"Under one Flag”? Race, Nation, and Migration in the Early Twentieth-Century
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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
History in the Graduate School
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Abstract

My dissertation project on colonialism and immigration in Canadian history explores the complex intersections of discourses of race, nation, and empire. With an emphasis on the role of visual and popular culture, I locate Canada within transnational discussions about citizenship and civilization. Like emerging states in the “Anglophone colonial world”, Canadians helped erect and maintain a “global color line”, by passing racist immigration laws that discriminated between “white” and “non-white” migrants. Canadian “racial nationalists” used visual culture to justify immigration restriction and create identity and belonging, even as Canadian identity simultaneously trumpeted tolerance and enlightenment. In turn, anti-racists invoked national exceptionalist mythologies to opposed race-based immigration restriction. Looking back at a global era of nation-building, I locate Canada as an emerging nation-state in which Anglo-Canadians faced the challenge of creating a national identity within a racist global empire, and alongside a powerful Republic that was also virulently racist, but from which Canadians desperately wanted to distinguish themselves. Heated debates about race and national belonging also unearthed cleavages between “white” people in Canada, the United States, and within the British Empire, including distinctions of gender, class, and ethnicity, as well as competing and political and ethical sensibilities. Situated at the intersection of transnational and national history, my project explores how this complex case of nation-formation spawned subtle and dynamic racial...
discourses, an understanding of which will advance our understanding of race and racism in the twentieth century.
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INTRODUCTION “Under one Flag”? Race, Nation, and Migration in the Early Twentieth-Century

This project is about a transnational moment when ideas of whiteness and national identity were being solidified throughout North America and the British Empire. This was an era of massive migration, as well as of rampant immigration restriction. Mass migrations from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean to the “Anglo-Colonial world”¹ were sharply curtailed, as increasingly restrictive—and increasingly racialized—policies were created to control the movement of people around the globe. Each chapter of this project deals with a different aspect of race and nation-building in Canada. My dissertation project on colonialism and immigration in Canadian history explores the complex intersections of discourses of race, nation, and empire. Positioning Canada within transnational discussions about citizenship and civilization, my project posits Canada's historical process of nation-building as an instructive case study within a larger transnational moment of nation-building, which complicates our understanding of race and racism in the twentieth century.

My project looks back on a global era of nation-building and locates Canada as an emerging British imperial nation next to a radical republic. Anglo-Canadians faced the

¹ This term is derived from Kornel Chang’s useful formulation of the concept of the “Anglophone colonial world”, “Anglophone settler world”, or “Anglophone colonial settler world”. This category is based on historically-constructed ideas of the ethnic and cultural superiority of the English-speaking, British-descended, so-called “Anglo-Saxons” in North America and the British Dominions.

challenging task of creating a national identity alongside a powerful state: at once independent and virulently racist, and from which Canadians desperately wanted to distinguish themselves. My project interrogates the ways in which this historically-specific case of nation-formation gave rise to subtle and dynamic discourses of racism and nationalism, an understanding of which will broaden understanding of racism and nationalism more generally. My research lies at the crux of transnational history and national history. This study approaches the historical construction of race, nation, and belonging, as well as the corresponding laws and policies put in place to control peoples' movements and encounters.

**Why Study Canada?**

When I explain to people that I study Canada, they often seem mystified, amused, or even vaguely antagonistic. I did my doctoral work in the United States, and much of my writing in Europe. Americans almost invariably asked “why would you come to the United States to study Canada?!?” Europeans frequently scoffed: “you study Canadian history? What history?” Canadian history seems too short by European standards and too parochial by American standards to warrant in-depth study. But the answer to why Canada is worth studying is embedded in the question itself. Canadian history seems irrelevant in part because Canadians have constructed such successful national myths. Canada portrays itself as a polite, peaceful, picturesque country, a place without want or strife, and one that has always been that way: thus it is history-less. American national
myths are bold and dramatic. The U.S. national narratives are bloody, conflicted, revolutionary. By comparison, Canada’s narratives are modest and uninspiring. European countries have myriad myths, but these states are so established that they don’t rely on them for legitimacy in quite the same way as their “new world” offshoots.²

This seems like a phenomenon of the study of places like Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, which are thought of as obscure, far-flung places. Notably, Europeans don’t feel this way about U.S. history, even if the country is just as “new” as Canada. Similarly, Europeans don’t question the validity of studying their own histories, or the history of Europe, more broadly. And Americans don’t think their history irrelevant, or Europe’s. Even many Canadians themselves believe this to be true. And I will admit that for a long time, this was also true for me. An interest in Canada's history slowly crept up on me, sneaking under my radar and catching me unaware, and that is the only reason I study it today. I never thought I would be a historian, much less that I would study Canada. But here I am. But what many people don’t realize is that this understatedness is part of the power of Canadian identity, evidence of very effective national identity construction. This lack of interest means that the official narrative has

² That is another quandary of trying to explain the study of Canadian history. In the mind of some Europeans, Canadian history is hopelessly “new”. Ostensibly, its history only “began” with European colonialism: as though the place that became Canada had been inert, static, and uninhabited previously and Europeans ‘brought’ history. Such a view is valid only in the sense that “Canada” as a state was a colonial creation. But clearly many populations thrived prior to European colonialism (for many, much more successfully than they did after). This is a fact that the term “First Nations” attempts to rectify, when applied to indigenous populations in Canada—who would usually be called “Indians” in the United States. The use of the term “First Nations” is an attempt to counter the conception that little life, civilization, etc. in the Americas predated contact with Europeans and European colonialism. The term “First Nations” is arguably an expression of a nationalism that can counter Anglo-Canadian and Quebecois nationalism.
been created and maintained with stellar success. That Canadian history and identity seems so very bland, harmless, and unassuming is living proof that the historical actors who created Canadian national identity did so very well. How could innocent Canada be complicit in racism and imperialism?

**Nation-Building and Transnational Whiteness**

Canada, like all nation-states, was invented, sustained, and continually reinvented in a global context. I thus approach history less as a succession of related events than I do as a broad historical process. I am concerned with how ideas about race, nation, and belonging circulated transnationally, and were taken up in particular instances. I am interested in interrogating national narratives, but less in studying any country in isolation. I don’t want to validate nation-states’ exceptionalisms or naturalize their centrality as dominant and discrete units of analysis. National narratives and boundaries are not intrinsically meaningful. They become meaningful by comparison and in relation to each other. Nation-states and their exceptionalisms were not created in a vacuum. They were born of a transnational dialogue—a flow of people and ideas that transcended borders.

W.E.B. Du Bois argued in his essay “The Souls of White Folk” (1920) that “[t]he discovery of personal whiteness among the world’s peoples is a very modern thing—a nineteenth and twentieth century matter...the world in a sudden, emotional conversion has
discovered that it is white and by that token, wonderful” (22). As Du Bois had famously predicted in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), the twentieth century would indeed be the century of the color line. In the less-quoted “The Souls of White Folk”, Du Bois explores the color line as a *global phenomenon*. This essay is Du Bois’ scathing condemnation of colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism. Here, he investigates the racial hierarchies and ideologies used to legitimate projects of nation-building and empire-building. Du Bois asks; “[h]ow many of us today fully realize the current theory of colonial expansion, of the relation of Europe which is white, to the world which is black and brown and yellow? Bluntly put, that theory is this: It is the duty of white Europe to divide up the darker world and administer it for Europe's good.” “But what on earth”, Du Bois asks, “is whiteness that one should so desire it?” His biting response: “…whiteness is the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen!” (22)

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of new racial discourses, in which “white” people “discovered” their “whiteness” and attached value to it. In this era of emerging racial ideologies, “whiteness” was both invented as a category, and used to legitimate newly developing political and economic systems: in ways that attached benefits and privileges to this new “whiteness.” Concepts such as nation-states, citizenship, and civil rights were forged alongside emerging racial discourses, and were used to selectively dispense rights and opportunities to some, and deny them to
others, on the basis of “race”. I use the term “racial nationalism”3 to account for the process in which socially-constructed ideas of “race” were made alongside mutually-reinforcing concepts of nation, citizenship, and civilization—almost always in ways that benefitted lighter-skinned people at the expense of the darker-skinned. Similarly, I use the term “racial nationalist” both (a) as an adjective: to describe particular ways of thinking, and also (b) as a noun: to identify particular individuals and the discourses they created and invoked. These social actors—some of whom I will introduce in Chapter One—articulated their nationalism through the lens of race, and their racial ideology through the lens of nationalism. For me, the concept of “racial nationalism” makes it possible to explore the intersectional nature of discourses about race and nation—which in turn intersect with discourses of gender and class.

For both systems of thought—the racialist and the nationalist—are about power. Discourses of whiteness not only pertain to identity, but also to social control. Especially in a historical context of rampant imperialism, whiteness was not some abstract or banal category, but instead formed a foundation for domination. The construction of “whiteness” took place in a historical moment when colonialism was being challenged by demands for liberation and self-determination on the part of darker-skinned peoples of the world. So our thinking about race in this era should never

be divorced from understanding the threats to imperial power and white supremacy posed by anti-imperialist political movements. And the architects of “whiteness” understood this perfectly. Amongst the presumptions of this newfound whiteness was an unassailable sense of entitlement—entitlement to hold power, to assert it over others. Du Bois understood this clearly too, observing: “[t]his assumption that of all the hues of God whiteness alone is inherently and obviously better than brownness or tan leads to curious acts” (Du Bois: 22). These “curious acts” include coercion, exploitation, and racial violence, systematically perpetuated against subordinate racial groups by dominant ones.

While Du Bois does not consider domination itself to be singular or historically specific, he does identify the rise of a discourse of whiteness, as a tool of domination, as particular to this era of European imperial expansion. He writes: “[s]uch degrading of men by men is as old as mankind and the invention of no one race or people. Ever have men striven to conceive of their victims as different from the victors, endlessly different, in soul and blood, strength and cunning, race and lineage. It has been left, however, to Europe and to modern days to discover the eternal worldwide mark of meanness—color!” (30) “Europe,” to Du Bois, meant the entire “white” world of European heritage and professed superior civilization. This symbolic Europe included the United States and the settler societies of the British Empire: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada – the primary focus of this dissertation. My project interrogates how one northern nation “discovered” its whiteness—and the corresponding “meanness” and
“inferiority” of non-whites—and made the idea of whiteness a cornerstone of its project of nation-building and identity construction. By elucidating the intersections of racial ideology and state-formation in this pivotal era, my project provides a case study that allows us to better understand larger global historical processes.

