; and Mackey, 2002: 49).

In the interviews conducted by Pierson, there is evidence that French Canadians were “othered” by the “English.” Here, the interviewees use the term “English” to refer simultaneously to English-speaking people of Irish, Scottish, and English origin, Canadians or immigrants. As Arthur Laverdure explains, he and other French Canadians did not see any difference between the Irish, Scottish, and English:

> Of course, there might have been more English people at the time, such as English and Scotch, and Irish. But they were counted as Englishmen in them day, because we never knew what the hell the difference was between an Irishman and a Scotchman. To us they were all English (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Arthur Laverdure, 1972).

Interestingly, some British Columbia historians have also suggested that by the early twentieth century the Irish, Scottish, and English were perhaps “blended,” because “their individual cultural or ethnic identities had become indistinguishable” (Smith, 2004: 225). For instance, the Irish coming from the United Stated would have been already “naturalized” there, making it easier for them to pass as “English” once in British Columbia (Ibid, 225). In other words, the Irish had already become white, in spite of their Catholicism and reputation for brawling. The idea that the Irish, Scottish, and English

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70 For a detailed account of the racialized spaces of Fraser Mills and Maillardville, see Chapter IV.
were “blended” is certainly a questionable hypothesis. Nonetheless, the interviewees did imagine Irish, Scots, and English as being first and foremost “English.”

Pierson, the interviewer, also refers to an “English” community when she asks if the interviewees felt any discrimination as French Canadians. Interestingly, they generally answer that such a thing did not happen. However, in exploring the interviews, I quickly realized that those constructed as French Canadians were indeed othered within an Anglo-dominant society. For instance, Arthur Laverdure remembers being called “Frenchy” by his co-workers at BC Manufacturing, where he worked after leaving Fraser Mills. Looking for a “better job somewhere else,” Laverdure remembers being in his early twenties when he left Fraser Mills to work at the New Westminster sawmill. He says he learned how to “run” every machine at BC Manufacturing — from the “rip” saw to the “cut-off” saw, from the “joiner machine,” to the “big planer and everything.” He recalls that even though he was physically small, he was “valuable” and “able for [his] size” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Arthur Laverdure, 1972). Laverdure is not exactly sure how long he worked at BC Manufacturing — maybe somewhere between 1919 and 1924 — but he says that everyone at work called him “Frenchy”:

I worked on all of them (the machines). They broke me on all of them, so if they were short of a man somewhere, well, ‘Frenchy’ had to do that. [...] Everybody down there, they figured my name was too long to call for. Instead of calling me Art or Mr. Laverdure or Laverdure or whatever, it was, they called me ‘Frenchy.’ “Alright ‘Frenchy,’ hey, come on, we want you!” (laughter) So ‘Frenchy’ went (laughter) (Ibid., 1972).

In the interview, Laverdure laughs when he tells the story. “I made the grade. I used to get along with everybody,” he explains. However, the fact that Laverdure was called “Frenchy” by his co-workers also reflects a social order where French Canadians were ethnicized others, of an inferior status warranting a familiar and teasing appelation.

Many authors argue that the Irish had to fight and vote their way into whiteness in the United States (see, Ignatiev 1995 and Roediger, 2002, for instance). According to Roediger, it was only in the 1930s that Southern and Eastern Europeans (non-anglophones and non-protestants) were able to secure their acceptance into U.S. whiteness (2005: 8).
In the account above, Laverdure seems to be treated as an eager "Frenchy" worker who would do as he was told. The stereotype of French Canadians being "docile workers" — "porteurs d'eau prêts à travailler pour n'importe quel salaire, dans n'importe quelles conditions," or "water carriers ready to work for any salary under any condition" — was very common at the turn of the twentieth century (Frenette, 1998: 114). In the United States, for instance, Carroll D. Wright argued in a 1881 Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistic report that the French Canadians were the "Chinese of the Eastern States" (Chartier, 1991: 43-45). Here, Wright refers to the stereotypes that constructed French Canadians as not wanting to improve their working conditions, content with little, and willing to live in isolated communities on their own (ibid., 1991) As such, French Canadians had no interest in the "civil, educational, and politic institutions of their country of adoption," in that case, the United States (ibid, 44-45).

The idea that French Canadians were docile workers was certainly shown elsewhere to be false. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 2, French Canadians were actively involved in the 1931 strike at Fraser Mills. Nonetheless, similar constructions of French Canadians as "docile," "cheap" and "happy to live among their own" were also reproduced in reports published in *The Western Lumberman* newspaper. When Father O'Boyle praised the recruitment of French Canadians to solve the "Asiatic problem" in Fraser Mills, he stated:

Now that the ice has been broken there will be plenty from Quebec to replace yellow labor in this province, for the mills in the older provinces are shutting down for want of timber to cut, and in British Columbia there is the advantage over Quebec of better wages and steadier work. In return the easterners will give the services of the best lumbermen in the world, stronger physiques, and men who will stay with the job. Your Quebec millman is not a great traveler. He is *domestic* and *socially inclined*, and if he has the advantage of living in communities of his own people, is slow to move elsewhere.\(^{72}\)

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Here, acquiring the services of “the best lumbermen in the world” — “men who will stay with the job” — certainly was assumed to entail that French-Canadian workers would not organize against their employer, or disrespect the authority of management. Indeed, in December 1910, the Canadian Western Lumber Company reported that “[t]he French-Canadian employees are willing and steady workers, and stand high in the esteem of the management.”73 In the same vein, a brief published in The Western Lumberman a year earlier compared French-Canadian with Swedish workers. Here, it is stated that the Swedes had a tendency to be “clannish,” implying that this characteristic did not apply to French Canadians:

Recently a mill company in British Columbia has been bringing these French Canadians out to supplant Orientals, and it is reported that they are giving excellent service. It is hardly just, however, to say that French-Canadians are better workers than some other nationalities. No better workers come to this country than the Swede. The objection sometimes urged against them is that they are liable to be clannish, to the detriment of their employer, standing by each other at times when they should not. Nevertheless, they are hardy, industrious people, and to them must be credited much of the hard work and industrial development along the Coast.74

Thus, in these narratives, when French-Canadian men are constructed as “good workers,” we should read “docile.” These accounts also suggest that French-Canadian “others” were classified as “desirable” workers, certainly more desirable than the other “others” — the undesirable “yellow labor.” What is important to mention here is that even though French Canadians were presented in a somewhat positive manner — they are constructed as “good workers” — these men and women still did not have much say in these social constructions. In other words, the social hierarchy placing French Canadians above “Orientals” was sustained and created by and for one elite: the upper- and middle-class, or upwardly mobile white Anglo-Canadians. This English-speaking elite had the authority and resources to assign meanings and typologies to different

73 The Western Lumberman, December, 1910, Vol. 12, No. 7, p. 27.
74 The Western Lumberman, Vol. 6, No. 11, November 1909, p. 13.
racialized groups and the means to physically manage these otherized populations accordingly. Here, I agree with Eva Mackey when she states the following about studying nation-building in Canada:

The important question here is not whether Aboriginal people, French-Canadians, or immigrants are erased in Canadian mythology, or even whether they are represented positively. The central issue is to examine who decides when and how Aboriginal people, French people or more recent immigrants, are or aren’t represented, or are or aren’t managed, in the interests of the nation-building project. These cultural groups become infinitely manageable populations as well as bit players in the nationalist imaginary, always dancing to someone else’s tune (2002: 49).

In this sense, when reports in The Western Lumberman describe French Canadians in Fraser Mills as “good citizens” and “excellent workmen,” this labeling also means that these people were “white” enough to be welcome in British Columbia, and “obedient” enough to work for the Fraser Mills Company without competing for position with those already there.

In her interview with Pierson, Ida Beaudoin Proulx talks of another stereotype affecting French Canadians. She recalls that when she was a school girl the “English” children from Fraser Mills would call the French-Canadians students “Peasoups” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Ida Beaudoin Proulx, 1972). When Beaudoin Proulx was in grade eight, she attended Notre Dame-de-Lourdes, Maillardville’s Roman Catholic primary school. She remembers that, at that time, grade eight was mostly taught in English. In the following excerpt, she answers Pierson’s questions about the “English” kids:

Miss Pierson: You said that when you went into Grade eight, and the classes were all in English, that the English kids called you ‘dummies’ and things like that. Did you ever run into any other prejudice like that?

76 Here, it is difficult to verify if grade eight was taught mostly in English at Notre-Dames de Lourdes in the 1920s. However, many of the interviewees do refer to this measure. At this point, more research is needed to confirm this claim. It is documented, however, that by the 1950s, English was the principal schooling language of the three “French” and Catholic parochial schools of British Columbia, including Notre-Dame de Lourdes. At that time, only a few periods a week were taught in French (see Landry, 1966 and Roy, 1984).
Mrs. Beaudoin Proulx: No, 'til when we start telling them that if they were so smart, why didn't they speak French? Well, that kind of, you know...

Miss Pierson: Eased up? Why do you think they didn't want to learn to speak French?

Mrs. Beaudoin Proulx: I don't know. They called us the “pea soups” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Ida Beaudoin Proulx, 1972)

The pejorative epithet “peasoups” refers to the soup made of whole dried yellow peas, salt pork, and herbs that French Canadians would often eat. On a deeper level of analysis, making pea soup could also refer to the inferior social status of the French Canadians as members of the working class. Indeed, pea soup was/is an inexpensive meal to prepare. Thus, calling French Canadians "peasoups" could also imply that they ate pea soup all the time, and ultimately, justify their position as lower-paid unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Indeed, why would French Canadian men need wages comparable to foremen, managers, or skilled-workers, while living on pea soup? Here, French Canadians seem othered because of culinary habits associated with the poor. On the other hand, I doubt that middle-class Anglo-Canadians were inferiorized for the meals they prepared. In British Columbia, Italians and Russians have also had their culinary practices inferiorized.

A Dutch-born longshoreman made the following comment to the BC Commission of Labour on March 7, 1913: "Italians lived on macaroni and the Russians on salt herring and bread... That is impossible for us." (McDonald, 1996:208). Here, the us/them dichotomy is quite clear. The (imagined) culinary habits of Italians and Russians implied that they were underconsuming, and therefore, able to work for lower wages. Like French Canadians, Italians occupied a complicated position when it came to whiteness. As poor single men working in semi-, or unskilled labouring jobs, these Roman Catholics from southern Europe were often considered non-white. For instance, in December 1911, an aldermanic candidate spoke of “‘too many white men' remaining idle while
'Italians’ worked” (McDonald, 1996: 208). In the case of French Canadians, there is no doubt that their membership in whiteness was also questioned. Being called “Pea soups” or “Frenchy” was part of a process in which French Canadians were imagined as less than white or non-white. It is well documented that French Canadians were generally considered inferior by the Anglo-Saxon majority in Canada at the turn of the twentieth century (see Welch, 1994/1995, Frenette, 1998, Berton, 1990: 41).

In Ontario, for instance, there was a fear that French Canadians would “invade” and ultimately surpass the number of English-speaking Canadians (Welch, 1994/1995: 42). In practice, this meant that a series of provincial laws were passed to prevent the use of the French language in schools. In 1912, the provincial government passed Regulation 17, an anti-French law restricting the use of French as a language of instruction in the first two years of primary school in Ontario (Martel, 1997: 32). According to David Welch, Regulation 17 “virtually ended French language schooling in the province” (1994/1995: 38). A similar English unilingual climate was prevalent in other provinces as well. In 1916, the Albertan and Manitoban governments prohibited teaching in any language but English in schools (Hébert, 1994: 5 and Frenette, 1995: 130). Three years later, in 1919, the province of Saskatchewan adopted the same law, making English the only legal language of schooling (Frenette, 1995: 130). In British Columbia, during the first half of the twentieth century, public education in French was also not supported by the provincial government (see Landry, 1966 and Roy, 1984). French education was left to private schools run by the Roman Catholic Church (Ibid.).