**The Birth of Whiteness**

Following Du Bois in “The Souls of White Folk,” historians of race, nation, and empire, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, utilize impressive archival research to prove that the early twentieth century saw the rise of a global color consciousness. Lake and Reynolds’ project, to which I am indebted, focuses on discourses of race and nation in the United States and British Empire: especially Australia, South Africa, and India. The authors demonstrate convincingly that “[w]hiteness provided a mode of subjective identification that crossed national boundaries and shaped global politics” (2008: 2). This was an era of nation-building, during which new nation-states proliferated across the globe—layering over older, feudal or tribal distinctions, newer hierarchies based on citizenship, skin color, and industrial capitalism. In the context of global migration and nation-building, experiments with democratic forms of social and political organization forged different social relationships and ideas about race. This age of liberal democracy was also an age of empire, and the categories of citizen and subject were racialized in complicated ways. And like many other nationalisms, Canadian national identity was created during a historical moment of anti-colonial struggle.
The construction of whiteness was both historically specific and defensive, taking place at a moment when anti-colonialism threatened the global status quo of white supremacy. The historical context was one of colonial competition. Struggles for dominance were at once national and global. In effect, the world was both rent and wrought by a vigorous colonial contest between: (a) rival “white” nation-states and imperial powers, pitted against each other for global power and control, but also (b) between races, with the “white race” pitted against the “black,” “brown,” and “yellow”.\(^4\)

In his era, Du Bois was not alone in conceiving of this age of imperialism and nation-building in these terms. Racial nationalists also saw it this way. As Lake and Reynolds explain, nationalists across North America and the British Empire saw themselves as part of a coalition of “white men's countries,” protecting the fate of their countries and Western civilization from the encroachment of inferior races. The solution to the “uppity-ness” of these racialized have-nots? Policies of immigration restriction and the creation of a global color line.\(^5\)

\(^4\) This competition took numerous forms, namely the competition for (1) the “best” immigrants to comprise the nation, (2) for control over terrain and people, and (3) for the superiority of national ideals.

\(^5\) I borrow the term “global color line” from Lake and Reynolds, who derive it from Du Bois. And like Du Bois, another prominent African American critic of segregation, Benjamin Mays, also commented upon the global reach of the color line in his 1937 article: The Color Line around the World.” The Journal of Negro Education 6, no. 2 (1937): 134-43. Stating that “the problem of race is world-wide”, Mays recounts his travel experiences, observing that “Indians and Africans complain constantly of the discriminatory treatment which they receive from Englishmen not only in England but in almost every part of the British Domain” (142). As with Du Bois, it is clear that Mays defines the term “Englishmen” broadly, to include the descendants of Englishmen, just as “Africans” includes African Americans and other African-descended peoples. In other more contemporary scholarship, and the notion of segregation as a global phenomenon, a 1999 book also characterized racial inequality around the world in terms of a “global color line”: Batur, Pinar, and Joe R. Feagin. The Global Color Line: Racial and Ethnic Inequality and Struggle from a Global Perspective. Stanford, Conn.: JAI Press, 1999.
Anglo-Canadian\(^6\) nationalists certainly shared this view of the global racial status quo. Like racial nationalists everywhere, some Canadians participated in the transnational formation of whiteness and the global color line. We shall meet some of these racial nationalists in Chapter One, and engage with their exclusionary ideas. But this is not only a story of racial violence and exclusion. This project also focuses on national belonging and inclusion. Racial nationalists wanted to build a nation, and this relied on inclusion and assimilation, not just exclusion and separation. These were two sides of the same coin. These processes took place simultaneously, and each relied on the other.

**Project Description and Chapter Summary**

In fact, inclusion and belonging is the theme of my first chapter. Each chapter centers around both (a) a specific process, and (b) specific racial group(s). Most broadly, the themes of my chapters are the follows: (1) belonging, (2) exceptionalism, (3) dissent, and (4) ambivalence. My first chapter focuses on the migration of ethnic whites from Europe, and the creation of a cohesive sense of Canadianness. Chapter One establishes the importance of “whiteness” to Canada’s emerging national identity and explores how

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\(^6\) By “Anglo-Canadian,” I am referring to English speaking Canadians of British ancestry. This group was dominant in Canadian politics, and was also considered unassailably “white”, unlike some recent European migrant groups, as I will demonstrate in Chapter One.
this racial category became a vehicle for the social inclusion of some ethnic immigrants, and exclusion of others.\(^7\)

My second chapter focuses on how the state’s relationship with Native Canadians and African Canadians was mythologized as peaceful and benevolent, to elide the necessary brutality of nation-building. In Chapter Two, I argue that Canadians used conciliatory national narratives to bolster their British imperial iteration of whiteness and masculinity—in contrast to Americans’ “unruly” republican brand of exceptionalism. My third chapter explores how debates about Chinese immigration became a battleground for competing national visions and rival exceptionalisms within both Canada and the United States. Specifically, Chapter Three argues that debates about Chinese exclusion unearthed deep cleavages in the category of “whiteness”—especially in terms of class, gender, and region. My fourth chapter is about the complexity of Empire, and shifting of alliances—especially with non-white participants in imperialism. Chapter Four explores the ambivalent relationship between the British Empire, white Dominions, and their “brown brothers”—specifically, between the Empire and nation-states over migration from Japan and India.

\(^7\) In this vein, Chapter One is related to critical whiteness studies that examine the development of racial ideology in historical context. But where it diverges from many studies is that it examines a specific case study in the context of broader transnational processes. In this respect, my study is influenced by those that study racial formations in transnational historical context.
Following other critical race scholars, I see “race” as a historically and socially-constructed category. I also conceive of race as a process. Rather than essential and universal, racial categories are culturally-specific concepts created during certain moments in history, to serve particular ends. My project interrogates how racial categories came to be ascribed to people during a moment of nation-building, and how constructions of “race” and of “nation” were mutually-reinforcing. I use the term “racialization” to refer to the myriad ways in which people are vested with “race” and the presumed attributes ascribed to given racial categories. Understanding race as a process goes hand in hand with the concept of “racial nationalism” to account for the ways in which the ideological content of nationalism; nation-building projects; and the laws and policies that support these projects—become racialized.

However, like most scholars who study “race,” I must sometimes use racial categories as though they were unproblematic. I find it necessary to refer to social actors as “white;” “black;” “Asian;” or “Native American;” “First Nations;” or “Indian;” for analytic purposes.

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8 Just as Gail Bederman explains of gender in *Manliness and Civilization*, race too is “a historical, ideological process” (7). Similarly, it is important to study the historical process of making race in order to understand how discourses of whiteness, like other dominant racial discourses, change over history. Particular versions of whiteness also have their own historical specificity. As contemporary critical race scholar Richard Dyer argues about “whiteness” today, much of the power of whiteness lies its invisibility and its normativity. The privileges attached to whiteness are often invisible precisely because of this “invisibility” of whiteness itself. But in some ways this silent, ubiquitous whiteness is a recent historical phenomenon. By contrast, the idea of “whiteness” in the nineteenth and twentieth century whiteness was frequently boastful and bombastic. After all, the notion of whiteness as hegemonic was being actively created at this time. While whiteness surely went assumed and unnamed in many contexts and social circles, it was just as often trumpeted loudly, especially in public discussions of nation and immigration. And perhaps modest, invisible, contemporary visions of whiteness represent a reaction to earlier vociferous proclamations of white superiority, which necessarily fell out favor in a post-WWII era of espoused universal human rights. In any case, it is important to understand that dominant discourses of race—like national identity—are historical products that change over time.

For a useful discussion of contemporary whiteness, see:

purposes. These terms themselves are historically and culturally-specific and represent
different paradigms for thinking about race. People who were once called “Negroes”
are now referred to as “African-descended”, “African(-)American” or “Afro-Canadian”,
or sometimes simply “black”. Similarly, groups officially called “First Nations” in Canada
today were formerly termed “Indian”, which they continue to be in the United States,
and sometimes in Canada as well.

Historical documents also sometimes refer to racialized populations using pejorative
terminology—but always as though racial categories were salient and eternal, rather
than constructed. Because I must engage historical discussions of ideas of race and
nation, the purely descriptive use of racial categories becomes necessary. Where my
project diverges from many studies of race and national belonging is that it examines a
specific case study in the context of broader transnational processes. As Du Bois has
observed, the solidification of a sense of whiteness and entitlement was a global
phenomenon. Consequently, my project sits at the crux of national history and
transnational history.

_How does Canada fit into Transnational Racial Nationalism?_

Racial ideology and national identity were constructed hand-in-hand and used to shape
and reinforce each other. Articulations of white Canadian identity were but one small
iteration of a larger transnational process of creating whiteness. As Kornel Chang
explains in his “analysis of white working-class formation in the northern Pacific”, while “the national and the global have been perceived as being in opposition to each other, always in tension and locked in a zero-sum game”, in fact, “the global and the national were at times mutually constitutive in a process in which the two were simultaneously made” (681). Studying the national can yield insights into global processes and vice-versa; yet many useful and insightful studies of whiteness, national identity, and imperialism mention Canada only in passing, if at all. Even excellent studies of British imperialism, such as Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper's Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference (2010) and Lake and Reynold's Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality (2008) often make only minimal references to Canada.9

So why include Canada in such studies? Part of the value proffered by transnational approaches is the movement away from the parochialism and exceptionalism that characterize some national histories. Such histories all too often present historical events as singular instead of connected. So how could including Canada in such studies help rectify this? Canada’s history is not exceptional, but of course it is particular, and we can learn about the mechanisms of race, nation, and empire by understanding it

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9 In both these projects, the lack of sustained analysis of Canada is completely understandable, given their scope and ambition. Certainly, their transnational frameworks lend a richness and complexity that many national histories lack. Imperialism can only be properly understood transnationally, but at the same time, the relative inattention granted to the Canadian case also means that some of the complexities of whiteness and imperial interconnection are also neglected. For each specific instance of nation-building also has its own historical and geographical specificity. For instance, geographically isolated Australians articulated their nation-building project in far more republican terms than Canadians, who perceived America’s expansionist republicanism as a threat, as I will go on to explain in greater detail.
better. This case study is interesting because of the ways in which it is simultaneously typical and atypical, for how it both interacts with and diverges from larger transnational processes. Anglo-Canadian nationalists felt strong ties to the British Empire, and articulated their place in the world in these terms. As Andre Siegfried wrote in 1907, “[t]he English Canadians consider themselves the sole masters of Canada; they were not its first occupants admittedly, but it is theirs, they maintain, by right of conquest” (115).

Colonial Canada's position within the British imperial “family” bordering upon a radical republic hostile to Britain, but also within North America and the Atlantic and Pacific worlds, required a complex and contradictory process of national identity construction. The complexity of this position meant a process of nation-building fraught with tensions and contradictions, which required the creation of nationalist and imperialist discourses more subtle than those constructed in the other British Dominions or the United States. My study can also yield insight into the fraught formation of race and nation because Canada's has been a remarkably successful case of national identity construction. Contemporary Canada prides itself on its tolerance and multiculturalism, its liberalism and willingness to grant asylum. Canada’s dominant identity is as a “nation of immigrants”—a rich mosaic of ethnic and cultural difference. Yet the Canada of yesteryear just as highly prized its British allegiance, origins, and whiteness.
To this end, the state designed a series of racially exclusionary policies to keep Canada a “white man's country” and shut out global migrations of “undesirable” racial “others”. The late imperial age saw the mass migration of people from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean to the fledgling nations of the so-called “New World”. Canada's response, like that of other “white men's countries” was to slam the gates shut against these unwanted others. Yet, Canada emerged from this openly white supremacist past to craft a very different contemporary national identity—one that lauds tolerance, inclusion, and diversity. Skillfully wriggling free of the memory of its colonial and imperial legacy, its late twentieth century project of national identity construction has been so overwhelmingly successful that most people in Canada and around the world know little of the nation's racist and imperialist past.