Given this pervasive anti-French context, it is rather surprising that most of the interviewees affirm that they did not experience any discrimination as French Canadians. Even Arthur Laverdure and Yda Beaudoin Proulx — who report being called names (“Frenchy” and “Peasoups”) — maintain that they were never victims of any “prejudice” or “mistreatment,” preferring to interpret these derogatory nicknames as friendly.
Beaudoin Proulx explains, "the people [from the English community] seemed to be very nice, so I didn’t bother them either, I guess" (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Ida Beaudoin Proulx, 1972). In the same vein, when Pierson asks Marie-Rosa Dicaire if she was ever teased, or the victim of any prejudice because she was French Canadian, she quickly answers that such a thing never happened — in fact, she adamantly denies experiencing any discrimination:

Oh no, no, no. NO, no, no. Nobody hate another, no. We were all, no matter if you just knew those people [the “English”], no matter if you were only seeing them every month, or two months and you knew them by sights, you know, their name, like them. You say hello when you pass one another, you know what I mean. No, there’s never been any quarrel about that, no. (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Marie-Rosa Dicaire, 1972)

In order to understand or interpret the interviewees’ answers it is important to contextualize their narratives within the time when the interviews were conducted — in the early 1970s, in the wake of the Canadian Commission on Bi-culturalism and Bilingualism. The Official Language Act had just been adopted in 1969, making English and French the two official languages of the country. In this political context, it is possible that French Canadians in minority situations felt more recognized and supported by the federal government. The Official Language Act made Francophone minority communities eligible to receive federal funding, starting in the 1970s (see Martel, 1997). Interestingly, a few interviewees do mention the idea of “two languages” when they affirm that they were never victims of discrimination. The following dialogue between Cheryl Pierson and Léona and Léo Hammonds illustrates this point:

**Miss Pierson:** To your notion, did you ever run into any kind of prejudice or were you ever held back in any way because you were French-Canadian?

**Mrs. Hammond:** No never.

**Mr. Hammond:** No never...

**Mrs. Hammond:** No. I was never held back because I figure I couldn’t because I’m French. I was born here, this is my home. Why, you know? And I think that in
Here, Léona Hammond uses the concept of home, of belonging to the nation. When she says "I'm French," she implicitly refers to French Canadians as one of the two founding peoples of the Canadian nation. Perhaps bringing up discrimination against French Canadians would have disrupted this narrative of equal partnership and belonging.

In the same vein, Arthur Laverdure is in agreement with Beaudoin Proulx, Dicaire, and the Hammonds. For him, "it would be a lie" to say that French Canadians were mistreated. However, Laverdure is also ambivalent when he discusses issues of discrimination with Cheryl Pierson:

**Miss Pierson:** Well, can you ever think in your life if you're ever, if you feel you ever were mistreated simply because you were French Canadian? Did you ever run into anything like that?

**Mr. Laverdure:** No, no. I can't. Maybe there has, maybe there has been some of them that it happened to them, but as far as I know and I'm concerned, we've never been mistreated over that, because mind you, they all had this god damn slang as we said before: "You goddamn bunch of French Canadians," and so on and so forth. But to say we were mistreated, no, I couldn't say that. Because if I did, it would be a lie (Laverdure, 4-1, p. 16).

As he explains later on, there was no such thing as discrimination because:

[...] we got along with everybody, and we kind of mixed up. I really mean. It's like everybody else. You go out in a different country, you got to get used to the system, and gotta compromise with them. Otherwise they'll tell you to get the hell out. Maybe once in a while the foreman might get mad, "You goddamned French bugger, why the hell don't you understand?" (Laverdure, 4-1, p. 16)

In his answer, Laverdure clearly shows that the acceptance (or even tolerance) of French Canadians was never automatic. Indeed, it was expected that the French Canadians would adapt to the "system." Here, the "system" certainly included learning English.
In the next section, I will discuss language issues and how various levels of proficiency in English related to one’s position towards whiteness.

5.2 Speak White: “When you’re cut short, you gotta learn”

ah!
speak white
big deal
mais pour vous dire
l’éternité d’un jour de grève
pour raconter
une vie de peuple-concierge
mais pour rentrer chez nous le soir
à l’heure où le soleil s’en vient crever au-dessus des ruelles
mais pour vous dire oui que le soleil se couche oui
echaque jour de nos vies à l’est de vos empires
rien ne vaut une langue à jurons
notre parlure pas très propre
tachée de cambouis et d’huile

(Michèle Lalonde, 1974)

Recited publicly for the first time in 1968 and published in 1974, “Speak white” is the title of a poem by Québécois writer Michèle Lalonde. The poem refers to the refusal of Lalonde to “speak white,” or more precisely, to speak English (Raoul, 1994: 30). Here, whiteness is associated with the English language — speaking English means speaking “white.” “Speak white” is also what English-speaking members of Parliament told Henri Bourassa in 1899 when he explained in French his disapproval of the Second Boer War (1899-1902). While none of the Maillardville residents interviewed in the early 1970s used the expression, I find it extremely useful to understand the position of French Canadians in British Columbia during the first half of the twentieth century.

Perhaps what best illustrates the complexity of French Canadians being conceived as both “colonizers” and “colonized” is exactly this: the contradictory politics of language. For instance, when Marie-Rosa Dicaire explains how her father, Hormisdas Hamon, built a “belle colonial house,” she illustrates the double status of French
Canadians — at the same time colonizing the “West” and being colonized in the “West.”

In the following excerpt, Dicaire describes the house her father built on one of the Fraser Mill Company’s lots shortly after his arrival in British Columbia in 1910:

*Cheryl Pierson*: Pouvez-vous décrire la maison que votre père a bâti ici à Maillardville, après qu’il est venu ?

*Marie-Rosa Dicaire*: Sa première maison ?

*Cheryl Pierson*: Oui.


Even if Dicaire wants to say this in French (“Je voudrais bien être capable de te dire ça en français”), she only remembers the two English words — “colonial house.”

Interestingly, the fact that Dicaire cannot think of the French words to describe the colonial character of her home reflects the actual hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon elites in British Columbia. As this excerpt shows, it is clear that French Canadians did participate in (and benefited from) the colonization of British Columbia. As Dicaire explains, French Canadians were able to build what she terms “colonial houses” — while at the same time other racialized groups were not allowed to purchase land. However, it is also undeniable that the colonization enterprise was directed, managed, and manufactured by and for an Anglo-Saxon elite. In this context, it is not surprising that Dicaire turns to English, the hegemonic language of the province, when she tries to describe her “colonial house.”

Here, the notion of “colonial bilingualism” discussed by Albert Memmi is fruitful to understand language politics in Maillardville (1972: 102-103). In the Québécois edition of *Portrait du colonisé*, Memmi explains that in any colonial situation, the maternal language of the colonized is often inferiorized and demeaned, while the language of the
colonizer is normalized. To participate in the affairs of the “cité,” to work, and to access any governing institutions, the colonized need to speak the language of the colonizer. While Memmi refers more specifically to French colonization in North Africa, he also argues that the phenomenon of colonial bilingualism is useful to understand the position of French Canadians. In his postscript “Les Canadiens français sont-ils des colonisés?” Memmi explains that there are many ways in which French Canadians could be considered a colonized people (Ibid., 1972, 137-145). For instance, he argues that in the 1970s, the Canada’s economy was firmly in the hands of Anglo-Canadians and Americans; most white-collar (and better paid) jobs required the knowledge of English, and formal education was available only in English in most provinces (Ibid., 1972, 139-141). For Memmi, this economic and social domination morphs into a cultural domination, where the language of the French Canadians is devalued. Memmi writes:

J’ai retrouvé au Canada une version d’un phénomène à peu près constant dans la plupart des situations coloniales, et que j’ai appelé: le bilinguisme colonial. Une langue officielle, efficace, qui est celle du dominant, et une langue maternelle, qui n’a aucune prise ou presque sur la conduite des affaires de la cité. Que les gens parlent deux langues ne serait pas grave, si la langue la plus importante pour eux n’était pas ainsi écrasée et infériorisée. Ce qui différencie le bilinguisme colonial du bilinguisme tout court. [...] En tout cas, on retrouve ici une situation du même type, avec presque toutes les caractéristiques psychologiques et sociales: les Canadiens français sont à la fois gênés par leur langue, ils en ont un peu honte et ils la revendiquent violemment. (Ibid., 1972 : 140).

Even if Memmi is talking here about French Canadians in the 1970s, and most particularly French Canadians in Québec, I find his concept of “colonial bilingualism” useful to explore language politics in Maillardville at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the interviews, most respondents remember having to learn English very quickly after arriving in British Columbia. Most of them acknowledge that some “older pioneers” — often parents and grandparents — never spoke English, but they report
having no choice themselves but to learn the dominant language. In the following excerpt, Hercules Lamoureux answers Pierson’s questions about language:

Cheryl Pierson: How about some of the older people, did they ever learn English very much or were they able to keep their French?

Mr. Lamoureux: This is, yes, there was some of the older people, I remember, that used to go to Fraser Mills and they couldn’t speak very much English. But they got on well with the foremen, some of the foremen were French but the majority of the foremen were educated in English and all the business was all done in English, locally. I remember some of the people down there, they’d talk to the foremen in French and they [the foremen] would answer back in English, though. People couldn’t speak it but they understood it, which was a very common thing in some of the people down there. (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Hercules Lamoureux 1972)

Here, Lamoureux refers to older French-Canadian men who did not learn English, even if they worked in an environment where the “business was all done in English, locally.” Interestingly, while Lamoureux talks specifically only about the men who worked at the mill, other interviewees also say mothers and grandmothers were often the ones who never learned the dominant language. In their interview with Pierson, Léona and Léo Hammond explain:

Miss Pierson: Did either of your parents ever learn English?

Mr. Hammond: Oh ya.

Miss Pierson: Both of them did?

Mrs Hammond: My Dad did...

Mr. Hammond: My mother never spoke English.

Miss Pierson: Was that common that very often the men would learn English and the women wouldn’t?

Mrs. Hammond: Well, it was because, you see, the man was working and the English foreman and things like that at the mill and they learned, you know. But the woman, well, they were at home, everything was French in school and the whole community was French, so they didn’t have much of a chance to really learn it, you know? (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Léo Hammond (née Léona Désormeaux), 1972)

It would appear that linguistic practices were highly gendered in Maillardville. In this context, some have argued that French-Canadian families (nuclear and extended), and
more particularly Francophone mothers, acted as reproducers of ethnicity — as the transmitters of the French language (see Lamoureux 2001 and Welch, 1995). Anti-racist feminist students of nationalism also point to the fact that women were/are often constructed as the “bearers” of the nation, culturally and biologically (see for instance, McClintock, 1995 and Perry, 2001)77.

In the interviews, many participants remember having to speak French at home when they were growing up. “We weren’t supposed to speak English in the house,” explains Héléna Paré (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Héléna Paré, 1972). As adults raising families in the 1920s and 1930s, the participants say that they, too, insisted that their children spoke French at home. Interestingly, there is also a common agreement that the French spoken at home was not as “good” as it was in Québec, or in the “old countries.” For instance, Jean-Baptiste Dicaire says that it was “kind of a raggy French” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Jean-Baptiste Dicaire, 1972), while Hercules Lamoureux talks of a “slang French” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Hercules Lamoureux, 1972).

Here, the fact that French was spoken with the insertion of English words and eventually accents is seen as a sign of the deterioration of the language. Like the colonized in a situation of “colonial bilingualism,” many narrators expressed some shame regarding their hybrid French. On this matter, Yvonne Coutu explains that “the minute an outsider came in and spoke a different language than we did, we had to speak their language, and the French was stopped right there.” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Yvonne Coutu, 1972). Talking of the French Canadian children born in the 1920s and 1930s, she adds:

They [the children] used to be ashamed of it [speaking French] because they didn’t speak like the parents, or myself. And there was, they spoke broken French, English mixed and that’s why they didn’t speak [French]. (Ibid.)

77 I will address “French Canadianness” and normativity in greater detail in Chapter VI.
In this context, it is quite clear that speaking French was not as valued as speaking English in Maillardville. This is not to say that the participants did/do not feel proud of speaking French, or of being "bilingual." On the contrary, many interviewees remember desperately trying to keep their language alive. Sending their children to Notre-Dame de Lourdes, the French-language elementary school in Maillardville, and prohibiting them from speaking English at home were only two of the strategies to foster French speaking. However, in an Anglo-dominant society, the French language certainly had second-class status. In the following excerpt, Ida Beaudoin Proulx tells Pierson about learning English at Notre-Dame de Lourdes:

**Miss Pierson:** There’s something I don’t understand. If this was a private school, in Our Lady of Lourdes that you were going to, and these English children came in — why, all of sudden, were classes given in English?

**Mrs Proulx:** Well, because we were supposed to learn English. They wanted us to learn English, you see. They wanted us to learn English. They thought, well, we’re high enough in French. But as I say when we were eighth grade in French, we were still baby class English.

**Miss Pierson:** Who’s they, who thought that you should learn English?

**Mrs. Proulx:** Well, I guess it was — everybody thought, you know, it’s English speaking, so we learned English, not much, but we had to, when they put us there, we had to learn English.

**Miss Pierson:** What about your mother and father, how did they feel about that?

**Mrs. Proulx:** Well, they never said too much about it. Mom never learnt English. Still, when she died, she could only say a few words. (Beaudoin Proulx, 1-1: 27)

Here, the necessity of learning English to operate in an Anglo-dominant society is made quite clear: "It’s English-speaking, so we learned English."

Marie-Rosa Dicaire also refers to the necessity of speaking English when she tells Pierson how she "picked up" the language:

**Cheryl Pierson:** Could you speak any English when you came out here?

**Marie-Rosa Dicaire:** No, not a word.

**Cheryl Pierson:** How did you start picking it up?
Marie-Rosa Dicaire: I picked it up I’ll tell you how. Everywhere you went, you had to talk English because, well, there was a French store in Maillardville after everybody built. That was a French man was building there. But the Council, where they had the Municipal Hall there, it was all English. Well, they had a few French men in there too, yeah. We had a man he was French. (Marie-Rosa Dicaire, Interview with Ida Beaudoin Proulx, 1972)

Dicaire’s father, too, did not know a word of English when he arrived in Fraser Mills on May 28th, 1910. The inability of Hormisdas Hamon to speak the language had indelible consequences. As Dicaire explains later in the interview, her father had his full name Anglicized. When asked what his name was, Hormisdas Hamon could not understand. Other French Canadians, who had arrived before him with the first “gang” of French-speaking workers in 1909, translated for him. In the end, however, the Fraser Mills’ clerk recorded Hormisdas Hamon’s name as “Joe Hammond.” Since then, Dicaire explains in her interview, everybody had called her father “Joe Hammond.” Indeed, the whole Hamon family saw their name Anglicized to “Hammond,” even though, as Dicaire recounts, the children had been baptized under a different last name in Québec.

Interviewed in French by Cheryl Pierson in 1972, Marie-Rosa Dicaire laughs as she tells the story: “Mon père Hormisdas, ils ne l’ont jamais appelé Hormisdas. Ils l’ont toujours appelé Joe, Joe Hammond. C’était toujours Joe Hammond, vois-tu” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Marie-Rosa Dicaire, 1972).

The story is not exceptional. The anglicization of surnames is a well known phenomenon in Canada (see for instance, Frenette, 1998: 163). In the United States, the Federal Census records from 1850 to 1870 often show French last names misspelled and/or Anglicized. In British Columbia, there is no doubt that this practice also reflected the dominance of the English language. As Robert A. J. McDonals argues, “people who

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78 At this point, more research is needed to verify how many French Canadians (if any) were City Councillors. All the minutes of the Coquitlam City Council from 1909 to 1939 are available on the Internet. It is only a matter of going through election results from this time period. At first glance, it does not seem that many French Canadians were elected.

79 This assessment comes from my work as a research assistant under the supervision of Jean Barman. For instance, French last names like Beaulieu were recorded as Bylieu.
did not speak English or more generally claim British heritage were, in the language of
the majority, ‘immigrants’ or foreigners’” (1996: 196) and thus, considered non-white or
‘less’ white.

In the next section, I will explore how the “less than white” French Canadians
constructed and tried to maintain their identity in opposition to the “English.” Through the
narratives of the interviewees, I look at the different ways in which French Canadians
both sought and refused acceptance into “whiteness.”

5.3 Frenchtown and Englishtown

Between 1911 and 1941, the Census of Canada categorized the population by “racial
origins.” The so-called “British races” included the English, the Irish, and the Scots. On
the other hand, the “European races” included French people, Germans, Italians, Greeks
and Russians. The Chinese and Japanese were part of the “Asiatic races,” while the
“other races” included Indians, or “Negroes,” depending on the years. Within this system
of classification, it is clear that the “British races” were conceived of as different from the
other “European races.” Accordingly, the various “British races” were also thought to be
different from the “French race.”

Given that the Pierson interviews took place in the early 1970s, it is perhaps not
surprising that the participants do not use the term “race” to describe French Canadians.
However, it is well documented that French Canadians and English Canadians of British
origin were thought to belong to two different “races” at the beginning of the twentieth
century. Even if the term “race” is not much used by the interviewees, there is plenty of
evidence to suggest that for a long time, the French-Canadian workers of Maillardville
saw themselves as being completely different from “English” Canadians.

Indeed, in many of the interviews, the participants recall two physical spaces —
imagined, constructed, and racialized in opposition to each other. One of the two was
the geographical area where the French Canadians built their homes, in the
neighborhood that became known as Maillardville. The other main space, Fraser Mills, which did not include the “Oriental Townsite,” was occupied by the “English.” Many interviewees make reference to what was considered a “Frenchtown” up the hill, and what was understood as the “Enlishtown” in Fraser Mills. As Arthur Laverdure explains:

“Up the hill, they used to call it “Frenchtown,” down the hill was “Enlishtown” [at] Fraser Mills. And first, we didn’t dare mixing too much, you know. We stayed in our part, the Englishmen stayed in their part” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Arthur Laverdure, 1972).

Among the participants, there is a consensus that at the beginning “les Anglais et les Français ne se mélangeaient pas ensemble” (Cheryl Pierson, Interview with Marie-Rosa Dicaire, 1972). Not only did the two groups speak different (and opposed) languages, they adhered to different religious faiths. As Léona Hammonds explains, “Years ago we’d say, ‘My goodness, she’s not a Catholic!’ or they’d say, ‘Oh, they’re Catholic,’ and you know, ‘We’re Protestant.’ It would have, well, you weren’t allowed to mix too much, but today they don’t do those things now, you know.” (Mr. Hammond, 2-1, p. 24). Marcel Marcellin is also in agreement with Hammond when he explains to Pierson why he changed schools:

**Miss Pierson:** Well, why did you decide to change from the French school to the public school?

**Mr. Marcellin:** Well, it’s a long story, maybe I shouldn’t print it but in the old days when we first came here to the public school, there was a Catholic school, well it used to be tight in the corner there, you know between the Catholic and Protestant? Throw rocks, you know, like they’re doing in Ireland, the other side of the, so I didn’t believe in that stuff. I always believe that you could be what you wanna be, that’s your business, if you wanna got to Catholic church, you go[...]. I mean that’s a private matter, so I didn’t get along with the nun over that, I was supporting that too so finally Dad put me to Millside school. (Marcellin, 1-2, p. 14)

Interestingly, it has been argued that the proletarization of French Canadians (and their participation in the labour movement) have changed this situation of conflict between Roman Catholic Francophone and Protestant Anglophones (see Welch, 1995 and Villeneuve, 1979). Here, it is suggested that working-class French Canadians developed
a class identity that brought them closer to English-speaking workers. In Maillardville, it is also interesting to look at class formation to understand how French Canadians claimed acceptance into whiteness. For instance, looking at the Depression and the workers' movement of the time sheds light on the complicated interlocking relations between class and whiteness. In 1932, William Élio Canuel, Secretary of the Workers Council, presented the following letter to the Coquitlam City Council:

We, the Worker's Council also demand that the single workers of this Municipality be given relief at the rate of .40 cents per person per day. That no discrimination be shown as regards [to] sex, color, nationality or age.

(City of Coquitlam, Council Minutes, October 31st, 1932)

Referring to the administration of relief, Canuel asks that “no discrimination be shown as regards [to] sex, color, nationality or age.” At the time, what became known as the Great Depression was hitting the country's working poor. According to Pierre Berton, “at the nadir of the Depression, half the wage earners in Canada were on some form of relief” (1991: 9). Maillardville was no exception, as many French-Canadian families lived in poverty and desperately needed relief assistance (see Stewart, 1956). Looking through the City of Coquitlam Council minutes between 1929 and 1939, I found many instances where people with French-Canadian last names asked for relief. Examining interviewee discourses on poverty and relief shows how social class can shapes one's sense of belonging to whiteness. I have already argued that French Canadians — as a group — were not only Catholic and French-speaking, but also overwhelmingly poor and working class. In this context, their collective working-class status made them less close to whiteness. Here, I argue that the distinction between French Canadianness and whiteness was not only linguistic or religious, it was also class based. Depending on the strategies at hand, French Canadians would distance themselves from whiteness, while trying to gain access to this privileged position of power at other times.
For instance, when William Élio Canuel asks the City Council to end discrimination based on nationality and colour, he seems to specifically refer to the differential status of French Canadians.\textsuperscript{80} This is made even clearer when, a couple of months earlier, the “unemployed workers of Maillardville” asked for their share of relief. In the following letter, the dichotomy — (French Canadian) unemployed workers of Maillardville versus (English) members of the City Council — is quite clear:

Maillardville, B.C.  
Dec. 14\textsuperscript{th} 1931

\textbf{Letter from Unemployed Workers:}

Relief Committee & Councillors,  
District of Coquitlam

Gentlemen:

We the unemployed workers of Maillardville demand work at the same scale of wages as paid the regular employees of this municipality at the rate of five days per week without discrimination to anyone whatsoever.

Or in lieu of this we demand we be given assistance with what work we are now given, as we cannot any longer carry on this way: most of us are now given a starvation wage with nothing towards anything else but food.

Or in lieu of this we demand direct relief so that we may live like Canadians should live and our children given the education the Canadian law demands and enjoy the same privileges your children are enjoying.

We also demand the discharge to take effect immediately of the present foreman on the Water Works relief project as we do not consider him a fit and proper person to handle men on any relief program.

\textsuperscript{80} Interestingly, “color” and “nationality” were not the only factors that could prevent someone from accessing relief funding. In reading through the Council minutes, I found many instances where women were refused relief by Council members who stated that husbands, fathers, and brothers should support them. In the same vein, single men and older people were also often discriminated against when asking for relief.
We remember your promises you have made in the past and demand that you live up to those promises now.

Be it remembered that a good portion of the men now working on relief have lived here for several years, have raised large families and are ratepayers.

Yours truly,
National Unemployed Workers Association.

(Sgd) Art Laverdure, Secretary

While this letter does not mention “colour” or “nationality,” there is no doubt that “we” seems to refer to the French Canadians living in Maillardville, while “you” certainly refers to the “English,” specifically the Relief Committee and City Councillors. Here, the letter’s author demands to “live like Canadians should live and our children be given the education the Canadian law demands and enjoy the same privileges your children are enjoying.” It is suggested that, unlike the City Councillors who, in 1931, were almost all Anglo-Canadian men, the letter drafters do not feel they live like “Canadians.” In other words, according to Secretary Laverdure, they are not living as whites should live. Their children are also not receiving the same education the “English” children of the City officials receive. The fact that the letter mentions that “a good portion of the men now working on relief have lived here for several years, have raised large families, and are ratepayers,” surely makes reference to French Canadians having large families. The letter is signed by Arthur Laverdure, one of the French Canadians interviewed by Cheryl Pierson in the 1970s. In this sense, there is a clear understanding that working-class French Canadians were demanding to be treated as white. In other words, one could argue that French Canadians were trying to gain acceptance into whiteness.

5.4 Conclusion

It is clear that French Canadians in Maillardville, as elsewhere in Canada, occupied a liminal space between whiteness and non-whiteness. As David Theo Goldberg argues,
“[w]hiteness, to put it summarily, stands socially for status and superiority, politically for power and control, and economically for privilege and property […], culturally for self-assertion and arrogance but also and dialectically for anxiety and a crisis in confidence” (2002: 196). In Fraser Mills, French Canadians occupied a working-class position as semi or unskilled workers. Economically and socially, male workers were believed to be inferior to foremen, managers, clerks, and other bosses who happened, for the most part, to be English, Irish, or Scottish Canadians, or even Americans. Politically, the City of Coquitlam Council was also dominated by English-speaking people. Culturally, French-Canadian men and women had to learn English to survive; they were also othered as Roman Catholic. Thus, being French-speaking and Roman Catholics placed them in an inferior position in a society where an Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity was conceived as the norm. Yet, French Canadians also enjoyed a social position that was superior to the one occupied by Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian workers, not to mention Aboriginal peoples, as racialized groups that were clearly conceived as non-white.

In the next Chapter, I will explore in greater detail other axes of social inequality that internally fractured whiteness and French Canadianness in Maillardville: namely gendered and sexual inequalities. Through the narratives of the interviewees, I will examine the role of the Roman Catholic Church in defining gendered roles and promoting heteronormativity in what became known as Maillardville.

81 According to the City Council Minutes available on the Internet at, elections results between 1909 and 1939 suggest that most City Councillors had English, or Irish last names.
VI "GOOD CATHOLIC": Silences, Gender Roles, Heteronormativity, and Moral Regulation

At six years of age, Hercules Lamoureux started his schooling in English at Millside School. Built in 1907 to accommodate the white children of the Fraser Mills' workers, the school operated entirely in English. Lamoureux, who only spoke French at the time, remembers that "to work any place, you had to know English, to write English" (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). After only a year, however, Lamoureux interrupted his English education to attend the Roman Catholic French School, Notre-Dame de Lourdes. Like other French-Canadian girls and boys of his age, Lamoureux had to make his First Communion. The year was 1915 and the only way to complete the preparation for this important Roman Catholic ritual was to go to Maillardville's private French school. After learning his Catechism "all the way through" and memorizing all of his prayers, Lamoureux was able to take part in the "sacred celebration" (Ibid.).