By understanding how this specific national identity shifted historically, but remained hegemonic, we can learn the malleability and power of national identity in general. The ground upon which nation-states justify their existence and proclaim their greatness—the symbolic content of their national exceptionalism—necessarily transforms over time. For national exceptionalism is not exceptional. All nations base their identities on stories and myths, parts of larger webs of meaning about what creates legitimacy and belonging. By better understanding how Canada’s web of meaning has transformed over time, we can better understand nationalism, and its intersections with discourses of race and exclusion/inclusion. The purpose of this study is not to exceptionalize Canada, but rather to insert it into transnational discussions of nation-building and
white supremacy—from which it is too often excluded—but in which its racial nationalists proudly took part.

Finally, I offer one last claim for the significance of this project. My exploration of the paradoxes of competing regional interests vs. imperial ties adds richness and complexity to our understanding of racial ideology. Through my research, I aim to provide a needed antidote to the dominance of U.S.-centered paradigms for thinking about race in the twentieth century. America’s particular model is far too often taken as universal in American academic thought. The United States and Canada have similar histories in many important respects: shared backgrounds as British colonies, and shared physical, economic and—to a large extent—human geographies. Yet white Canadians articulated their whiteness in simultaneous communion with—and opposition—to white Americans and their dominant models of race and nation. My project interrogates processes of national identity construction, and the often contradictory discourses of race and nation these processes both created and were created by.

Canada’s ambivalence reflected that of the British Dominions more broadly. These semi-autonomous states necessarily underwent processes of state-formation distinct from the British metropolitan experience, American independence, and the national liberation struggles of what historian George M. Fredrickson has called “extraction” or
“exploitation” colonies. 10 White Dominions such as Canada inhabited an in-between position that was neither ruling nor rebellious. Semi-autonomous, their power was borrowed, and they were always in the process of becoming. They neither had the unquestioned legitimacy of an established empire, nor the self-claimed power of a revolutionary state that had won its independence. As Eva Mackey has argued in her work on nation-building in Canada, "new settler societies, unlike traditional European nations, have had to 'undertake the process of nation formation urgently, visibly, defensively'. They are always being 'caught in the act, embarrassed by the process of construction'" (22, citing Bennett et al, 1994).

What is more, societies like Canada have "a different landscape and genealogy than identity in the older nations of Europe or even the United States" (Mackey: 22). Mackey’s point is well-taken: there is something especially challenging about establishing a sense of national identity and belonging in new settler societies. This is in part by virtue of their newness. But it is especially true in settler societies like Canada and the former British Dominions, which lack a dramatic founding moment that can be memorialized and mythologized as with the American Revolution in the United States. Similarly, historian George M. Fredrickson argues in White Supremacy: that "white settler societies" differed from "tropical 'exploitation colonies'" (4).

10 While they had some level of autonomy—certainly more so than many British colonies, in a number of very important ways the Dominions were not fully “self-governing” until 1931, and in Canada’s case until 1982. They had no extra-territorial powers, their highest courts were in Britain, and they could not amend their own constitutions.
In his comparative study of racism and segregation in South Africa and the United States, Fredrickson contrasts the "regions claimed by the English on the eastern coast of North America [which] were temperate in climate and potentially attractive to white colonists as permanent homes" against the colonies seen as "uncomfortable and unhealthful places where fortunes could be made and then brought back to Europe" (4). These “exploitation” colonies were places conceived in the European imperialist mindset as places only valued for the extraction of raw resources. This of course included human labor—much of it from enslaved and indentured peoples. These colonies ultimately won their independence following protracted struggle. But the fact remains that theirs too represents a very different path to nationhood than Dominions’ complex middle path.

It is difficult to stake a claim for nationhood when a would-be state seems to some like little more than an extension of an established power. In lieu of a bold founding myth, this is how many have viewed Canada: a state dwarfed not only by its mother country, but also by its only neighbor, which became a world power in the nineteenth century became, and a superpower in the twentieth.\textsuperscript{11} Canada’s landmass is larger than the

\textsuperscript{11} First Nations—Canada’s indigenous peoples—have surely not seen nation-building in Canada as banal. Yet many commentators have deemed Canada’s national identity tenuous at best. See Eva Mackey’s \textit{The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada} (1999) for further discussion of the apparent fragility of Canadian identity. She writes that “[t]he desire for and the necessity for a national identity are seen as common sense, it is taken for granted. Yet, if we listen to people, the project of creating identity has also apparently been terribly unsuccessful. Everywhere, Canadian national identity is seen as crisis-ridden, as a fragile and weak entity constantly under attack and in need of vigilant defense. Some people say that Canada has no identity at all,
United States’, but comprises less than one-tenth of the arable land of the USA. Thus Canada’s physical geography has more often been a source of concern rather than pride. Canada’s vast expanse and low population density gave rise to fears of U.S. annexation—understandably, given America’s expansionist proclivities. Canada has always come second where it counted in the realpolitick worldview: in political, economic, and military might.

Creating national identity in these circumstances required a concerted effort. This project explores the creation of self-definition and belonging. Nation-building can best be understood as the material process of establishing institutions and infrastructure, combined with the symbolic process of creating identity and myths. While these parallel processes are intertwined, this project focuses more closely on national myths—especially, those about race, migration, and empire. For it was the exertions of myth-making that made the nation. As Ernest Gellner argues in *Nations and Nationalism* (2006), ",[i]t is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way around" (55). National myths created the framework within which material resources were distributed and institutions were understood. Gellner goes on to argue that, "[a]dmittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically" (54). Nation-builders inherit values and assumptions from

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or at least not a real one" (22). She goes on to add that "[e]ven a report from the federal government suggests that Canada is a 'nation without nationality'" (22, citing Spicer).
their predecessors, but reshape them to their own ends to forge identity. This transformation includes both the "invention" of tradition and the restoration of "quite fictitious pristine purities" in a "creative, fanciful, positively inventive aspect of nationalist ardour" (55).

**Envisioning Nation: Images, Print, and National Identity**

The invention of “nationalist ardour”—and thus ultimately the nation itself—is intrinsically tied to the popular press. In the nation-building era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when “Canada” was becoming Canada, creating national identity relied on the rise of printing. As he explains in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), Benedict Anderson sees the advent of print culture as fundamentally tied to both capitalism and the nation-state. Anderson’s notion of the "print-as-commodity" (39) captures how the confluence of "capitalism and print created monoglot mass reading publics" (45). In his discussion of the "origins of nationalism" (36), Anderson identifies the importance of the newspaper in reinforcing a sense of imagined, invisible community.

Newspapers helped create a sense of social cohesion. Printed at low cost, for daily consumption by a large customer base, they marked a departure from earlier forms of "print-capitalism" (37). Anderson cites the “extraordinary mass ceremony” (35) of a reading public simultaneously consuming the daily paper. This ritual is at once personal
and communal. Each reader is aware that this same act is being "replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion" (36). Thus, this ritual is cohesive. It provides 'continual reassurance' "that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life...creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations" (36).

It is with this view of the reading public and nascent nation-state that I undertake my analysis of visual culture and national identity. I use and extend the analytic framework that Benedict Anderson posits. Anderson interrogates discourses and written words, but his analysis does not encompass visual images of nation and belonging. Anderson’s work does not account for how visual forms have been used to create and disseminate domain discourses of national identity and belonging, or to generate and affective sense of belonging in individuals. By contrast, the images in newspapers and illustrated popular periodicals are an important primary source base for my project. I analyze a large number of images in this project, especially political cartoons, and pay close attention to common symbols and motifs. As I will go on to explain, recurring tropes apprehended by a large readership—and thus viewership—provided accessible depictions of race and belonging. Political cartoons frequently showcased visual illustrations of who could—or could not—be Canadian.
**Intellectual Framework**

But before we discuss images of national belonging/exclusion, we must discuss nations, and forces that created them. My research is indebted to the work of scholars such as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, who have de-naturalized nation-states and nationalist sentiments, and theorized how they have been historically constructed. Similarly, Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci are also important intellectual influences, for their indispensable analyses of how everyday attitudes, policies, and institutions are imbued with subtle but potent operations of power.\textsuperscript{12} And of course, Edward Said’s work has illustrated how these operations of power are culturally codified and grounded in hierarchical assumptions about race and civilization.

I have also learned a great deal from other scholars who have brought similar intellectual influences to bear on their analyses of the past. This of course includes historians, as well as scholars in anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, gender studies, and visual studies. I have also found historical work on race and immigration to British Dominions, and on imperialism more broadly, indispensable as secondary sources, and thank these scholars for their painstaking archival research. I also owe a debt to Charles and Cynthia Hou for their two collections of Canadian political cartoons, \textsuperscript{12}

many of which I analyze in this project. I also use many images from the Library of Congress collection of political cartoons.

Political cartoons are an incredibly rich cultural form and important primary source base for my project. When properly analyzed, these images can yield a wealth of information about past worlds. Yet as Peter Burke notes, historians tend to privilege textual over visual sources (2008). Burke goes on to argue that when they do include sources, most historians use them primarily as illustrations, without subjecting them to as rigorous analysis as they do texts. To do this with political cartoons seems to me an especial injustice. For these images are explicitly political, by definition. To some extent, all images are political, for of course they were created and circulated in a broader social context. But images are produced for any number of reasons: documentary, illustration, decoration, recollection, self-expression, commerce.

All such visual forms are valuable in deepening our understanding of the social realities of the past. But many images expressly elide aspects of their context. Often, the creators and consumers of such images have intended them to be appreciated and interpreted primarily from an aesthetic perspective. These images exist within the realm of what Walter Benjamin terms the “secular cult of beauty,” which was

This impressive collection comprises two volumes of Canadian political cartoons and features hundreds of cartoons from over fifty different newspapers.


“developed during the Renaissance and prevailed for three centuries” (231). According to Benjamin, such pieces of art have an “aura”, owing to their “authenticity” as “historical objects”—unique works of art: singular and irreproducible. Of course, these images can still be interpreted critically, and with awareness and attention to context. And obviously, entire fields of study such as art history are devoted to doing just that.

Other times, images are created in order to elicit a desired action from viewers, other than the act of aesthetic appreciation. Take, for instance, commercial imagery, such as advertising. We can learn a great deal about past perspectives and other social worlds by analyzing consumer culture. Ann McClintock’s excellent analysis of imperial soap ads in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995) illustrates how advertising images are still very meaningful and revealing, when we study the symbols and strategies used to market goods.

Like political cartoons, until fairly recently, advertising has not been studied as seriously as art. This is in part because of its relative newness. There can be no long tradition of studying advertising as with art, for advertising does not have a long a history, unlike “fine art”. As Walter Benjamin points out in his seminal 1936 essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”: “[a]round 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes” (219). Advertising had its own
technical basis, as did older art forms. But unlike previous visual forms, both advertising and political cartoons relied on the technology of the printing press. This also marked a massive change in the nature of visual culture. For Benjamin, the ability to mass produce of images represented a “tremendous shattering of tradition” (221).

In a sense, political cartoons are the precise opposite of rarefied “high art” objects. They are cheap, disposable, and available to virtually everyone. As Benjamin goes on to explain, “the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence.” In short, these items utterly lack the “aura” of elevated art objects. It is not only because of its newness that mainstream print culture does not hold the same place as “high art”. It is also because they are, by definition, unremarkable and ubiquitous. Their lack of aura is part of their power. They influence by repetition and inundation—precisely the opposite of rare art, where its power lies in its singularity. Advertising—both commercial and political—given its widespread circulation, its virtual over-proliferation—makes it impossible to systematically archive, and complicates its close study. Such an archive will always be incomplete, yet overwhelming.

Another reason why these newer visual works lack aura is because they represent a shift from a realm of precious raw materials and sublime aesthetic beauty—impractical, and so even more valued as the exclusive concern of elites—to a world of “base”
materialism and instrumentality, tainted by the necessary “commonness” of its materials and consumers alike. And just as traditional “high art” departs from printed forms, so too does print advertising, in its own way, depart from political cartoons. Both forms are instrumentalist, mass-produced, but advertising is distinct in the sense that its objective is obvious, unchanging, and inherent to its form: to sell products and services.

By contrast, political cartoons vend not material goods but complicated, often conflicting, political agendas. Given their nuances and complexity, comparatively few scholars have turned their attention to this particular form of visual culture. Yet political cartoons, among few other visual forms were created with the explicit, express intention of advancing specific non-commercial agendas. Political cartoon images are frequently polemical, even propagandistic. They are designed to carry weight, to affect public opinion. Ideally, their creators and distributors intend them to spur action, to generate critique or ensure accord. Surely, this is part of why they have been relatively devalued as forms of “art” or “culture”—because of their utility, and the fact that they are often clumsy, ham-fisted. These images circulated widely, and were designed to be accessible. Through their use of common visual tropes they could be decoded even by a non-literate viewership. Thus, these visual historical documents should warrant at least as much attention and analysis as their textual counterparts. For my project, this is particularly true because these images gave visual form to the imagined community.

14 I would also include some public interest campaign images and wartime propaganda in this category. But these images are somewhat distinct in that they are usually clear and cohesive, and oriented towards an obvious, unambiguous agenda.
They portrayed the nation while it was under construction. In this sense, these images helped to create the nation.

For it is not only political cartoons, as images, that were reproduced. It was the motifs contained within them as well. Particular symbols were repeated across many different political cartoons—creating what I consider a “visual vocabulary” of race, nation, and belonging. This visual vocabulary intersected with other popular and political discourses—and even affected law and policy—which was itself represented and re-represented in political cartoons. Methodologically, I study political cartoons using tools of discourse analysis: including close reading and semiotics. These are useful tools borrowed from cultural studies and critical theory and applied to historical visual culture, to yield insights about the past. When subjected to close analysis, these fascinating sources can yield numerous insights into national anxieties and political tensions, as well as the attitudes and values of an era.

In terms of methodology, one of the most useful models for my project is that of David Ciarlo in Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany (2011). As Ciarlo explains, discovering ‘obsolete visual patterns’ gives us “a window into how people used to 'see'”. He goes on to argue that: “[o]verall, some patterns of imagery can be recognized ultimately as so pervasive...that they collectively constitute a visual hegemony—a codification of representation so ubiquitous that those seeking to craft a representation need to deploy it to be easily understood” (17, emphasis mine). In
“simple terms”, Ciarlo elaborates that “a broad, historical survey of visuality might be able to tell us something about *how* people saw, and even how they interpreted those images, merely by showing and analyzing *what* they saw, over and over and over again” (17).

Ciarlo’s insights are very useful for my project. As do I, Ciarlo focuses on race and empire in an era when the proliferation of print culture played a central role in solidifying and disseminating emerging national identities. Political cartoons depicted race and immigration in strikingly visual terms, and naturalized racialized notions of national belonging. In my analysis of large numbers of visual images, I also see the emergence over time of what Ciarlo terms a “visual hegemony”. Ciarlo borrows Antonio Gramsci’s notion of cultural hegemony, and applies it specifically to images and visuality. Gramsci’s “hegemony” refers to the use and manipulation of culture, by a dominant ruling elite, for the purpose of maintaining control over a diverse society and perpetuating the *status quo*. In applying Gramsci’s concept to visual culture, Ciarlo explores how images have been used to reinforce dominant ideologies—through the combination of widespread distribution, and the repetition of particular visual patterns. Like Ciarlo’s, my research also explores “the growing hegemony of…visual construction[s] of race”, in a historical context of nation-building and imperialism in “which identity, racial and national both, were not just imagined, but *materially* imaged” (5, emphasis mine).
Although Ciarlo works with advertising images, his concept of visual hegemony is useful for exploring recurring motifs and visual tropes in depictions of immigration. Often, print ads and political cartoons used similar motifs, even as their form differed, as did the agenda they marketed. Consumer and political imagery in this era frequently used similar illustration techniques, especially for depicting racial difference. For instance, racial caricature—which exaggerated the phenotypical traits of racialized populations—was prevalent in advertising as well as political cartoons. This technique was popular in both forms of visual culture. Moreover, these two media forms were sometimes mutually-reinforcing. Both visual forms are about selling something, but advertising is consistently about commodities, while political cartoons are mired in messy political debates, or social commentary and satire. Yet, despite their divergent aims, these two forms certainly acted together to strengthen notions of racial difference. And at times, politicized pictures intersected with consumer imagery. This is the case in the “Magic Washer” laundry soap advertisement that I analyze in Chapter Four: it used anti-Chinese tropes to sell soaps.

Much of the imagery portraying race, nation, and belonging used racial caricature and visual metaphors to depict exclusion and otherness. Motifs such as fences and gates recur constantly throughout political cartoons portraying migration, strategically placed to bar “undesirable” populations. Unflattering caricatures both reflected and reinforced the presumed “inassimilability” and “otherness” of these migrants. In addition to caricature, dehumanizing metaphors also became part of a visual hegemony—in which
“inferior” racial groups were pictured as animals or inanimate objects. Racialized migrants—especially from China—were often animalized: envisioned as swarms of bees, or marauding pigs devouring everything in sight. They were just as frequently visualized as a tidal wave or some other force of nature threatening to engulf the defenseless state. Such motifs were repeated with such regularity and consistency that they became a sort of shorthand for immigration restriction.

It is this shorthand—this hegemonic visual vocabulary—that most concerns me in the analysis of political cartoons. I am most interested in how the repetition of images comes to form what Ciarlo identifies as a “comprehensive visual archive” (17). In debates and discussions of migration and belonging, visual images, popular attitudes, institutional stances, and law and policy all reinforced each other—and occasionally collided. Because I am interested in understanding dominant culture in a broad sense, I have chosen to devote less attention to particular media outlets – and image producers and consumers – than to larger patterns and portrayals. I have included information about cartoonists, editors, and publications when it is both readily available and relevant, but this is not at the heart of my analysis. This project is neither a history of newspapers or periodicals, nor of particular editors, cartoonists, and their audiences. I am less interested in a business or institutional history of media outlets than in how the images that these outlets circulated intersected with larger debates about race and belonging—and what can be gleaned from studying these points of intersection.
Some critics will argue that omitting such information means omitting important historical context. However, I contextualized these images by reading them alongside other primary sources, which make the historical context come alive. Historical information on long-extinct newspapers and periodicals is difficult to come by. Many such publications survive only in fragmented form, with missing pages, and missing volumes—sometimes years-worth. These businesses have frequently stopped publication, changed ownership, or been renamed, which makes it difficult to track down publication information. Circulation information is similarly difficult to come by, and of questionable value for my project, since it only provides absolute numbers, but not more revealing demographic data about readers. So I create context by analyzing the intersections of cultural forms. To this end, I have devoted my archival research primarily to government documents, such as meetings and debates of the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate, as well as to popular writings, such as books and articles—frequently by racial nationalists, but sometimes by anti-racists as well. In this way, I can place political cartoons in the context of larger public debates about race, nation, and empire.

I have found that various forms of culture borrowed heavily from each other in reinforcing racialized ideas of belonging and exclusion. David Ciarlo found that in Germany advertising imagery gradually became increasingly divorced from “overt, official sources” (11). The opposite proved true for my project and sources: visual imagery and official state discourse remained deeply intertwined. My primary source
base includes textual sources, both “official” and “popular”, which I analyze alongside political cartoons. Official sources include government meetings, debates, legislation, and hearings and inquiries. Popular sources include newspaper articles and editorials, books, and speeches by non-politicians. I study political cartoons as an important form of visual culture, but not to the exclusion of historical writings.

Textual and visual sources are inherently linked. In Canada, both cultural forms created and reinforced racial ideology, including raced definitions of membership in the imagined community. In an era when print culture was becoming increasingly ubiquitous and influential, images provided powerful ammunition for advancing partisan political agendas. Through political cartoons, visuality and imagery were harnessed to deride competitors’ political parties and leaders. These were images were mutually-reinforcing with textual messages. And official and popular sources also reinforced one another. Because elected representatives were beholden to their constituents, popular sentiments played an important role in policy-making. Similarly, policy decisions served to normalize racial attitudes through official acceptance. Both popular and official views shaped the vision, and ultimately the reality, of Canada.

This visual vocabulary was not confined to Canada but circulated transnationally throughout the Dominions, Britain, and the United States. Common metaphors for fragile national whiteness and besieged “purity” were recycled and reconfigured until they became well-known tropes. Visual metaphors of race and nation were exchanged
within the British Empire and also within North America—both of which Canada was a part of. Canadians, like their counterparts, created and exchanged images other with Dominions and the United States. Repetition kept these images alive and made them continually relevant to debates about race and nation. Meaningful innovations on these themes were also soon repeated, so that they too quickly became pervasive and hegemonic. Visual hegemony was not only created that depicted exclusion—but as we shall see in Chapter One, also more inclusive versions of national identity, as well as transnational constructions of imperial unity and white solidarity.
CHAPTER 1 Creating Citizens: Whiteness, Inclusion, and National Identity

The Birth of Whiteness

Canada became “white”, and entrenched this whiteness as a central part of its national identity, in a global historical moment of nation-building, when other young states in what Kornel Chang terms the “Anglophone colonial world” were also rushing to do the same (Chang: 2009). This chapter sets out the context for subsequent chapters about national exceptionalism, labor migration, and imperialism. I explore how a core Anglo-Canadian—that is, white, English-speaking—identity became dominant around the turn of the twentieth century. At this same moment, the idea of “whiteness” became an increasingly salient component of transnational conversations about race, nation, empire, and migration. With this transnational framework in mind, this case study of whiteness and national identity formation elucidates insights into larger process of racial formations and national identity construction taking place in this epoch.

Just as “nations” are not an intuitive, organic way of organizing space and humanity, “race” is not an essential, intrinsic trait. Race is socially-defined, and historically constructed. As Frantz Fanon explains in Black Skin, White Masks, race has “historicity” (2008: 92). Racial categories carry the weight of their historical formation, and the
collective associations that have accrued over time. In a famous passage, Fanon describes how he feels the burden of his racialization bearing down on him—equating him with his "ancestors, enslaved and lynched" (92)—but also surpassing this historical reality that befell many people of African descent. Fanon writes: “I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features; deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas, slave traders..."—when he simply “wanted quite simply to be a man among men”, “a man, and nothing but a man” (92).