The day of his First Communion, Lamoureux remembers wearing "that holy uniform" that was "all velvet with a beautiful white tie and new shoes." He also recalls that it was "really, a big celebration," where "the whole community used to get together" (Ibid). Lamoureux stayed at Notre-Dame de Lourdes for a couple of years — long enough to complete his First Communion and Confirmation — then he returned to Millside School to complete his elementary schooling in English.

Lamoureux's journey reflects the importance of the Roman Catholic Church in Maillardville. From baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, and Sunday Mass, to weddings, funerals, and religious processions, life in Maillardville between 1909 and 1939 seems to have revolved around the Catholic Church. As discussed earlier, the name itself, "Maillardville," honours the first priest of the parish, Father Edmond Maillard, who administered Notre-Dame de Lourdes Church from 1909 to 1911. Literally, the name means "Maillard-ville," or the city of Maillard. It was also with the help of a Roman
Catholic Priest, Oblate Father Patrick O'Boyle, that a French-Canadian foreman, Théodore Théroux, recruited French-Canadian workers in 1909 and 1910 to work at Fraser Mills. At the time, the company promised French Canadians who moved to British Columbia access to lumber to build a Church, a school, and a presbytery.

In the interviews, many of the participants relate how the French-Canadian men and women worked together to build the religious buildings as soon as they settled in Fraser Mills. In fact, Notre-Dame de Lourdes Church was built so quickly that its first mass was held as early as December 11, 1910 (Stewart, 1956: 49). For René Marcellin, there is no doubt that French Canadians accorded a great deal of importance to religion. As he recalls settling in British Columbia with his family in 1910, he explains how "the Church came first":

They [the Catholic sisters] stayed here. They had a house, and then they [the old Québec people] built a town on top of the ill, it didn't take long because, you know, these old Québec people, I don't know if you're a Catholic or not, but Church came first. You could starve to death, but you still had to build that church, had to have that old priest there. [...] We had to go with holes in our shoes, and we still have to have that collection to build that church (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972).

The religious sisters mentioned here are the Sisters of the Child Jesus, who taught at Notre-Dame de Lourdes School for 43 years (from 1910 to 1953), before being replaced by the Ursulines of Québec after the 1951 school strike. In 1967, the Sisters of the Child Jesus returned to run Notre-Dames de Lourdes School.82

In this chapter, I explore the role of the Catholic Church in Maillardville. More precisely, I take the Church as my entry point to analyze gender roles, heteronormativity, and issues related to sexuality. Referring to the concept of moral regulation, I will probe how the Roman Catholic Church prescribed, defined, and regulated which sexual and

82This information comes from "Le Programme-Souvenir de la Paroisse de Notre-Dame de Lourdes, Maillardville, C.-B., 80ième anniversaire."
gender behaviours and identities were considered "normal," "good," and "desirable" for French-Canadian men and women.

Examining the impact of the Female Refuges Act (FRA) between 1920 and 1945 in Ontario, Joan Sangster defines the term moral regulation as the "processes whereby some behaviours, ideals, and values were marginalized and proscribed while others were legitimized and naturalized" (1996: 241). Through the FRA, women who were perceived to be "out of sexual control" were incarcerated in an attempt to regulate their sexual and moral behaviours (Ibid.: 240). Sangster illustrates how the courts, the police, and the Children's Aid Society, as well as parents and families, all worked simultaneously and collaboratively to watch, condemn, and punish "bad girls."

In the interviews with Cheryl Pierson, the participants do not necessarily refer to a specific provincial legal act, comparable to the FRA in Ontario, which would have regulated their moral and sexual behaviour. However, through their narratives and memories, the participants do refer to different state and extra-state moral regulatory agencies that attempted to govern the minds and bodies of the people of Maillardville. Through a patriarchal and heteronormative discourse, the Church, for instance, defined "appropriate" gender roles and "desirable" (hetero)sexual identity and behaviour. The Church, of course, was not acting alone in the business of producing self-regulated and docile bodies. In the interviews, the narratives surrounding Roman Catholic schooling, gendered work and (un)employment, as well as wedding alliances and celebrations, all shed light on various moral regulatory agencies. These were sometimes informal — the family, the school, and the workplace — as well as formal — the Coquitlam City Council and its Relief Committee provide one key example.83

83 Here, I am conscious that the distinction between formal and informal agencies is often difficult to make. State and extra-state regulatory agencies often overlap.
To understand how certain gendered and sexual behaviours were normalized, I first look at the interviewees' narratives pertaining more specifically to the Church. For instance, I explore how the Roman Catholic school educated boys and girls differently. While girls where taught to become "good" mothers and wives, boys seem to have been schooled to work at the mill, with very little opportunity for post-primary education. In this section, I analyze how the interviewed men and women resisted, negotiated, and accommodated the ordinance and surveillance of the Church. In other words, what did it mean to be a "good Catholic"? How did the participants in the interviews resist and deal with this label? What do their silences tell us about how the interviewees felt about the Church?

In addition to the Catholic Church, the interviewees report that family members also pressured them to conform to gender roles and moral regulations. For instance, the women remember how they were strongly encouraged — by their husbands and other family members — to stay home rather than work for pay outside. Here, ideological dichotomies between the private realm and the public sphere were heavily gendered. Women were associated with the home, while men were linked to the public world. In practice, however, many women did need to work for pay outside the home, since their husband's wages were often inadequate to support the whole family.

Finally, I look at the institution of heterosexual marriage and the celebration of (white) weddings. In the interviews, many of the participants remember their wedding day in great detail. I argue that these wedding celebrations worked as a display of compulsory heterosexuality. Bringing together the "whole community," I argue that weddings were a way to endorse, reinforce, and reiterate heteronormativity. In other words, marriages made monogamous heterosexual relationships the (only) "normal" and "natural" way to live one's life in Maillardville. Looking at marriage alliances, it is also clear that race played an important role in dictating who could love whom, and who could
be intimate with whom. Indeed, the celebration of marriage was both racialized and class-bound.

6.1 (Not) Talking about the church: growing up Catholic

When asked about the Church, Paule-Yvonne Paré remains quiet. On this particular topic, Paré does not want her words to be recorded. Cheryl Pierson asks: "How about the Church at this time? Did you go to the Church and everything regularly?" Paré replies: "I won't talk about this, except if you turn that off," presumably referring to the reel-to-reel tape recorder in the room (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). Paré is not the only one who is reticent to speak when it comes to the Roman Catholic Church. When Pierson asks François D. Leroux how he liked the idea of his children going to the Roman Catholic School in Maillardville, he simply replies: "Well, I had to pay for it" (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). Here, Leroux refers to the monthly fee charged to parents who sent their children to the private school. In a similar fashion, it is not clear what Arthur Laverdure thinks of the role of the Church in Maillardville. In the following exchange, Laverdure thinks of the role of the Church in Maillardville. In the following exchange, Laverdure, too, seems evasive:

**Miss Pierson:** What do you think of the law that the churches put in the community in the beginning?

**Mr. Laverdure:** Well, the Church played quite a role in there, too, you know. They brought up their own communities of sisters, and brought up the school, and they teach them quite a bit. That is, helping them in their schooling, and one thing and another, not in money wise, but to a certain extent... Mind you, me, it's just like anything else, if you want to go to church it's your business, if you don't, it's your business (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972).

While Laverdure acknowledges the role of the Church, he seems reluctant to elaborate. He frames his opinion in terms of personal choice when he says: "if you want to go to the church it's your business, if you don't, it's your business." Like Paré, Leroux and Laverdure, many other interviewees seem hesitant to talk about the Church. Indeed, as I
read through the interviews' transcripts, I found many silences surrounding the topic of
religion, per se.84

Paradoxically, the interviewees are much more voluble when questioned about
their Roman Catholic education at Notre-Dame de Lourdes. From the interviewees'
narratives, it becomes clear that their schooling anecdotes and reminiscences are also
tales of moral regulation. Here, the teaching sisters acted as moral regulatory agents as
they inculcated "proper" gender roles for boys and girls, dictating what behaviours were
considered to be "normal," "good," and "natural." In Notre-Dame de Lourdes, it seems
clear that girls were taught to become homemakers, while boys were oriented to work at
the mill.

For instance, Marie-Rosa Dicaire remembers that her schooling years at Notre-
Dame de Lourdes included "so many hours of sewing," and that the "nuns would keep
the girls more working than teaching" (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). Dicaire
reports going to school there for four years, from 1910 to 1914. She left school in grade
five to help her family and work as a housekeeper (see Chapter five). However, she
feels that after grade five, "you didn't know nothing" (Ibid). When Pierson asks what
"were they [the religious sisters] teaching you in grade five?" Dicaire's answer appears
somewhat categorical:

But, that's what I'm telling you, instead of teaching you something useful, you
know, they make you work, you see. And you should come home and your
mother is waiting for you to make all the work again. And so, my mother was
not a healthy woman, her, and then, what can you do? You're born just to
work. That's what I figured me (Ibid).

But what exactly were the girls taught at Notre-Dame de Lourdes? In the
following excerpt, Dicaire discusses what she remembers in greater detail:

84 It is difficult to explain why the interviewees are reluctant to talk about the Church. It appears
likely that some are critical of the role of the Church in Maillardville. For instance, many
interviewees question Church policies, such as charging (expensive) school fees to impoverished
workers and their families. Others who were active in the 1931 strike openly question the priest
telling them to abandon all union activities.
Cheryl Pierson: You were talking about writing on a board on your laps, what else do you remember about that school?

Marie-Rosa Dicaire: Well, like you say, they show you A, B, C, you know. But the trouble was that instead of teaching you like they teach today, the nuns they would keep the girls more working than teaching. We had to buy, first of all, small piece of very nice linen and a needle and thread, and you got to start to make a hankie and if it's not right, well, you got to tear it up until you got it properly made. They came from France, those nuns, and they were very strict. [...] And then, after that they had to show you how to crochet. It was five threads, you know. And the nuns, they had a kind of a board, but all, just like little nails. And they would make fine lace, you know. It was pretty what they were making. They tried to teach me, but I didn’t want to. But they made me. I was good enough. It was very easy to learn. But there was more work than teaching, you know what I mean. The most things they should have teach, they teach you: read French, write it, and everything like that, but no, you had to do so many hours for sewing (Ibid.)

While Dicaire is one of the few female interviewees who reports more “working” than “teaching” in school, her narrative is in accordance with other accounts of Catholic schooling during the first half of the twentieth century. For instance, Sherene Razack notes that up to the 1960s, Québec’s écoles ménagères aimed to educate girls in preparation for marriage and motherhood (1991). Through “domestic science,” girls were trained to become ideal wives and mothers. In this sense, it makes sense that girls in Maillardville would have been taught to sew and crochet — both skills attributed to being a “good homemaker”.

A newspaper article in The Coquitlam Star dated May, 8, 1912 also echoes Dicaire’s narrative. In it, an anonymous author describes the streets and buildings that constituted the “French settlement” at Fraser Mills. Interestingly, the second half of the 600-word piece is spent describing in detail a visit to Notre-Dame de Lourdes School. Here, the writer explains what the children, and more particularly the girls, were learning:

> The Roman Catholic Church (still in a rough shell in wood) and the parsonage of Father de Wilde are at the top of one of the side streets. Behind these, stands the convent of the Sisters of the Child Jesus. One is kindly allowed to visit the school. The portress, wearing the quaint old dress

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85 Interestingly, I found this article while I was looking through the photo albums at Notre-Dame de Lourdes Church. Neatly clipped besides the old photos of the Church, it is not clear why someone (perhaps a sister or a priest) chose to keep it.
of the mediaeval order, opens the door and welcomes the visitor to a Spartan side room which is the Sister’s sitting room. She fetches a teaching Sister who is pleased to show the sewing class. The muddy boots of the children, says the Sister, have made havoc of the floor. Upstairs are some 25 to 30 girls in a well lighted room, busy sewing under the supervision of a young, brown eyed Sister. They are old fashioned children, who rise politely when visitors come. The work is crochet with white cotton and wool, knitting of stockings, small embroideries, such as collars, and one older girl is busy lace making, with pillow and bobbins. They gave us a little singing. Three times a week, the girls put in an extra hour to take their sewing lesson. This is all the time devoted to that work. The rest of the school is closed, the boys having gone home. Reading, writing, and arithmetic, English language, are the subjects chiefly taught, and half an hour a day singing, the Mother Superior says. Six girls learn to play the piano and religious teaching is kept well to the fore.

This romanticized, and even exoticised, depiction of Notre-Dame de Lourdes School illustrates how French-Canadian girls received a specific gendered education — oriented towards domestic chores and skills. Indeed, the boys went home while the girls “put an extra hour to take their sewing lesson.” Interestingly, this portrayal of the school also presents the Roman Catholic convent, and by association French Canadians themselves, as being temporally different, as occupying what McClintock calls an “anachronistic space” (1995). Studying colonialism in the late Victorian era, McClintock defines the trope of the “anachronistic space” in these terms:

According to this trope, colonized people — like women and the working class in the metropolis — do not inhabit history proper but exist in a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency — the living embodiment of the archaic ‘primitive’ (30).

While the representation of the convent is rather positive, there is no doubt the newspaper reporter presents the religious institution as being temporally different. Expressions such as “the quaint old dress of the mediaeval order,” as well as characterizing the nuns and the children as “old fashioned,” certainly situate the convent in an “anachronistic space.” As I have discussed earlier, French Canadians, working-class for the most part and Catholic, were “othered” and constructed as “racially
different" by Anglo-Canadian elites. In this context, it makes sense that they would also be portrayed as a class of people living in the “past.”

The article also mentions how “religious teaching is kept well to the fore” at Notre-Dame de Lourdes School. From the interviews, there is no doubt that the participants would agree with this statement. In fact, many of them remember how they needed to learn their Catechism and know the answers to all the questions by heart for their First Communion. As Ida Beaudoin Proulx explains, “Oh well, it wasn’t like it is today. We had a Catechism, oh, I guess about an inch thick. And we had to know every question from the beginning to end.” She adds: “Today, as long as they know how to make the sign of the cross, I think they let them go” (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). Beaudoin Proulx remembers making her First Communion in 1910. She was part of the first cohort of French-Canadian children to participate in this religious ceremony at Fraser Mills. She also remembers that she wore a “white dress with a veil” (Ibid.).

Taken in 1922, the photograph below illustrates schoolgirls in Maillarville — wearing white dresses and white veils — as well as schoolboys on the day of their First Communion. The priest in the middle is Father Delestre, who administered the parish from 1916 to 1929. The photo is kept at the Notre-Dame de Lourdes Church. I found it extremely evocative of the contested and dynamic relations between gender and religion. Here, gendered practices and expectations associated with “boyhood” and “girlhood” are definitely inscribed in the children’s ceremonial clothing.
Illustration 6.1. "Growing up Catholic": Boys and Girls with Father Delestré at their First Communion Ceremony in 1922

For instance, the fact that the girls' outfits resemble wedding dresses is not a coincidence. White dresses and veils can be seen as markers/indicators of what is (almost inevitably) coming next — a future marriage to a man (unless one chooses to become a religious sister, an act which was also seen as a marriage with God). The spatial arrangement of the subjects — the children and the priest — reveals much about the prevalence of religion in Maillardville. Father Delestré sits in the middle of the first row, arms crossed, appearing front and centre in the photograph, clearly indicating his predominant social position as a religious and community leader. Interestingly, the photo also reflects the myth of the frontier discussed in Chapter Four. Indeed, as the setting of the staged photograph suggests, while French Canadians are seen as settling in an "empty land" (illustrated by the muddy soil and the forest in the background), they are also bringing with them "civilization" in the form of Roman Catholicism.
Here, it is important to note that the prevalence of the Catholic religion in Maillardville did not go unquestioned. Just as the First Communion photograph presents the priest as an important community leader, there is no doubt that the moral authority of the Church was challenged and resisted by Maillardville’s residents. Much like Dicaire and Beaudoin Proulx, who reminisce about their religious education, other interviewees recall how they, or their parents, took action and chose non-religious, public schooling for their children. For instance, René Marcellin recollects that there was too much “Church stuff” when he attended the convent. For him, there was too much religious teaching and not enough “schooling.” “That’s the trouble with a Catholic school, you don’t get a straight hour of school. Church came first, schooling came next. I think that’s why my dad moved me over [to the public school],” he explains to Pierson (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). Arthur Laverdure expresses similar concerns when he says that he put his children in public school because there was “too much Catechism and not enough of the other stuff” (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). In these examples, changing school could be interpreted as a way to contest and refuse the religious teaching of the Catholic Church.

Here, Marcellin and Laverdure’s stories illustrate that Maillardville’s residents could act as subjects with agency, and refuse to abide by the rule of the Church. As Deborah Brock explains, “the making and meaning of moral regulation is always contested, struggled over, and re-fashioned” (2003: XXVII). In other words, the people targeted by moral regulations should not be understood as passive “victims,” oppressed by, and obedient to the dictates of moralizing agencies. Some Catholic French-Canadian interviewees were critical of the predominance of religious education, while others took action to avoid what they found to be inadequate schooling.

For others, sending their children to the public schools was a financial decision. In British Columbia, denominational schools were not funded by the state (Barman,
In Maillardville, this meant that the overwhelming majority of poor working-class parents had to pay for the Catholic education of their children. In the interviews, many participants explain how school fees were often difficult to afford. For instance, Léona Hammond says that when her children went to school in the 1930s, she had to pay a monthly fee of $1.50 per child. She remembers having to pay the fee even during the summer holidays:

It cost me a dollar fifty a month. But then we had to pay for the holidays. We had to pay our dollar fifty a month. If we didn't pay our dollar fifty a month, you see, the priest would say "we can't take them back in school." Cause I went to see the priest that one time and I said "Well, why should I pay when they're at home?" and he told me I had to help the others that were at such big families you know, and they couldn't afford to pay, so you have to help. Cause I had only two [children] then, you see?

It appears quite clear that the priest could exercise his moral and religious power when it came to the schooling of the parishioners' children. In fact, it seems that the priest had the authority to accept or refuse children's entry into the school. In the end, Hammond managed to send her children to Notre-Dame de Lourdes School and she found that the institution had "good nuns" who were "good teachers." When asked by Pierson if the French Canadians supported the private Catholic school from the "beginning," Hammond answers: "Well, some people could pay and others didn't have enough to pay [for the Catholic school]."

Marie Lizée was one of the parents who could not afford Catholic schooling during the Depression. When she tried to send only three of her five school-aged children to Notre-Dame de Lourdes School, the priest used his authoritative power. He refused Lizée's children in his school arguing that it was all or nothing; Lizée had to send all of her children to the private institution (and pay for them all), or none of them could attend the Catholic school. In the following excerpt, Lizée explains what happened:

I didn't have no money to send my kids to the [Catholic] school. I had to pay a fee, so I ask him [the priest] if I could send my three oldest ones. Incidentally, they're Episcopalian, they made their confirmation, they know all their Catechism,
their prayers. But the little ones, the two other little ones, can I send them over there [to the public school]? Nope! He wanted them all, or none at all. So I say, "Well, I'm sorry, Father." He says to me, "It's okay, you don't have to pay. It'll be a debt you pay later on." I didn't know, I didn't see with all the "no work" and the Depression. I didn't see when I could've paid, and I didn't want to contract a debt against the Church, so I sent all my kids to the public school, and I got mad at him, and I told him off! Of course not like that. I asked forgiveness after, but I like to tell I told him if he takes his collar and his dress off, I'd give him a licking! I would've too! I'm quite a temper.

Here, Lizée "decided" not to send any of her children to the Catholic school. Unlike Hammond, who seems to have been able to afford that option, Lizée could not come up with the tuition fees. Within these unequal relationships of power — where the priest dictates who can and cannot attend his school — it seems quite clear that the parents' social class impacted the schooling experience of their children.

In the end, however, whether the children attended Notre-Dame de Lourdes School, or Fraser Mills School did not change the fact that most interviewees did not go to school for a very long period of time. The great majority of the participants did not pursue formal education beyond the eighth grade. Ralph Duplin, for instance, remembers going to school until grade nine (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). At seventeen, he started to work at the mill. Alfred Sauvé tells a similar story. He started working at Fraser Mills in September 1912, just before his fiftieth birthday. In the following exchange with Pierson, he laughs as he explains how little formal schooling he has:

Miss Pierson: Did you ever have the chance to get any schooling?

Mr. Sauvé: Over here, no... not there.

Miss Pierson: How about back East?

Mr. Sauvé: Not very long either. That's the Canadian rule.

Miss Pierson: What do you mean?

Mr. Sauvé: Soon we're able to work, we want to go to work. That was the trouble. (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972)
Here, Sauvé seems to refer to the fact that children were often called upon to help their parents as soon as they were old enough to work. Interestingly, he also mentions that it is the “Canadian rule,” making it clear that leaving school early was the “norm.”

Like Sauvé, Léo Hammond started to work at Fraser Mills when he was 14 years old. When Pierson asks if it was usual to drop out of school so early, he replies: “Yes, yes, that’s what they [the French Canadians] used to do, because the people were so poor that when they had a large, big enough family, then when the children didn’t want to go to school, well, they had to go to work to help” (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972).

Here, Hammond suggests that the children went to work when they did not want to go to school. However, given that most of Maillardville youth did not pursue schooling beyond the elementary years before the 1940s (see Stewart, 1956: 70), it seems that French-Canadian children were indeed “schooled for inequality.” I borrow this expression from Jean Barman (2003). Although she applies the term “schooled for inequality” to refer to the education of First Nations children and the terrible legacy of Canada’s residential schools, I argue that this expression could, to a much lesser degree, refer to the schooling of French-Canadian pupils in Maillardville (and working-class children in general).

There is little doubt that Maillardville’s boys were not schooled to become lawyers, doctors, or university professors; in school, they were not taught to become the

[86] The fact that children and youth worked for wages is not unique to Maillardville. Children labour is an important part of working class families’ histories in Canada and elsewhere. Bettina Bradbury, for instance, illustrates how children’s wages helped support families at the end of the nineteenth century in Montreal in Working Families, Age Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal (1993).

[87] It is not clear if Sauvé uses the term “Canadian” to refer to “French Canadians.” Up until the late 1860s, the appellation “les Canadiens” designated French-speaking people living in Canada. However, with the massive arrivals of “British Americans” from the United States after the American Revolution (1775-1882), and with Confederation in 1867, the expression “Canadians” came to designate all people of British descent living in Canada. At the same time, “les Canadiens,” now forming a minority, became known for their difference as “French Canadians” (see Juteau, 1999: 47-48). In the interviews, I have noticed that some participants still refer to French Canadians solely as “Canadians.”
future "leaders" of society. It was expected that the girls would become busy housewives as the wives of factory workers, and not the leisured wives of society's decision makers. Indeed, as John Ray Stewart explains, there was no high school in Coquitlam until 1938. For the boys, leaving school meant taking a job at Fraser Mills (or in some other plant). On the other hand, unmarried girls could help at home with the domestic chores, or sometimes work as housekeepers in other people's houses before getting married.

In brief, while many participants seemed reticent to talk about religion per se, their narratives around Catholic schooling shed light on the moral regulatory practices and powers of the Church. Obviously, the school system encouraged the status quo by enforcing and perpetuating working-class positions and distinct gender roles. Boys were to become factory workers, and girls the wives of the factory workers. While girls learned how to perform domestic chores (like mending and sewing) in school, most boys (and girls) simply did not attend (the right) school long enough to gain access to liberal and white collar professions. Many interviewees questioned the material taught in class, and some criticised the fact that there was too much "religious teaching" and not enough "formal learning." As a way to resist and contest this religious teaching, some parents sent their children to the public school. Others simply could not afford the tuition fees of the private Catholic school, and had to send their children to public school.

In the next section, I explore how the gender roles and norms promoted by the Catholic school translated into the adult life of the participants. How did working-class men and women negotiate, accommodate, and resist the gender ideology that located women in the home while defining men as the sole breadwinners?

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88 I will address gender roles and women's work in greater detail in the next section of this chapter.
6.2 When women kept house and men worked at the mill: gender roles and expectations

Sister Marie Paule was a member of the Order of the Sisters of the Child Jesus, who taught at Notre-Dame de Lourdes School from 1919 to 1923, and then again from 1927 until 1939. In her interview with Pierson, Sister Marie Paule acknowledges she knows little about women's participation in the labour market. According to her, there was no (paid) "work" for women "in those days" in Maillardville (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). Later in the interview, however, she modifies her propos. She concludes that work opportunities might have indeed varied according to a woman's marital status. Here, she specifies that a "young girl might find work here and there, but not the married ladies." In this statement, Sister Marie Paule reiterates the gender ideology at work in British Columbia (and Canada) prior to the Second World War.