As for the question of who is able to be simply “a man among men”, let us turn to critical whiteness theorist, Richard Dyer. In *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (1997), Dyer points out that today part of the power of whiteness is its invisibility, normativity, and ubiquity. It is not only whiteness as a racial category that is largely invisible, but also the privilege it confers on its bearer: “like 'an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions’” (9, citing McIntosh). Dyer goes on to explain: “this then is why it is important to come to see whiteness. For those in power in the West, as long as whiteness is felt to be the human condition, then it alone both defines normality and fully inhabits it” (9). Unlike what Fanon observes of blackness, Dyer concludes that "being white" is equated "with being human" (9). This is part of how it "secures a position of power" (9).
But whiteness has not always been as invisible and normative as Dyer contends that it is today. Nor has it been so expansive. There was a time when whiteness was highly visible, and hotly contested. It was exclusive—even prized—particularly by those with a tenuous claim to it: the “ethnic” minorities and the working class. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the racial category of whiteness was under formation. And it was elusive and exclusive. It was once a selective category to which many people, including those taken-for-granted as white today, aspired. Increasingly, scholars have turned their attention to the historical formation of whiteness in North America: such as David R. Roediger’s *Wages of Whiteness* (1999), Matthew Frye Jacobson’s *Whiteness of a Different Color* (1999), and Noel Ignatief’s *How the Irish Became White* (2008), who explore how poor European immigrants came to be seen as “white”.

In this project, I do not attempt to delve into the origins of whiteness. Rather, I explore the solidification and entrenchment of this category in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I also examine how this emerging quality was increasingly attributed to *states* as well as persons, states which were *themselves* emerging alongside whiteness. In this era of nation-building, not only individuals but also new “nations” aspired to be “white”. This chapter explores the complexity, cleavages and fragmentation within the category of whiteness and focuses on how this trait was
systematically ascribed to the imagined community, and built into exclusionary rules of mobility and citizenship.

This chapter again sets Canada in larger transnational context as part of the British Empire and North America. A major theme of this chapter is ambivalence. Anglo-Canadians were ambivalent about the British Empire’s polices and migrants, “ethnic” Europeans, and Americans. I demonstrate that the decidedly less ambiguous perception of what Du Bois calls the “black and brown and yellow” world ultimately helped to ameliorate other social cleavages: to make ethnic European settlers “white, and by extension the state, and “citizenship” in general “white” as well.

**Images of Race and Belonging**

As Fanon points out, race is visible, *epidermal*. Visual images reinforce racialized definitions of inclusion and exclusion. An August 1907 political cartoon in the *B.C. Saturday Sunset* (Vancouver) shows two gates side by side, one labeled “White Immigration”, the other “Oriental Exclusion” (Fig. 1.1). Behind the gates, a harbor is visible in the background. The gate on the left is open wide, and a group of upright, self-possessed white immigrants walks calmly onto Canadian soil from a modern steamboat. Their slight distinctions in dress suggest various European ethnicities and social classes, such as the young British-looking child to the left, and another young man on the right,
who looks like he is dressed like a farmer, in overalls. These distinctions are just enough to endow the migrants with individuality and personhood, but not enough to make them seem “other”—they are all portrayed as unarguably “white”—especially in stark contrast to other potential newcomers. Behind the gate on the right, a mass of animalistic and demonic-looking Asians clamors to get into Canada. In addition to the Asian migrants’ unflattering physiognomy and profuse numbers – many are only represented by their hats, which befits their depiction as dehumanized and undifferentiated – their emergence from an old-fashioned sailing ship further signals their “backwardness” and “primitiveness”. Unlike the dignified white immigrants, one Asian man even sticks his leg through a hole in the gate in an effort to slip through, like an animal escaping from a pen.

But Miss Canada, in a Union Jack-emblazoned dress, firmly holds the gate shut to bar their entry. The caption reads, "The same act which excludes Orientals should open wide the portals of British Columbia to white immigration". In this chapter, we will see how the motifs and symbols from this image were continually reinforced in popular culture. We will also see how various cultural forms—political cartoons, newspaper

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1 A trope repeated in many cartoons is the belief that Asians are “sneaky” and “devious”, which is reinforced in this image by the man’s apparent attempt to slip into Canada, unnoticed. Similarly, the racist caricatures reinforced Asian migrants’ “foreignness” and presented them as almost sub-human. So too did the depiction of potential migrants—penned in and packed behind the fence like livestock—a dehumanization that also reinforces a belief in the numerical threat posed by Asians, discursively presented in the racialized language of the “Oriental invasion”, “scourge”, or “flood”.
articles, government debates, laws, and racial nationalist texts – both circulated transnationally and conspired to create whiteness.

For evidence of how such cultural forms circulated transnationally, we have only to turn to a December 1881 cartoon from The Wasp (San Francisco) (Fig. 1.2). The 1907 image from the Saturday Sunset borrows many motifs from this American image from over two decades before. The 1881 Wasp political cartoon shows a shipload of European settlers disembarking, as Uncle Sam and Lady Liberty look on approvingly. The idealized white immigrants carry signs, reading “art”, “industry”, “capital”, “labor”, and “agriculture,” to symbolize the newcomers’ Protestant work ethic and Western cultural inheritance. These signs literally spell out how the new settlers will commemorate America's founding values and carry on their legacy: as indicated by the grave marked “in memory of Puritanism”. In striking contrast, in the right frame, Asian immigrants are portrayed as a looming sea monster menacing the vulnerable Pacific state, and bearing the labels “immorality”, “small pox” and “ruin to white labor”. Again, this all happens under the watchful eye of a female archetype representing the nation. In this case, it is Miss Columbia, the American equivalent of Miss Canada.\(^2\)

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2 As Ellen L. Berg, an affiliate assistant professor at the University of Maryland, explains on a New York Times blog, “Columbia was America’s response to Britannia, a secular goddess who personified the national spirit. Both Britannia and Columbia were patterned after other goddess figures: Britannia copied Minerva’s helmet, for example, and both symbols frequently identified themselves with the Goddess of Liberty by displaying or wearing the ‘liberty cap’.” As Berg, who is “is writing a book about the symbol of Columbia in American history” goes on to say: “[from these roots in classical symbolism, Columbia’s
While both states’ popular culture depicted immigration restriction, the degree to which cartoons from the United States and Canada used nearly identical visual forms and racial tropes is fascinating. The strikingly similar images from 1881 and 1907 bear out David Ciarlo’s argument that viewing multiple rather than discrete, individual images enables us to recognize “larger patterns of imagery over time...[v]iewing imagery collectively and coherently, as a corpus over time, allows us to see the existence of patterns—of ways of crafting and of seeing imagery—that are mutually reinforcing” (16).

In this case, the two images reinforce the idea that “whiteness” can equal belonging.

“This unified white racial identity was also reproduced in daily regional newspapers such as Vancouver’s *B.C. Saturday Sunset*, which opined in 1911 that “‘the White Man[,] even the riffraff of the white race that Europe sends, can be boiled down into a decent Canadian citizen in a couple of generations at least, but an Oriental does not change’” (Chang: 684). Using almost identical language and logic, the Reverend Neville Lascelles

identity gradually solidified during the first half of the 19th century. In these early days, Columbia, or her twin, the Goddess of Liberty, rivaled the American eagle in popularity as an emblem of public patriotic proclamation.” See: “Hail, Columbia!”, *New York Times Disunion Blog*, July 2, 2011.

3 Miss Canada rivaled Miss Columbia in popularity in Canadian nationalist discourse, and was a recurring figure in Canadian political cartoons. Unlike the more matronly Mother Britannia, used to depict England, the youth of Miss Columbia and Miss Canada referred to the newness of these two countries. The youth of these figures also referenced the ideals of promise and freedom associated with the New World. But Miss Canada, unlike republican Columbia, was usually depicted proudly garbed in her Union Jack, exemplifying a dutiful daughter, faithful to her mother (country). Political cartoons from this era also frequently portrayed the corresponding male archetypes – Jack Canuck (Canada), John Bull (England), and Uncle Sam (United States), which we will see in many of the images analyzed in this project. By racial and gendering the body politic, all such images linked these states to the larger project of Anglo-Saxonism. Reginald Horseman explains in *Race and Manifest Destiny* that an important component of Anglo-Saxonism was to link western civilization to a mythologized great past lineage of great civilizations. Ancient Roman and Grecian imagery figures prominently in depictions of the imagined Western past to legitimate later national and imperial projects.
Ward of the Anglican Church and the superintendent of the Chinese and Japanese missions in British Columbia explained that "'[w]hen Frenchmen, Italians, and even Germans come to British Columbia it is only a question of time before they are absorbed into the Canadian commonwealth. Not so with the Japanese and Chinese, who are Mongolian, Yellow, Asiatic, and non-Christian people."

Whiteness was defined primarily in opposition to the overseas labor and migration of Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian groups” (Chang: 684).

Where the two images differ is in their portrayal of class and ethnicity. In the 1881 cartoon, we see a variety of ethnic European phenotypes. We also see a portrayal of class, through the depiction of various occupations and trades. Some settlers are clearly from elite classes, such as the man in the top hat, spectacles, and starched collar. By contrast, working class man is equally clearly skilled, and carries saws and chisel; many, however, carry shovels. There is even one caricatured Irishman, carrying some papers, reading "politics". By contrast, in the 1907 political cartoon, we see neither class nor ethnicity. In this simplistic and binarized image, all Europeans have become even more “white” when counterpoised against the threat of “Orientals”.  

4 This is not to say that all white ethnicities received equal treatment in Canada, or that there was no discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. It is rather to say that their “whiteness” afforded European migrants a privilege unavailable those whose skin-color was presumed to mark them as incapable of civilization and thus citizenship.
In the early 1900s it went without question that Canada needed immigrants much more than the United States did, as its West remained more sparsely settled. Nation-building required workers who could build infrastructure, generate wealth, pay taxes, and subscribe to national mythologies. In the context of North American national competition, making “less desirable” European migrants “white” validated both their desirability as members in the imagined community and Canada’s desirability as a destination for settlers. As we will see in the texts of two vocal racial nationalists, James S. Woodsworth and Agnes Laut, as well as in political cartoons, ideas of racial otherness were combined with the material needs of nation-building to create whiteness, inclusion, and “Canadianness”. As we shall see, racial exclusion helped to form the basis for inclusion of the “motley” newcomers who arrived in Canada from Europe.

**Racial Nationalists**

In *The Canadian Commonwealth* (1915) journalist Agnes Laut (1871-1936) identified the same themes and tensions that preoccupied Du Bois in *The Souls of White Folk*, but did so from the racial perspective of a white Anglo-Canadian nationalist. Laut complained of the audacity and presumptuousness of the non-white world in daring to demand self-governance and a hand in world affairs. In her view, as in that of as many other white nationalists—in Canada and across the globe—darker-skinned people were born not to rule, but to *be* ruled. And they should stay in their place. That place in Laut's
estimation, was not Canada or any other “white” country. In her chapter “The Coming of the Oriental”, Laut presents a racial nationalist view of global politics, migration, and nation-building through an imagined conversation among the rising imperial power, Japan, and the “three great governments”—“Uncle Sam's,” “John Bull's,” and “Miss Canada's.”