Indeed, as Gillian Creese notes, "[a]fter marriage women were not expected to work in the labour market, and if they did, low wages were justified in terms of married women's dependence on their husbands." (1992: 369). In other words, employers understood that married women were first and foremost "housewives," as opposed to "breadwinners." If married women were to work, their sole salary was not meant to make them and their children financially independent. Male workers were the ones receiving a "family wage," which was supposed to cover the needs of the whole family.89

In Québec, during the first half of the twentieth century, it is also well documented that women were expected to stay at home once they married (see for instance, Baillargeon, 1991: 73-97). The Catholic Church argued that women should not only stay at home (and take care of all the domestic chores), but they should also procreate, raise, and educate (many) children. Having children was seen as a duty, as Andrée Lévesque

explains: “pour l’Église, la maternité est plus qu’une fonction naturelle, un devoir assumé, c’est aussi une mission qui légitime l’union du couple. Le but de la vie commune d’un couple étant la reproduction, rien ne doit l’entraver et tout doit tendre à la favoriser” (Lévesque, 1989: 30). During the 1920s and the 1930s, the Québec Catholic Church also found allies in the medical field, as doctors supported pro-natalist priests and told women that having and raising children (within the sacred union of marriage) was not only “natural” and “normal,” but also beneficial to their physical health (Ibid: 30-31).

On a political level, promoting high birth rates for French-Canadian babies in Québec was also part of a eugenic and nationalist project to “protect” the survival of the French-Canadian “race” (Ibid., 32). This incitement to procreate, often called “la revanche des berceaux,” or the revenge of the cradle, was promoted by nationalist politicians, priests, and intellectuals who saw French-Canadian immigration to the United States, as well as mixed marriages with non-French Canadians, as two dangerous elements that could “weaken” the weight of the francophone population within English Protestant Canada (see, for instance, Razack, 1991 and Delisle, 1993). In this context, it is not surprising that nationalistic discourses would portray women as the reproducers and bearers of the nation/race, biologically and culturally. Through maternity and education, women were responsible for the collective future of the nation, as they were expected to transmit the French language and the Catholic religion to French-Canadian boys and girls. However, as Diane Lamoureux observes, if French-Canadian women, or more specifically mothers, were central figures in the reproduction of the nation, one should not conclude that a Québécois matriarchate existed (2001: 100). Up until 1964, the Québec Civil Code endorsed the idea that married women were to be subservient to their husbands (Ibid, 140).
In the interviews, the participants also refer to specific gender roles and expectations related to labour issues. The gender ideology associating women with the private and domestic sphere, and men with the public and outside world, did impact the interviewees' lives and subjectivities. In fact, the interviewees remember how they challenged, accommodated, and resisted gender norms. Here, it is important to note that men and women were affected differently by gender ideologies, depending on their social status. Poorer people, for instance, were scrutinized by city workers — and expected to conform to specific gender norms — when they asked for governmental relief during the Depression.\(^{90}\) In the same vein, working-class women, who worked for pay in the labour market, faced pressure to stay at home.

Léona Hammond (born Désormeaux), for instance, remembers leaving school in 1922 when she was 12 years old. She had to help at home. She then spent a few years working for other women, including Mrs. Allard, who ran a boarding house. When asked what kind of work she was doing, Hammond replies: “Just house work. Helping. That was about it, but you always had to have a uniform.” In 1925, Hammond even worked at the Royal City Cannery in New Westminster for a month and a half before getting married. “We were doing tomatoes,” she explains, “it was awful.” On November 23, 1926, at 16 years old, Léona Hammond married 22-year-old Léo Hammond, who had been working in Fraser Mills for eight years. Once married, she stopped working for pay outside the home. When Pierson asks her to talk about the “French-Canadian women’s role in Maillardville,” she provides an answer that reflects the gender ideology of the time. In the following excerpt, she explains what women did in Maillardville:

\(^{90}\) For instance, according to the minutes of the Coquitlam City Councils between 1930 and 1939, single women who asked for relief had to prove that they had no brother, father, or husband who supported them, thus assuming women’s dependence on a male breadwinner.
Well, we (the women) [would] look after our family, you know, prepare our meals and we'd entertain, you know? Sometimes we'd go and visit one, or other one, you know, or our friends would come in the afternoon. We'd have our cup of tea and they'd go back home for their supper. But we always made sure that at four o'clock everybody would go home to prepare dinner, see? For their husband, and at night, sometimes, we'd go visiting too, but we were always at home, we were always with our family, they were very scarce a man that would come home and the wife wouldn't be there for their dinner, very scarce, you know, but there was some.

Here, Léona Hammond presents Maillardville's women as (almost) “perfect” wives and mothers who were “always with their family” and would go home at four o'clock to prepare dinner. Interestingly, she acknowledges that “some” men would come home and “the wife wouldn't be there for their dinner.” However, a wifeless home with an empty table was “very scarce.”

Within Léona Hammond's narrative, it is suggested that women kept an eye on each other to ensure that gender norms were respected. Indeed, when she says that “we always made sure that at four o'clock, everybody would go home,” she can be seen as referring to surveillance practices between women: it is within the peer group that women disciplined and regulated each other. The concept of disciplinary power developed by Foucault (1975; 139) is interesting to understand how gender norms infiltrate complex and multiple relations of power. Foucault argues that power comes from everywhere, and is fluid and impalpable. I agree with his notion of disciplinary power, where people come to be self-regulated and self-disciplined, as they internalize normalizing practices. However, I am also in agreement with Joan Sangster when she writes that “[c]oncentrating on the discourses that define and construct moral regulation, however, should not obscure the political economy and social relations framing them” (1996:244). Consequently, when Sangster studies the Female Refuges Act, she argues that “we need to know which social groups promoted, used, and endorsed this form of regulation, why, and how their consent was secured” (Ibid: 244). In the case of
Maillardville (as well as Canada in general) a hegemonic gender ideology — the idea that women had to stay home, and men had to work outside the home — was “promoted, used, and endorsed” by different regulatory agents.

For one thing, the participants often mention how the Church was strongly opposed to women entering the labour market. As Léo Canuel explains, the idea “that women’s place was in the home was secluded [sic] by much of the leaders. Especially the Church would say that the women’s place is in the home.” However, throughout the interviews, the participants do not mention exactly how the “Church” operated to oppose women’s working for pay before the Second World War. I mentioned earlier that the Catholic Church, via its schools, did teach girls how to do domestic chores and prepared boys to work at the mill. However, whether women, as adults, were discouraged by the Church from working outside the home is more difficult to assess, given the material currently available. The literature from Québec reports that priests, themselves, would not only prescribe women’s domesticity in their mass sermons, but they would also lecture married women individually through the Catholic ritual of the confessional (see Lévesque, 1991). Unfortunately, the interviews do not offer much information on the tactics used by the Church, but I suspect that priests must have scrutinized working-class women in Maillardville as well.

While the participants do not explain in detail how the Church, as well as its agents — the priests and the nuns — opposed women’s work for pay in the public sphere, many women, on the other hand, do remember how family members (often husbands, but also children, and parents) pressured them to stay home. For instance,  

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91 Paradoxically, entering religious life has also been a way for women to find an alternative to marriage and motherhood. In Taking the veil,” Martha Danylewycz shows how many women chose sisterhood to access career opportunities and work that were otherwise unavailable to married wives and mothers (1999).

92 As discussed earlier, my access to Notre-Dame de Lourdes’ historical documents was severely controlled and limited.
Hélène Paré remembers that she would have liked to study to be a nurse. Instead, she left school at 14 years old to help her mother at home. She explains that she was the only girl in the family, and she had “to do the hard work all the time.” Talking to Pierson, she says: “Well, I’m telling you when there are three-four men and you have four-three meals a day, and they’re good meals, [you have to] wash by hand and scrub floors, and do the rest, you’ve got lots to do.” Here, when Paré says “I was the only girl,” she makes it clear that girls, not boys, were expected to stay home and perform the domestic chores. “I was the only girl” summarizes the gender ideology of the time.

While mothers could force their daughters to stay home, there is no doubt that other family members also played a crucial role. The two following examples take place slightly after the time period I have focused on, as they relate to the Second World War, but I believe they illustrate how husbands pressured their wives to stay home. For instance, Paule Yvone Paré remembers that she would have liked to work in real estate when the “men were going [to the war], and the factories and industries were working double and three shifts, so they needed help.” She explains, “I could have gone to work, but I didn’t. My daughter said, ‘You go to work, I’m gonna go stay with grandma.’ My husband said, ‘If you go to work, I’ll get a housekeeper.’” In this context, where her daughter and husband disapproved of her working ambition, Paule Yvone Paré stayed home.

Léona Hammond tells a similar story. She remembers that she wanted to work in a factory. Her husband thought differently, and threatened to leave his job at the mill if she did. She explains what happened in these words:

When they opened the new kind of treatment for woman down here during the war, I wanted to go to work. I thought, well, that would be something, you know, to help because we wanted to get repair for our home and all that and he [her husband] says to me “No, if you want to go to work, I’m gonna quit.” See? So I stayed home.
For Paul Yvonne Paré and Léona Hammond, the desire to work coincided with the increasing employment of women during the Second World War. These two married women however, ended up staying home, responding to family pressures, and more specifically to their husband's blackmail and threats.

When Pierson asks Hammond why the women in Maillardville mostly stayed home, her response is quite evocative of the pressures women endured when they wanted to work for pay. She replies: "Well, because of the family, you know. The man figured, well, you had to do with your husband's wages. They figured well, you know, you got married and you must do with what you have." Here, constructing men as the sole breadwinners was completely in line with the patriarchal structure of the nuclear family (and the patriarchal structure of the society). The ideology defining women as housewives, depending on their husband's salary, was not without consequences in terms of gender inequality, however. Within this patriarchal system, it must have been extremely difficult for women to be economically independent, live on their own, cohabit with a lesbian lover, or leave an abusive relationship, for instance. In other words, I agree with Gillian Creese when she writes that "support for a male 'family wage' reinforced male domination over wives and children within the family," and "maintained male dominance in the labour market." (1992: 382). In many cases, however, the patriarchal ideology of the male "family wage" did not prevent women from entering the labour market. For many working-class families of the time, wives and daughters had to work because the sole salary of the "male breadwinner" was not sufficient to make ends meet (see, for instance, Parr, 1990, Sangster, 1995 and Bradbury, 1993).

In the case of Maillardville, for instance, some working-class women did break gender rules as they entered the labour market after they married. For instance, Hélène Paré opened a hairdressing operation in her home in 1930 (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972), while Marie Lizée, who had seven children, worked at the Royal City
Cannery when her husband was on relief during the Depression (Interview with Cheryl Pierson, 1972). Overall, however, most of the married women interviewed did not work for pay on a regular basis after they married. Women who lost their husbands, on the other hand, might have had to enter the labour market to overcome poverty. Paul Yvonne Paré, for instance, recalls that in the mid-1920s her widowed mother, Fernande Abraham, worked in canneries during the summer seasons. Abraham then moved to Vancouver in 1925 to work in the laundry business, before she remarried and returned to Maillardville in 1926.

The complicated trajectory of women as paid workers is not surprising. While the women interviewed faced tremendous pressures to stay home during their married life, their work inside the home also seemed crucial to the survival of the family. In fact, according to the interviews, it seems that married women performed house work that was indispensable to making ends meet. For instance, Hélène Paré remembers that, as a housewife, there was much to do all the time. Answering questions about what she did with her time in the 1920s and 1930s, she laughs when she says: “What did I do when you are as poor as I was? At home, there was lots to do, I mean, I’d sew, and do my own sewing and do garden, and I’d do everything.” Later in the interview, she explains that she would bake her own bread, make her own soup base, can “lots of fruits,” and raise chickens, which she also canned. She concludes: “We’d make do.”