Laut’s optimistic narrative places Canada on par with the United States and the British Empire, despite its being a fraction of the size of the U.S., and only one among Britain's numerous imperial appendages. In this, Laut was not unusual among Canadian nationalists: many in this era envisioned a future in which Canada would eventually match or even surpass the United States in wealth, political influence, and economic power, and would go on to become the central nation-state of the British Empire. As Laut writes in a 1909 book, *Empire of the North*, “Canada stands at the same place in the world's history as England stood in the Golden Age of Queen Elizabeth—on the threshold of her future as a great nation...a nation the size of all Europe is setting out on the career of her world history” (34). Yet note that she does not claim that Canada is a “great power” but rather a “great government”. Canadian nationalists were aware that they were not a “great power”, even if they were part of one, and hoped to become one—if only Britain would allow them to build their imagined community as they saw fit.
In *The Canadian Commonwealth*, speaking on behalf of the “great governments”, Laut crafts an imagined dialogue between “Whiteman” and “Brown Brother” on the subject of migration and foreign policy—a paraphrasing of actual diplomatic negotiations that had transpired “shorn of diplomatic kowtowing and compliments and circumlocutions” (132). Laut outlines the antipathy of racial nationalists to immigration from Asia. She explains that racial nationalists do not object to the presence of a few students, merchants, and travelers, “but what we do object to is the coolies.... What with the Chink and Jap and Hindu, you are hundreds of millions of people. If we admit your coolies at the present rate...we shall presently have a coolie population of millions. We don’t like your coolies any better than you do yourself! Keep them at home!” (130-131).

Rather than defend the “coolies” – the poorest of racialized workers, engaged in the most grueling and ill-paid manual labor – “Brown Brother” retorted to “Whiteman” that Asian nations “don’t care any more for our coolies than you do. We don’t in fact, care a hoot what becomes of the spawn and dregs of no-goods in our population” (131). “[B]ut,” he continues, “what we do care for is this—we Orientals refuse to be branded any longer as an inferior race.” No more should skin color be cause for subjection,

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5 Laut, Agnes. *The Canadian Commonwealth* (1915: 131, emphasis mine). In fact, what the Mikado actually said (in British colonial paraphrasing) was this: “When British Columbia passed legislation preventing Japanese from working in coal mines, for example, in 1899, Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain explained that it was not acceptable: ‘It is not the practical exclusion of Japanese to which the Mikado objects, but their exclusion nominatum, which specifically stamps the whole nation as undesirable persons’” (Lake & Reynolds: 179, citing a letter from Chamberlain to the Governor General).
“Brown Brother” insisted: “[w]e intend to stand shoulder to shoulder with you in the management of the world's affairs...[w]e intend to force recognition of what we are by what we do. We ask no favors, but we now serve you notice that we intend to play the game” (131-132). The “game” was “Whiteman’s” game: imperialism and power.

Laut then asks her readers: “[c]an you see the white men's eyes pop out of their heads with astonishment?” (132) In their dealings with China, Japan, and India, the aggrieved white men had thus “found themselves involved in a complex race problem, dealing with three aggressive applicants for places at the council of rulers governing the world” (132).6 One can easily imagine Laut's own eyes bulging, given how her words bristle with indignation at the audacity of the non-white world in daring to demand the right to self-determination and a seat at the table of global governance.

Du Bois similarly identifies Japanese might as a threat to white supremacy: at once political, economic, military, and ideological. He argues that following Japan's unprecedented victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), “[t]emporary halt in this program was made by little Japan and the white world

6 The “three aggressive applicants” are presumably China, Japan, and India. But we can arguably extend the figure of “Brown Brother” to include all racialized threats to white hegemony and European imperialism, included, but not limited to those from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Historical events such as the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) were certainly seen as early threats to European colonialism, which continued into an imperial and anti-imperial era, and undermined notions of white superiority, symbolically and ideologically, but also economically, and politically.

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immediately sensed the peril of such ‘yellow’ presumption! What sort of a world would this be if yellow men must be treated ‘white’?” (30) Du Bois speaks wryly of this framing of Japanese imperialism and anti-colonialism, accurately identifying a deep-seated terror of the fearsome specter of racial equality. Laut and other racial nationalists did not share Du Bois’s sense of irony. Laut and her allies took themselves and their presumed plight very seriously, and saw their role in nation-building as indispensable.

Racial nationalists positioned themselves as gatekeepers—which in a very real sense they were—since their vocal advocacy for immigration restriction helped spur the creation of immigration laws and that curtailed the movement of darker skinned peoples into so-called “white men's countries.” As British racial nationalist, James Bryce (1838-1922) argued: “the Colonial Office drew a fundamental distinction between white, self-governing colonies 'deemed fit to govern themselves' and Crown Colonies – 'tropical colonies [with] a predominant coloured population' – in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific”. And “white men’s countries” were determined to maintain their privileged global position. “In drawing the global colour line, immigration restriction became a version of racial segregation on an international scale, as [American racial nationalist] Lothrop Stoddard memorably stated” (Lake & Reynolds: 5).

7 Lake and Reynolds (123). Bryce was a British Viscount, Liberal Party politician, and Ambassador to the United States (1907-1913). Bryce wrote the well-known book, The American Commonwealth (1888), and later Canada: an Actual Democracy (1921). James Bryce was a prominent thinker, who as Ambassador did much to strengthen Anglo-American ties. His work was cited by J.S. Woodsworth and Lothrop Stoddard, and discussed extensively by and Lake and Reynolds.
While policies were enacted at the state level, the massive scale of this exclusionary venture required cooperation between “white men’s countries”. Through discursive constructions of race and nation, as in the discussion between Laut’s “Whiteman” and “Brown Brother”, racial nationalists created unifying discourses of whiteness and Anglo-Saxonism, in which Canada's was not only constructed as “white”, but in which its plight and aspirations were linked with those of other white men throughout North America and the British Empire.

**Colonial Contest: The Tensions of Nation and Empire**

The global status quo was framed as a colonial contest, and even as a “race war” (Lake & Reynolds: 93)—a zero sum battle for survival and supremacy, in which white men's countries were simultaneously allies and competitors in a colonial contest for dominance. But within this contest, Canada's place is ambiguous, for there was constant tension between Canada's place as part of North America, as part of the British Empire, and as a semi-autonomous entity. This slippage is evident within Laut's work, as well as that of other nationalists, as I will go on to discuss. This tension is also abundantly present within popular visual culture created during the era of nation-building, and which supported this endeavor.
Nationalist public culture consistently represented migration from Asia as a danger to Anglo-Canadian hegemony. A 1908 cartoon, published in both the Montreal Daily Star and the Vancouver Daily Post, depicted some white Canadians' fears of decline and insignificance in striking literal terms (Fig. 1.3). The cartoon shows a pan-Asian crowd gazing at a curious spectacle, an endangered species\(^8\) labeled “Homo Albus (White Man) At one time very numerous in this province[,] may still be found east of the rocky mountains.” The attentive Chinese, Japanese, and Indian spectators look on in visible amusement as the exhibition's curator announces, "we have here gentlemen positively the last specimen of a white man known to exist in B.C. It was captured after great trouble and expense in the interior of the province. If you will listen gentleman it will now sing a comic song...."\(^9\) The bewildered and tattered-looking older man sings "Rule

\(^8\) By contrast, some white men were offended by the notion that whites could be made extinct. W. H. Fitchett harshly critiqued a book by influential Australian racial nationalist, Charles Pearson, which made such claims. Fitchett argued that Pearson lacked “pride of race”, since he expected white people “to vanish before a procession of coffee-coloured, yellow-tinted, or black-skinned races” (Lake & Reynolds: 92, quoting W. H. Fitchett). Similarly, it is also important to remember that Pearson’s work was polemical, as was Laut’s and that of her contemporary, J.S. Woodsworth, who we will soon meet. These thinkers wrote their texts to promote particular political agendas and policies that could actualize their racial nationalist visions. By arguing that they were trying to save Australia or Canada from debased and uncertain futures as “mongrelized” nations, these individuals imagined themselves within a teleological conception of nation-building. They were fervently devoted to their visions for their countries’ futures and dedicated themselves to working towards something greater. In a complex sense they were, if “nations” themselves represent “something greater”—for these racial nationalists helped create a sense of national unity, albeit one based on discourses of whiteness and national superiority.

\(^9\) This image probably also stung because of its racial reversal of the prominent practice of exhibiting darker-skinned peoples for curious white audiences. Such “anthropological” or “ethnographic exhibitions” were a common spectacle at world fairs and expositions. These displays depicted “exotic” cultures and lifestyles, which were frequently fictionalized or exaggerated in the portrayal of “Negro villages”, “Indian villages” the like. Exhibits sometimes included sensationalized reenactments of practices like cannibalism or hunting, and reinforced ideas of indigenous and African inferiority. Displays sometimes also featured people with distinct physical features, as was the case with African “pygmies” and the so-called “Hottentot Venus,” a woman named Saartjie Baartman, who was displayed in London in the early nineteenth century by French anatomist Georges Cuvier, and whose remains were preserved following her death. The fact that the political cartoon alludes to such practices of human display is significant, since such spectacle is implicitly understood to be undignified and insulting when “white” people are on display. This underscores Du Bois’ and Laut’s point that certain prerogatives are reserved only for Europe and its offspring.

For more on scientific racism and ethnographic displays, see:
Britannia,” as a grinning Chinese man remarks in ‘broken English’: “me see heap plenty white man maybe twenty year ago.” The caption reads "Looking Ahead: What it may come to if the Oriental invasion is not stopped.”

In addition to the palpable fear of extinction and powerlessness highlighted in comic form, what is striking is the Britishness of white Canadian identity in this era. Historian Barbara Roberts explains that “[b]etween 1880 and 1920, Canada built a nation. For most, that nation was to be British in outlook as well as in character. The highest level of citizenship was based on love and loyalty to Canada and to the British empire; the two were inseparable” (Roberts, 1979: 186). By depicting the captured specimen of white Canadianness as preeminently British, and having him sing the glories of imperial rule as the “subject races” look on in mirth, the cartoon presents Canadian national whiteness as both under siege, and as inextricable from British imperial whiteness and its aspirations for world dominance.

In keeping with Canada’s ambivalent position as both a North American and British imperial state, white Canadian nationalists simultaneously aligned themselves with the other Dominions and the United States, in shared opposition to migration from Asia.


For an analysis of the portrayal of Native peoples at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, see:
and in cooperation for the erection of a “global color bar”. Yet Canadian nationalists also saw themselves as competitors with, and critics of, other white men's countries—and to some degree the British Empire itself. Despite prizing their Britishness, many Anglo-Canadian nationalists (and virtually all French-Canadians) were frustrated that British imperial politics often thwarted white Canadian hopes for racial and national greatness. Tensions around immigration were particularly palpable, and many white Canadian nationalists resented how the machinations of Britain's larger imperial ambitions impinged upon nationalists' ability to craft the imagined community they envisioned. As Laut laments, while the United States, particularly “California went the whole length of demanding the total exclusion of Brown Brothers”—“Canada was ordered to lay both her hands across her mouth and never speak above a whisper of the whole Brown Brother problem; and England—well—England openly took the Jappy-Chappy at his word—recognized him as a world brother and entered into the famous alliance” (132-133). The Anglo-Japanese Alliance officially began in 1902, and expired in 1921, but was officially terminated in 1923.

Britain's decision to ally with Japan with little consideration for Canada's concept of its racial destiny, angered many white Canadian nationalists, who were forced to tone down their antipathy towards Japanese migration, as a result of the alliance. Laut's disdain for the Anglo-Japanese alliance is echoed in a 1907 cartoon from the B.C. Saturday Sunset, also known as the Vancouver Saturday Sunset. The image shows a
Japanese man and British John Bull crouching on and straddling the globe, holding cans of paint, a metaphor for imperial conquest (Fig. 1.4). As the Japanese man brushes strokes of yellow across western Canada, John Bull raises his red-smeared paintbrush in protest. The caption reads "John Bull: —Hi there, Jappy, I didn’t agree to let you dab your bloomin' yellow all over my red spots when I allied with you.” Red was Britain’s imperial color, and yellow also seems to be a symbolic choice for representing Japanese imperialism, given the characterization of Asians as a “yellow peril”. The cartoon's title, "What it should be" reads as a strident indictment of British insistence that Canada not jeopardize the important military and trade relationship with Japan, over the question of immigration to western Canada.