Exploring the survival work practices of working-class families in Montréal, Québec at the end of the nineteenth century, Bettina Bradbury concludes that “[m]ost married women did not work formally for pay for long periods during their married life precisely because of their importance as domestic labourers and wage-managers at home.” (1993: 170). I find that Bradbury’s observation applies to Maillardville wives’ work prior to the Second World War. Unlike French-Canadian married women and girls who worked in New England’s manufacturing textile towns in the early
twentieth century, Maillardville’s women did not find full-time employment at the Canadian Western Lumber Company in Fraser Mills, the town’s main employer. Instead, they combined multiple work strategies, paid and unpaid, formal and informal, to support their families — from working in the canneries in the summers, to starting hairdressing practices at home and having boarders; from raising chickens to cultivating a garden and sewing clothes. In this sense, I agree with Bradbury when she argues that the work of wives and mothers has to be reconceptualised outside the public/private dichotomies of paid versus unpaid work. In the introduction to her chapter entitled “Managing and Stretching Wages: the Work of Wives,” Bradbury writes:

We cannot understand that work [the work of mothers and wives] by using the fixed categories and dichotomies developed to theorize women’s work in contemporary capitalist society. Such work extended beyond the child-bearing and child-rearing, cleaning, tension management, washing, cooking, and shopping and budgeting that characterize the late twentieth-century housewife’s role. Production, reproduction, consumption, and exchange intermeshed. Bearing and rearing children; producing or buying food and clothing; cleaning, cooking, and caring not only for the young but for the sick and elderly; taking in work, going out to work, all of these were part of a housewife’s job of making ends meet. Paid forms of work, only some of which were wage labour, were interwoven with housework and other domestic labour. Revenue-generating and revenue-saving often took place outside the formal labour market. The economy within which these women produced, consumed, and purchased had no clear lines demarcating what economists would today label formal and informal sectors. (Ibid.: 153)

In Maillardville, while married mothers were engaging in all kinds of work, paid and unpaid, unmarried daughters living at home also helped their families prior to marriage. Prior to the Second World War, the female interviewees revealed that they mainly worked as nurses, cannery workers, and to a lesser extent, store clerks, before getting married. According to the majority of the participants, domestic work was certainly the most widespread form of employment for unmarried young women. For Léo Canuel, it is quite simple: "Jobs were not available for woman in any kind, except to do

94 According to the interviews, no women were hired in Fraser Mills until the Second World War.
the work of another one that had a lot more money." Here, Canuel offers an interesting
class analysis, making it clear that gendered work opportunities varied according to
one’s social class. Overall, however, the nature of the work performed by women for pay
in Maillardville was similar to the housework they did at home for free. In other words,
ideological representations of (white) femininity and masculinity were reflected in the
kind of work available to Maillardville’s women and men. As Creese shows, female
labourers in British Columbia were primarily seen as wives and mothers, and their “paid
labour often involved skills related to domestic labour.” (1992: 366) In Vancouver, by
1931, 96 per cent of working women were employed in domestic and personal service,
in trade and finance, in the professional sector, or in manufacturing and transportation.
Within these sectors of activity women earned between one half and two-thirds of what
men earned, and they were confined to what were considered “women’s jobs”: as
domestic servants, employees in boarding house, hotels and restaurants, dressmakers,
laundresses, and hairdressers, or secretaries, nurses and teachers, as well as workers
in food processing and textile factories or telephone operators (Ibid.: 366). In this sense,
it is not surprising Maillardville’s unmarried women also occupied these realms of paid
work before they married.

To summarize, these gender and moral ideologies, that defined women’s place in
the home and constructed men as sole breadwinners, did impact women’s and men’s
experiences at home and in the workplace. While the Catholic Church acted as a strong
supporter of women’s domesticity, there is no doubt that other regulatory forces — such
as female friends, family members, and husbands, in particular — also condemned
women’s work outside the home. When women did work for wages, they occupied low-
paid jobs, where the nature of their work was similar to what they did at home. In the
end, however, French-Canadian women did engage in all kinds of paid and unpaid work,
blurring the traditional distinction between formal and informal sectors of employment.
Interestingly, perhaps one of the most important social institutions permitting and supporting the gender division of labour in Maillardville was (heterosexual) marriage. It is through these hetero unions that heterosexuality was presented as the norm, and wedding celebrations were indeed celebrations of this compulsory norm. Looking at the narratives of the interviewees pertaining to (hetero) wedding celebrations and marriage unions, I will explore in the next section how heterosexuality was not only normalized, but also classed and racialized.

6.3 “That was the entertainment!”: celebrating weddings and heteronormativity

The train that carried the French Canadians was known as the "Honeymoon Special," five couples having been married the night before leaving Quebec. The traditional large Quebec families were aboard the train, one containing twelve children, and two others ten apiece.

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Indeed, the “Honeymoon Special” arrived in Fraser Mills on May 28th, 1910. Carrying 166 French-speaking Canadians, comprising 49 families, the train also had onboard five “just married” French-Canadian couples. These newly-weds, along with the other women, children and men, formed the second group of French Canadians to settle in Fraser Mills where the men would work in the mill of the company town. In many ways, I found it not surprising that a train carrying French Canadians onboard would be called the “Honeymoon Special.” Indeed, it seems that wedding celebrations in Maillardville played a key role in the social life of the participants. At the time of the interviews, for example, all the interviewees were married or had been married at some point in their lives (except for Catholic Sister Marie Paule). Throughout the interviews, many narrate their wedding celebrations in detail, explaining that the whole town was invited. Here, it is clear that the public celebration of weddings acted as a conspicuous display of
compulsory heterosexuality, constructing heterosexual companionship as the “normal” and “natural” thing to engage in.

To understand the celebration of marriages in Maillardville, I find the concept of “heteronormativity” extremely useful. According to Celia Kitzinger, the term is used to describe socio-legal, organizational, and interpersonal practices that derive from and reinforce a set of taken-for-granted presumptions related to sex and gender (2005: 478). More precisely, Kitzinger writes that heteronormative practices include:

“[P]resumptions that there are only two sexes; that it is “normal” or “natural” for people of different sexes to be attracted to one another; that these attractions may be publicly displayed and celebrated; that social institutions such as marriage and family are appropriately organized around different-sex pairings; that same-sex couples are (if not “deviant”) a “variation on” or an “alternative to” the heterosexual couple. Heteronormativity refers, in sum, to the myriad ways in which heterosexuality is produced as a natural, unproblematic, taken-for-granted, ordinary phenomenon (Ibid.: 478)

Given this definition of heteronormativity, I also agree with Jonathan Katz when he claims that “(b)y not studying the heterosexual word, ideas, and social system, analysts of sex, gay and straight, continue to privilege the “normal” and “natural” at the expense of the “abnormal” and “unnatural” (178), in other words, leaving the heterosexual unquestioned reiterates and reinforces its dominance. In this context, exploring the glorification of heterosexual marriages may allows us to deconstruct the heterosexual norm.

In her article entitled “Heterosexuality goes public: The postwar honeymoon,” Karen Dubinsky presents the hetero honeymoon as a window for people “to make their entry into officially sanctioned public sexuality” (1999: 215). In Maillardville, the public celebrations of marriages played a similar role. In fact, when the participants remember their weddings, they are also telling stories of public recognition of their “normality” because of their heterosexual partnerships. On this topic, the memories of Léona Hammond referring to her participation in a double wedding are quite telling.
Léona was married to Léo Hammond on November 23, 1926. On that same day, Léo's sister also married. Léona remembers that this was the first “double wedding” in Maillardville. As she tells the story of her double wedding, her narrative illustrates the involvement of the community:

It was the biggest wedding ever had, like there were 800 people at the hall. There was only one hall those days, you know, Mr. Tremblay’s. We had a big orchestra and we danced till 5 o'clock in the morning. We got married in the morning at 9 o'clock, you know, and High Mass and there were so many people that they could not fit in the church. And then they'd have our breakfast with the priest who comes, he's the one who gives us the toast and then, we had a big dinner.

Here, not only there were “800 people” to celebrate the marriage, but the priest was also present to sanction the union. Later in the interview, Léona Hammond discusses leisure and social activities in Maillardville. Interestingly, weddings come up as an important source of entertainment, making it clear that the celebration of what may appear as a “private” union between two people was, in fact, a public mass spectacle “to watch and enjoy.” In the following exchange with Pierson, Léona Hammond presents weddings as entertainment:

Miss Pierson: Well in those early days, when you just got married, what did you do for entertainment?

Mrs. Hammond: We use to have house parties, things like that, and they started to have dances at the hall. One, you know, like for New Year’s Eve and Halloween, things like that, you know. But, if there was a wedding, well, you know, you were all there. That was the entertainment, or else we'd take the street car on Saturday [...]

Like Léona Hammond, Marie-Rosa Dicaire also remembers that everyone was present if there was a wedding in Maillardville. Interestingly, Dicaire also mentions that not everyone had access to big weddings. Indeed, it is very likely that not all couples had the financial resources to organize “des grosses noces.” Here, Dicaire introduces the idea that weddings also reflected one’s social class and status. Although Dicaire was
from a working-class background, her dad was able to pay for what she considered a big wedding. She explains in French:

Il y a du monde qui n'avait pas des grosses noces de même, ils faisaient ça rien que chez eux. Mais en partie, le monde qui pouvait, qui voulait se montrer, donnaient des bonnes noces à leurs enfants... Comme mon père, c'était sa première fille qu'il mariait, il voulait donner des bonnes noces. Et puis, il a fait tout ce qu'il a pu. Il a loué le hall, il l'a eu quasiment pour rien. Il y a un grand Hall qui appartenait à un Mr. Tremblay. C'était un homme qui était aveugle. Et puis, dans ce temps-là, la communauté était assez petite. Tu pouvais [inviter] tout le monde de Maillardville. Tu mettais une affiche sur un poteau, pis tout le monde lisait l'affiche, puis tout le monde était invité : les garçons et les filles qui étaient assez vieux pour aller là.

Here, Dicaire shows that big weddings were not accessible to everyone. In her narrative, Dicaire also sheds lights on the patriarchal character of the wedding when she mentions that her father gave her “des bonnes noces.”

If weddings were classed, they were also racialized. In fact, according to Notre-Dame de Lourdes’ wedding records, compiled by Catou Lévesque in 1980, no unions were celebrated between (white) French Canadians and people of non-white or non-European descent between 1909 and 1939. As mentioned earlier, given the fear of miscegenation and the extreme racism of the time, it is not surprising that French-Canadian elites would have not want to celebrate intimate unions with non-whites. From a French-Canadian nationalist perspective, miscegenation would have also weakened the “purity” of the French-Canadian “race.”

From a linguistic and nationalist point view, marriages of French Canadians with non-Francophone and non-Catholic whites, on the other hand, also challenged language practices and the “survival” of the French language and culture. The participants in the interviews had all married a French-Canadian partner. However, most of their children married non-Francophones. In fact, in the interviews, many participants attribute the declining use of French in the early 1970s in Maillardville to the increasing number of “mixed marriages” — the unions between (white) French-speaking Canadians with non-
Francophone (white) Canadians (more precisely with Anglo-Canadians, but also with people of Ukrainian, Irish, and (to a lesser extent) Italian and Greek origins). Finally, in terms of sexual inequality, weddings are not neutral. As Ramona Faith Oswald explains,

Rituals are significant in part because they link private and public meanings, and demonstrate an acceptance and/or rejection of social convention (Roberts, 1988). Our society privileges heterosexual marriage, and thus weddings also link the personal decision to marry with an institutional heterosexual privilege carrying profound social, legal, financial, and religious benefits.

Here, those benefits were not available to people who remained single, or obviously, to any queer men and women who would have dreamed of celebrating their union publicly. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to explore queer subjectivities in Maillardville, since the interviews did not leave any room to address anything other than hetero subjectivities and relationships. Indeed, it is likely the heteronormative framework of the interviews itself certainly influenced the participants' response and engagement.

6.4 Conclusion

It is clear that different moral regulatory agencies were at work to promote proper gender roles and sexual behaviours and identities in Maillardville. From their (gendered) schooling, to their (heterosexual) wedding day, and their gendered and classed participation in the labour market, French-Canadian men and women faced all kinds of pressure to be “good Catholics,” to conform, to “fit in.”

However, the material realities of many of the interviewees' lives often entered into conflict with the “ideal” “moral” behaviours promoted by the Church and other moral agencies — the family, the state, etc. For instance, parents who could not afford the private Catholic school did send their children to the public school, which did not charge tuition fees. In the same vein, women who needed to make ends meet did participate in the labour market.
Men and women also acted as subjects with agency, and challenged the moral authority of Church authority in many ways. For instance, many men did engage in union activities during the 1931 strike, even though the priests disapproved and had sided with the company bosses. Similarly, parents took their children out of the Catholic school when they found the (religious) teaching of the Church questionable.