In the accompanying editorial on "the Japanese immigration question,” Sunset editor John P. McConnell rails against the “influx” of “Japs” and calls for “an immediate check to the yellow invasion.” McConnell angrily insists,¹⁰ “[w]e in British Columbia seriously object to being made the burden bearer of a British alliance with an Asian race. We recall the numerous sacrifices which Canada has been called upon to bear...for Imperial interests or through imperial neglect”. Such critiques of Britain were a popular refrain

¹⁰ The article was written under McConnell’s penname, Bruce. As McConnell explains on the opening page of the first issue, this idea was suggested by Mr. B. E. Sheppard, former publisher of the Toronto Saturday Night. This is only relevant to my project insofar as it evidences interconnections within the Canadian press at this time, and the fact that some publishers and editors knew one another and shared ideas and affiliations.
amongst racial nationalists, who felt it unjust that they had to further compromise the “purity” of their burgeoning nation for the greater good of the Empire.¹¹

**Imperial Intricacies and the Creation of National Whiteness**

The specter of whites and non-whites in general—and the British and Japanese Empires in particular—jockeying to paint the globe with imperialist brushstrokes illustrates the degree to which national and global politics were characterized in terms of a racialized colonial contest. Migration and citizenship also fell under this rubric of demographic, economic, and social dominance from which only one “race” could emerge triumphant. In the minds of many nationalists in this era, the migration of non-whites to Canada and other white men’s countries was surely part of a larger design for imperial conquest. Within their constrained worldview, the certain outcome of this zero-sum contest could only be the dominance of the victor and the inevitable decline into ignominy of the defeated race. But Canadian racial nationalists, like their U.S. and imperial contemporaries, refused to throw in the towel. They did not want to mourn the downfall of vanquished, if formerly glorious, Anglo-Saxondom—intoning imperialist

¹¹ Note that this was a regionalized debate. Others felt that Canada’s first duty was to the Empire — but West Coast racial nationalists said it was because political elites in Central and Maritime Canada didn’t have to suffer the presence of “unassimilable” Japanese in their midst as did those in the West, as I will discuss further in Chapters Three and Four.
songs to the amusement of their perceived inferiors, who had bested them in the contest for racial dominance.

But the implications of this colonial contest for questions of Canadian national identity were complicated. Simultaneously citizens of a North American Dominion, and subjects of the British Empire, Canadian racial nationalists’ loyalties at times converged and other times collided. What was clear however, was that, regardless of the amorphousness of loyalties and identities, Canadians were “white.” What exactly constituted this whiteness was still being worked out and debated, especially given the questionable whiteness of some European migrants. What was abundantly clear was what whiteness was not. It was not “black,” “brown,” or “yellow.” Through exclusion, Canadians created inclusion. Belonging was solidified through rejection, and whiteness and Canadianness by identifying what was not white, what was un-Canadian. Pictorially presenting their nation's plight at the mercy of Japan's imperial paintbrush—and by extension, that of the non-white world—was just one of the many ways in which Canadian nationalists participated in larger discourses and representations of Anglo-Saxonism and imperial power that circulated throughout North America and the British Empire during this time.

*Maps, Migration, and Modernity*
Canadian nationalists' ideas did not occur in a vacuum, but were rather a part of transnational discussions of race and nation. Part of why popular images such as the cartoons showing white extinction and imperial globe-painting aroused fears of racial decline is because they intersected with other related discourses. Canadian racial nationalists such as Laut aligned themselves with like-minded nationalists in the United States, which reinforced the credibility of their critiques of immigration. Laut was in the company of thinkers like Lothrop Stoddard (1883-1950), a leading U.S. advocate of immigration restriction. Stoddard had earned a Ph.D. from Harvard, which is significant in that it lent an air of legitimacy to his claims. Stoddard’s educational attainment also illustrates the fact that many racial nationalists were from elite social and economic circles, and that their ideas enjoyed mainstream acceptance at the time. Stoddard wrote *The Rising Tide of Color Against World White Supremacy* (1920), which included an introduction by another prominent racial nationalist and eugenicist, Madison Grant. Grant (1865-1937) had also been educated at elite universities, having earned a B.A. from Yale and a law degree from Columbia. Madison Grant was the author of the popular 1916 book, *The Passing of The Great Race; or, The racial basis of European history*. In his own influential text, Stoddard reinforced Laut's view of the global racial status quo—which he perceived as a brutal clash of civilizations—in which a “rising tide of color” threatened to engulf and absorb white civilization.\(^{12}\)

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12 This was not a unidirectional process. Advocates of racial equality responded to racial nationalists' texts, just as racial nationalists reacted to marginalized
In fact, Stoddard cited Agnes Laut’s *Canadian Commonwealth* (1915) in his eleventh chapter, “The Inner Dikes”. This chapter focuses on the white world’s “race-frontiers—these ‘inner dikes’—[that] the rising tide of color has for decades been beating, and will beat yet more fiercely as congesting population, quickened self-consciousness, and heightened sense of power impel the colored world to expansion and dominion” (236). In this chapter, Stoddard elaborated his belief that “the weakened, distracted white world must soon face a colored peril threatening its integrity and perhaps its existence” (236). Stoddard identified a three-pronged threat: arms, markets, and migration. He cited Laut as an authority on migration, explaining that as in Australia, “[f]rom Canada rises an equally uncompromising determination” (283) to erect “drastic immigration barriers” (282-3). This included the determination of Agnes Laut, from whom he even appeared to borrow the “dike” metaphor, writing:

a well-known Canadian writer, Miss Laut, thus defines the issue: “If the resident Hindu had a vote—and as a British subject, why not?—and if he could break down the immigration exclusion act, he could ouvtoke the native-born Canadian in ten years. In Canada are 5,500,000 native-born, 2,000,000 aliens. In India are hundreds of millions breaking the dikes of their own natural barriers and ready to flood any open land. Take down the barriers on the Pacific coast, and there would be 10,000,000 Hindus in Canada in ten years (283-4).

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In addition to his discussion of Australian racial nationalism, Stoddard linked Canada’s predicament to America’s perceived plight, explaining that “[o]ur Pacific coast takes precisely the same attitude” (284), and going on to discuss California. Like many in their time, Stoddard, Laut, and Grant all took the idea of eugenics seriously as what Stoddard would later term the “modern science” of “race-betterment” in his 1940 book, *Into the Darkness; Nazi Germany Today* (189). All three racial nationalists saw selective immigration policies as a way to ensure that the best “racial stock” would comprise their states’ biological body politic. In *Into the Darkness*, Stoddard even went on to praise the Nazi regime for its extensive application of the “science” of eugenics. Stoddard

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13 Eugenicist discourse was both prevalent and respected at this time. In 1900, a Canadian science and medical journal, *Canadian Practitioner*, ran an article entitled “Is the Anglo-Saxon Race Degenerating?” which featured a discussion of “race evolution” (*Canadian Practitioner*, Vol. 25, No. 8. July-August 1900). Eugenics lasted well into the twentieth century. The Second International Eugenics Conference was held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York in September, 1921. The event was promoted by the United States State Department, and featured prominent figures: Alexander Graham Bell was the honorary president, and Charles Darwin’s son spoke at the event. The Eugenics Conference logo depicted a tree (Fig. 1.7), probably a play on the idea of a “tree of life” or “family” tree, extended to the “human family” more broadly. The image attempts to validate eugenics as a legitimate science of “social” or “human” engineering. The image reads: “Eugenics is the self direction of human evolution”, and also “like a tree, eugenics draws its materials from many sources and organizes them into a harmonious entity”. The labels on the tree’s roots draw connections to anatomy, physiology, biology, genetics, psychology, mental testing, history, geology, archaeology, ethnology, politics, economics, biology, genealogy, education, sociology, religion, psychiatry, surgery, and medicine, in a messy conflation of humanistic, social scientific, and scientific discourses and methods to reinforce social Darwinist ideas. The 1920s was a high water mark of the eugenics movement. Eugenics discourse and practice were largely discredited after WWII revealed horrors of nationalism and racial “science” taken to their logical extreme in the Nazi Holocaust and massacre of millions of European Jews. Notably, Canada denied refuge to many Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust. For more on Canada’s refusal to assist the Jews aboard the St. Louis, see:


And for Jews in Canada more generally, see:
wrote that “[w]ithout attempting to appraise this highly controversial racial doctrine [of Germany’s treatment of the Jews], it is fair to say that Nazi Germany's eugenic program is the most ambitious and far-reaching experiment in eugenics ever attempted by any nation” (190).

In his introduction to a 2004 edition of Du Bois’ *Darkwater*, David Levering Lewis writes that "[i]n prose as grave and portentous as any used by Du Bois himself, Stoddard, a Massachusetts lawyer and eugenics enthusiast, caught the attention of much of middlebrow America without warning" (v). And not just middlebrow America, but much of the “white world”. The depiction of white “extinction” in the 1908 political cartoon (fig. 1.3) intersected with other attempts to draw the attention of the “distracted white world” to the danger of its imminent decline. The image was deemed significant enough that two newspapers in two Canadian cities chose to print it. Visual tropes intersected with political and social scientific practices seen as evidence of “modernity”. Like the pseudoscience of eugenics, mapping was also a tool of modernity, and it was as politically inflected as other visual forms. So if we take popular visual culture seriously, and consider the 1907 image of the globe as a material object and tool of information, we can see how the repetition of such motifs lends credence to a Manichean worldview pitting “the west” against “the rest.” The image of a color coded map, parceling up the globe into imperial possessions or racial groups was a common motif that circulated
widely during the nation-building era. The fold-out frontispiece to Stoddard’s *Rising Tide of Color* attempts to depict literally what Kornel Chang terms a “racial geography”.

With the map, entitled “Distribution of the primary races,” Stoddard provides a visual depiction that reinforced the cartoon’s tongue-in-cheek depiction of white irrelevance in more serious “scientific” form (Fig. 1.5). The map’s "primary races" include: white, yellow, brown, black, and Amerindians, and is intended to corroborate Stoddard’s argument about the “white race” being under urgent threat—a perspective shared by Australian racial nationalist, Charles Henry Pearson, whose work Stoddard greatly admired and frequently cited. In fact, he cited Pearson in his section on Australia, immediately before his discussion of Canadian racial nationalists. And as Laut did with Canada, Pearson argued for the need for a “white Australia” policy. These individual instances of racial nationalism helped to further advance the transnational agenda of white supremacy and Anglo-Saxonism.