There is little doubt that moral regulatory practices did encourage Maillardville's French-Canadian men and women to conform to specific gender roles and (hetero) sexual behaviours. However, these moralizing practices impacted French-Canadian subjects differently, depending on their social class, gender, and sexuality. While none of the female interviewees were single mothers between 1909 and 1939, it seems evident that a poor, working-class single mother would have been more scrutinized by the priest than, for instance, middle-class male and married Chief of Police Emeri Paré, who served as the first police officer and fire chief in Maillardville from 1913 to 1927 and a model of "success."
VII Conclusion

In this study, deciphering the making of Maillardville has provided a deeper understanding of the constructions of identities and communities in the past. Through the narrative of 23 Maillardville residents, I have looked at the making of a French-Canadian identity and community in British Columbia between 1909 and 1939. While I focused specifically on the multiple and contradictory historical accounts of Maillardville, this case study also resonates in the broader context of nation-building in British Columbia and Canada. In fact, the narratives of the interviewees, as well as the discourses at work in *The Western Lumberman* newspaper, cannot be understood outside of their historical and social context — the overall creation of Canada as a white settler-society, with all the exclusionary practices that such an aim implies. As I revisited Maillardville, I observed how the social inequalities of race, gender, class, and sexuality interlocked through national (i.e. Anglo-dominant) discourses and practices. While the French-Canadian families who settled in Maillardville sometimes benefited from the Anglo-dominant construction of the nation as white, they were also inferiorized and discriminated against by English-speaking elites of British descent. Indeed, French Canadians were both colonizers and colonized in British Columbia between 1909 and 1939. Considered “white labour” when recruited to replace non-white workers, the labourers were, nonetheless, less, or other than ‘white’ in comparison to Anglo-Canadians. The social making of Maillardville illustrates these complicated and contested social hierarchies.

The racialization of the space in and around Fraser Mills shows how the making of Maillardville reproduced racial hierarchies. On this topic, the narratives of the interviewees are quite compelling. The majority of them reproduce the “myth of the frontier” (Furniss, 1999) when they remember their perilous and difficult journey by train,
their arrival in the company town of Fraser Mills, and their subsequent settlement in what became known as Maillardville. In this discourse of an “empty land” ready for the taking, French-Canadian interviewees reproduce racisms, as they erase the presence of First Nations from their own discourses. As settlers-colonialists, it seems that, in this context, French Canadians were considered “white,” and they enact the creation of national mythologies. As Sherene Razack makes it clear, “[m]ythologies or national stories are about a nation’s origins and history. They enable citizens to think of themselves as part of a community, defining who belongs, and who does not belong to the nation” (2002:2)

The “whiteness” of the French Canadians is also reinforced through the creation of a racialized other, an out-group, since the “strong” French-Canadian worker is constructed as superior to a “weak” Asian or South Asian worker. This construction is highly gendered, as women are absent from the narrative. In terms of management of the space, this racialization translates into differential treatment, as Maillardville is distinguished from “Japtown,” “Chinatown,” and “Hindutown.” The French Canadians are allowed to purchase land and build a community with a church and a school, to create the space of a ‘family-oriented’ Maillardville. On the other hand, Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian male workers have to live in the company town, in temporary houses for single workers. This arrangement clearly marks the desire of an Anglo-elite to encourage permanent settlement for one group racialized as superior.

While the narratives of the interviewees show the lumberjacks as colonizers, there is also evidence that French Canadians were also colonized within the Anglo-dominant society of British Columbia between 1909 and 1939. Indeed, whiteness itself as a category of identity was/is fractured. Because of their French language, their Roman Catholic religion, and their working-class status, French Canadians were not considered completely “white” by the Anglo-Canadian elite. Otherized as “peasoups” and “Frenchies,” French Canadians were also constructed as the “happy poor” and “docile
workers," thus perfect to work at the mill. In terms of language, the interviewees remember having to learn English quickly. They also report feeling that their language was inferiorized in comparison to the dominant English language. While Catholic French Canadians were considered different from English Protestant Canadians, they also "worked towards whiteness," as they demanded relief during the depression to live like "Canadians" should live, and the next generation inter-married with English speakers.

Within the French-Canadian community of Maillardville, whiteness and French-Canadianess were also fractured along lines of gender and sexuality through the moral regulatory power of the Roman Catholic religion. Through Roman Catholic schools, French-Canadian girls were educated to become housewives, while boys were trained to work at the mill. Nevertheless, as adults, many French-Canadian men and women did contest, accommodate, and resist the moral regulatory practices of the Church, the family, and their peers, as women worked for pay, and men entered into union activities. In these cases of dissidence, men and women challenged gender norms. The celebration of weddings also acted as a powerful moral regulatory agency in making public the institution of heterosexuality. This order was also racialized, as no marriages between French-Canadians and non-whites were recorded between 1909 and 1939.

In looking at the making of Maillardville, there is evidence that the social inequalities of the past resonate in the present. Indeed, while Maillardville is preparing to celebrate its one hundredth anniversary in 2009, there is no mention in the official narratives of the presence of Aboriginal peoples, or Japanese, Chinese, and South Asians. In the same vein, the project of revitalization of Maillardville, "Rebuilding BC's Historic French Village" does not mention that there were Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian workers working side by side with French Canadians. On the other hand,

95 See <http://www.coquitlam.ca/_Flaunt+Your+Frenchness/Maillardville+Revitalization.htm> (accessed 14 April 2007)
the Mackin House Museum, which honours the pioneers of Maillardville is located in what was the house of Mr. H. J. Mackin, the first General Sales Manager of Fraser Mills. Here, the history of rich white Anglo-men is clearly celebrated. Given what Maillardville’s residents remember and tell about social inequalities in the past, it is no coincidence that these social inequalities are still represented in the present.

While this study sheds lights on exclusionary heritage narratives in the present, it does not, however, recover the silences reproduced in popular histories. Indeed, in focusing on narratives by French Canadians, I did not (re)cover the stories, memories, and thoughts of the men (and few women) of Asian and South Asian origin who lived and worked in Fraser Mills between 1909 and 1939. These silences remain just that, silences. That is certainly one shortcoming of this study. More research would be necessary to unveil these absent narratives, but it might prove very difficult to find archival data on these non-white populations.

Moreover, this study is based on interviews with only 23 people and most of the interviewees were from working-class background. It would have been interesting to look at the memories of French-Canadians who were better-off. How did these people remember Maillardville? Did they experience discrimination as French Canadians, or were they easily accepted into the white (Anglo) middle-class?

In terms of the elites within the French-Canadian community, I would have also liked to explore in greater detail the role of the Roman-Catholic church in Maillardville. I wonder what type of roles the priests and nuns played in the daily lives of the interviewees. How did the ritual of the confessional differ according to one’s gender and class? Looking at Roman Catholic school textbooks would also be interesting to better understand the predominance of religion in the community. I also wonder what the letters exchanged between Maillardville’s priests and the Archdiocese of Vancouver would have told us about the community. I wonder if there was friendship or solidarity
between Irish and French Canadians, since both groups were predominantly Catholic. These interesting questions related to religion would be fruitful to explore to deepen our understanding of the nation and the family.

In the same vein, issues related to violence, abortion, prostitution, adoption, prohibition, single mothering, and children born out of wedlock — all research themes that could shed light on the family and nation-building — are not part of my analysis. At this point, more research would be needed to look at these issues.

While there are many topics that are left out of this project, this study nonetheless contributes to the field of sociology and social history. For instance, looking at the complicated positions of French-Canadians in British Columbia sheds light on the fractured and uneven character of whiteness. In this sense, From the Mill to the Hill contributes to critical whiteness studies in illustrating how whiteness is not monolithic.

In terms of citizenship studies, this project also illustrates how one’s belonging to the nation is deeply racialized. In the context of the building of Maillardville, Chinese, Japanese, South Asians, and Aboriginal people were considered inferior “others” by the Anglo-Canadian elite. Denied citizenship, these non-white people were also considered to be fundamentally different from whites. Today, it is interesting to see that similar processes of otherization are still at work.

Today, Muslims and Arabs are often equated with “terrorists” in popular discourse, and are subject to racial profiling in Canadian airports. For instance, in one of her columns, Globe and Mail wordsmith Margaret Wente qualified the “Arab World as “a dysfunctional, backward breeding ground for various dangerous pathologies.” ⁹⁶ Apparently, Wente is not alone in sharing such a view of the “Arab World.” In fact, the term Islamophobia refers to this irrational fear of Arabs, and to the homogenisation of

this diverse population into one single group of "Muslim extremists." In a 2004 UN conference, then Secretary General Kofi Annan commented on the emergence of Islamophobia: "(when) the world is compelled to coin a new term to take account of increasingly widespread bigotry — that is a sad and troubling development. Such is the case with 'Islamophobia'" (Ibid.)

Looking at Islamophobia today, I find many parallels with ideas of the "yellow peril" and the "strange Hindus" present in early twentieth-century Maillardville and in British Columbia. Probing the past can help understand today's racism. Indeed, I argue that this strategy is part of an anti-racist social project, making it clear that racism is not solely a thing of the past — a "dark chapter" of Canadian history — but engrained in the present. The marginalization and exclusion of racialized and othered populations still happen today, and like in Fraser Mills in the early 1900s, it perpetuates social inequalities.

Looking specifically at nation-building, this study also sheds light on the constructions of nations and communities not only in the past, but also in the present. The making of Maillardville happened in the greater context of the building of British Columbia as a "white man's province." Building Maillardville (and by extension the province) is remembered through different national mythologies — like the myth of the frontier, the "strong" French-Canadians pionners, the two founding nations — and through the exclusion of Asian, South Asian, and Aboriginal people as national subjects. What this study makes clear is that nations necessitate stories.

Today, when Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper celebrates the commemoration of the battle of Vimy Ridge during the First World War, he couldn't make

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98 I borrow this expression from Sherene Razack, 2002.
my point better as he says: “Every nation has a creation story to tell.” Here, this
Canadian ‘military triumph’ is presented by Harper as “central to the story of our
country,” where “Canada deserved so much to take its rightful place... as a sovereign
nation, strong, and free” (Ibid.) However, like Michael D. Wallace does, I question this
construction of the nation. I agree with Wallace that this construction excludes many
from the national imagery/imagination. As he explains, “Canadians did not fight in ‘the
Great War’ for anyone’s ‘freedom.’ We fought because we were part of the British
Empire, wherein only the white, English-speaking minority was free” (Ibid). More over,
like Wallace, I also question how this founding myth is used to boost patriotism while
Canadian troops occupy Afghanistan (Ibid). In other words, I believe that it is important
to deconstruct national myths, and nation-building, not only to understand a remote past,
but to question an enduring present that portrays Canada as a benevolent, tolerant, and
“great” nation.

Finally, this study also contributes to the study of Francophone communities in
Canada. The findings of this research suggest that the French-Canadian community in
Maillardville has been historically constructed as white, patriarchal, heterosexual, and
Roman Catholic. It would be interesting to look at current definitions of what it means to
be Francophone in British Columbia. Is there still a vibrant Francophone community at
the present? Is this community still racialized, as in the past? As mentioned in the
introduction, there is much discussion over immigration, identity, and multiculturalism
among Canadian Francophones. While there has been research in Ontario (see
Maddibo, 2005; Heller 1994; Quell, 1998; and Chambon and all. 2001; for instance), not
much has been done in British Columbia. The research in Ontario suggests that

(Accessed 14 April, 2007).
Francophone communities in that province struggle to redefine their identity and share limited resources, as non-white Francophone immigrants challenge the 'status quo.' It would be interesting to explore, through interviews, how Francophones in British Columbia define their community (if such a community exists). How are new Francophone immigrants involved in Francophone institutions (the Francophone School Board, community centres and groups, etc)? Looking at these issues would continue the work started in this study, of unveiling and questioning the constructions of class, racial, gender, and sexual locations of privilege and subordination as part of an awareness project to combat social inequality.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

List of Interviews

Boileau, Rodolphe (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Rodolphe Boileau Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Canuel, William Elio (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, William Elio Canuel Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Coutu, Arthur (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Arthur Coutu Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Coutu, Yvonne (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Yvonne Coutu Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Dicaire, Arthur and Marie-Rosa Dicaire (1973), Interview with Frankie Johnson, Arthur and Marie-Rosa Dicaire Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Dicaire, Jean Baptiste (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Jean Baptiste Dicaire Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Dicaire, Marie-Rosa (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Marie-Rosa Dicaire Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Duplin, Ralph (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Ralph Duplin Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Goulet, Jean Baptiste (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Jean Baptiste Goulet Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.

Hammond Léona and Léonard Hammond (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Leonard and Leona Hammond Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Lacasse, Francis (1973), Interview with Frankie Johnson, Francis Lacasse Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Lamoureux, Hercules (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Hercules Lamoureux Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Laverdure, Arthur (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Arthur Laverdure Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Leroux, François (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, François Leroux Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Lizée, Marie (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Marie Lizée Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Marcellin, René (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, René Marcellin Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Paré, Hélène (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Helena Paré Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Paré, Yvonne (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Yvonne Paré Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Proulx, Ida (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Ida Proulx Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Sauvé, Alfred (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Alfred Sauvé Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Sister Marie-Paul Sister (1972), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Sister Marie-Paul Interview, Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Thomas, Maurice (1973), Interview with Cheryl Pierson, Maurice Thomas Interview, Reynoldston Research and Studies Oral History Collection.
Appendix B

Locating Maillardville on the Map

Appendix C

Locating Maillardville and Fraser Mills