Maps are tools of modernity and were used to lend a veneer of scientific credibility to xenophobic attitudes, but they were also aesthetic objects, and analyzing them on this

14 (Lake & Reynolds: 3). Lothrop Stoddard called the work of Australian racial nationalist, Charles Pearson, “epoch-making” in his book *The Rising Tide of Color* (Lake & Reynolds: 3 & 77)

level can also yield insights into racial ideology in this time. In Stoddard's map, with its simplistic color coding system, like his and Laut's arguments betray a constant conflation and slippage between Canada, the U.S., Britain, and its Empire, as well as between Japan, Asia, and the entire non-white world. These categories were not neat and discrete, but rather were slippery and malleable. Racial categories were under constant tension and negotiation in this era, in part because they were undergoing construction, but also because they were ultimately part of an empty, arbitrary system of classification—meaningful only within a larger social context that legitimated them. But ironically, the fact that “race” is constructed and racial categories had no real meaning did not cause these categories to disintegrate. Instead, the arbitrariness and constructed quality of these categories, the absence of “real” meaning, has arguably made these concepts all the more enduring and persistent. Part of the power of notions of race and racial categories is that they can shift, mutate, and become more adaptable to the purposes of racial nationalists. Because of their lack of substantive content, these notions can be re-imagined and deployed in constantly evolving ways.

These maps of race and empire were commonly understood symbols that were legible to readers, and which, along with eugenic theories of racial superiority and inferiority, added a layer of “scientific” legitimacy to nationalists' cries for immigration restriction. By reinforcing the presumed demographic threats these maps conveyed, Laut and her Canadian contemporaries were in dialogue with racial nationalists throughout North
America and the British Empire. As Laut's work makes clear, white Canadian nationalists, like other racial nationalists in this era, saw themselves as part of both a larger shared legacy of western civilization, and defenders of its triumphant future, but also as the architects of distinct glorious and national destinies. And the greatness of western civilization was inextricable from its whiteness. As Lake and Reynolds explain, whiteness was a project, “a paradoxical politics, at once transnational in its inspiration and identifications but nationalist in its methods and goals” (4). In Canada, as throughout what Kornel Chang terms the “Anglophone colonial world,” there was a constant tension between nationalists' ideas of Anglo-Saxon unity, on the one hand, and the expressions of national superiority on the other.

Penelope Edmonds argues for a “reappraisal of discourses of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, examining a range of writers who promoted narratives of an imagined trans-colonial Anglo-Saxon community at colonial and metropolitan levels” (2009: 100). Concerning questions of race and migration, Canadian racial nationalists saw themselves in a shared plight with other white men's countries, and adopted similar measures to protect their nation's 'racial purity' and privilege. In keeping with their critique of Britain, Canadian nationalists chose to form transnational and trans-imperial alliances of their own. They did this with like-minded racial nationalists, with whom they exchanged solutions about how to protect their besieged shores against the “rising tide of color” flooding the globe—and
threatening white supremacy, and ostensibly even survival. Racial nationalism strained imperial allegiances in some ways even as it strengthened them in others, for instance, by linking certain countries—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—in shared pursuit of trans-imperial white supremacy.¹⁶

During this age of nation-building, whiteness and national belonging in imagined communities was constituted largely through exclusion. Agnes Laut wrote of “the three great Oriental peoples” that “[w]ith China, Great Britain is in friendly agreement. With Japan, Great Britain is in closest international pact. To India, Great Britain is a Mother. Yet Canada refuses free admission to peoples from all three countries. Why? For the same reason as do South Africa and Australia” (127). Discourses of whiteness circulated transnationally, but in addition to these transnational white solidarities, articulations of white supremacy also had distinct national and local inflections. This tension between the global and the local, regional, or national resulted in complex, layered sets of meanings. While opposition to the inclusion of non-whites in emerging national communities was widespread, the distinct nationalist inflections facilitated the creation of ideas of national values and belonging. For the challenge facing Dominion-dwellers in this era was nothing less than creating a nation.

¹⁶ Edmonds also talks about “trans-imperial Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism” and “late twentieth century notions of whiteness and its operations”; “emergent and circulating ideas of Britishness and whiteness by the late nineteenth century” (100).
Some individuals were particularly invested in, and influential in, shaping the outcome of this process, and did their best to seize the reins and guide the Dominion's growth along a path that served their agendas. As in the other Dominions, Canadian nationalists had to construct a national identity, a statement of principles about who they were; what they stood for; and origin myths about how they came to be. Especially given the lack of a radical revolutionary statement of principles, such as the United States used to distinguish itself from Britain, some have argued that “the positive content of Canadian identity is unclear,” even today after centuries of concerted and successful nation-building (Clarke, 1997: 98). At a time when national meanings were only beginning to coalesce, what it meant to be “Canadian” was determined in part by what was deemed un-Canadian, and in this era of “rampant racialism” (Horsman, 1981), the emerging body politic had to be white. Racial exclusion thus opened the space for ethnic inclusion, and barring racialized others helped foment the growing sense of white Canadian identity.

**Britishness, Whiteness, and the Complexity of National Identity**

The rigors of nation-building created a series of ever-present tensions—Canada was a British colony, and its project of building national identity was undertaken mainly by English-speaking political and intellectual elites of British ancestry. But in order to be
viable as a nation-state, those responsible for settling the vast landmass had to people it
with immigrants who could generate wealth and prosperity. And they also had to be
able to fulfill the racial destiny nationalists imagined to be essential for their young
Dominion's future greatness. And despite nationalists' teleological fantasy that Canada
would grow into a powerful nation and ultimately become a world superpower,
Canada's very existence relied directly upon British economic and military support. The
elite nation-builders responsible for immigration policy were well aware of this fact, and
it caused them great anxiety. They created bombastic claims of national greatness in
part to mask a sense of inferiority and uncertainty about their place in the world.

Thus, national meaning in Canada was attached largely to its Britishness. For racial
nationalists during this era, nationalism and imperialism were inextricable, not only in
terms of duty to the Empire, but also dependence upon its power and protection.
Canada was a toothless giant, which could not exist without Britain’s might. So in
addition to their cultural and ideological ties, most nationalists were imperialists by
definition, since their nation could not exist without the Empire. Similarly, Canadian
imperialists could not carry out their duty to the Empire without a strong sense of
national identity, and ideally, an economy to match. So Canadians sought to fortify their
nascent state by recruiting the “best classes” of settlers from Britain and select parts of
Europe.
In Canadian popular culture, an accumulation of racial nationalist discourse, such as Laut's tract, and visual representations such as political cartoons, consistently presented both whiteness in general, and Canadian whiteness in particular, as under siege. Public discourse created by racial nationalists reinforced this sense of threat and advocated defensive policies of immigration restriction. But although a sense of whiteness was created in this historical moment, this was by no means a straightforward, self-evident, or transparent process. Rather, the process of creating white and Canadian identities was fraught with tensions and contradictions, and entailed concerted efforts at the state and popular level to create a sense of social cohesion and belonging.

**Founding Mythologies and Imagined National Futures**

Even as they took pride at having a seat at the table with other racial nationalists, Laut and her contemporaries also imagined a special national destiny for Canada. The unique and splendid future they envisioned derived in part from the nation's Britishness—and yet this same Britishness was also the source of great ambivalence amongst racial nationalists. Laut herself was very ambivalent about Britain. She spoke with reverence of the United Empire Loyalists “who refused to give up their loyalty to the Crown and left New England and the South, abandoning all earthly possessions to begin life anew in the backwoods of the Great Lakes country,” even as in the next
breath she scoffed at the stuffiness and “excesses” of “old English aristocrats, who referred to democracy as ‘the black rot plague of the age’” (3). But she went on to say that despite their affectations, “these colonists came in unselfish pursuit of ideas; and they gave of their blood and brawn...and all earthly possessions for those ideals; and it is of such stuff that the spirit of dauntless nationhood is made” (3).

Laut argued that Canada was built on the unselfish ideals of its founders: religiosity and an ethos of self-sacrifice. Unlike Germany and Japan, she argued, Canada had no impulse to dominate (2). And unlike America, Canada was not founded by crass materialists, pursuing wealth above all else. In *Ambivalent Allies* (1994) John Herd Thompson and Stephen Randall identify “the sense of mission and the extravagant anti-Americanisms” as part of an elite Loyalist ethos (16), and argue that the “Loyalist myth” was “sufficiently hegemonic” as to characterize how Canadians would view the United States (17). And Laut implicitly invoked the United States in contrast when she added: “[n]or do you find a fight for freedom,” for “Canada has always been free—free as the birds of passage that winged above the canoe of the first voyageur” (2, emphasis mine).

We see a similar ambivalence towards Britain on the part of John P. McConnell, editor of the anti-Japanese *B.C. Saturday Sunset* that railed against Britain's lack of support for Canadian opposition to Japanese migration. Yet, like Laut, McConnell also raised the mother country to exalted heights in his pictorial representation of British Canadians.
The front page image of the very first edition features a towheaded cherub walking across rays of sunset—wearing a sash that reads “Saturday Sunset”—to clasp the outstretched hand of a regal woman clothed in the Union Jack, possibly representing British Columbia’s grateful reception of the new paper (Fig. 1.6). Female personifications of the nation were a common motif in nationalist discourses. The sun was also a common motif in visual depictions of nationalism and imperialism, as it represented light and progress of civilization—borne with such apparent success that “the sun never set on the British Empire”. As the light of civilization and progress graces western Canada, a bustling harbor and city can be seen below, symbols of commerce and enterprise. On the right, a sheaf of wheat and assortment of fruit rests alongside farming tools, symbolizing the toil and cultivation required to extract the bounty of Canada’s soil.

The idea that white men were a particularly hardworking and enterprising breed—a “master race” born to rule the inferior peoples of the world—was one of the core precepts of Anglo-Saxonism and white supremacy. Canadian racial nationalists such as McConnell saw themselves as the inheritors and defenders of this legacy, and articulated their national identity in these terms. As historian Daniel Francis explains, Anglophilia was prominent amongst Canadian political elites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (63). Some commentators even argued that Canada was more “Anglo-Saxon” than Britain itself, as Anglo-Canadians worked tirelessly to showcase
their Britishness, forming fraternal organizations and imperialist societies. Even as they resented the demands of Britain's imperial leadership, and its foreign policy decisions, they nonetheless embraced their own personal Britishness. What is more, Britain, they imagined, should want Canada to remain firmly a white Anglo-Saxon nation.

But as Alastair Bonnett argues in his article, “How the British Working Class Became White,” “[i]n the nineteenth century the notion that all Britons were white was asserted with considerably more force and conviction outside Britain than within it. From a colonial distance it was a commonplace to accord a white, and hence elite, identity to every inhabitant of the United Kingdom” (1998: 316). As Bonnett explains, to British elites "[t]he British working class...was marginal to the symbolic formation of whiteness and, sometimes...actively excluded from it." Whereas Anglo-Canadians built their national identity around the presumption of a British—and thus, for them, de facto white—core identity, the British working class came to adopt a belief in their whiteness well into in the twentieth century—much later than their colonial counterparts. What is more, British working class assertions of whiteness were in part catalyzed by colonial

17 Bonnet elaborates: “I suggest that whiteness became available to the working class because of changes within the socio-economic and symbolic structuring of British capitalism (more specifically, I discuss imperialism and the rise of the welfare state). The aggressively defensive articulations of working class whiteness examined in this section bare the imprint of these changes, more specifically a shift in emphasis from whiteness as a bourgeois identity, connoting extraordinary qualities, to whiteness as a popularist identity connoting superiority but also ordinariness, nation and community” (318)
claims to whiteness, which made this discourse available to working class Britons (Bonnett, 2002: 318).

By contrast, for Anglo-Canadians, as for their British colonial contemporaries, their ancestry was synonymous with whiteness. For them, Britishness was the pinnacle, the exemplar of whiteness, against which all other extractions of whiteness were measured—and generally found lacking. But Anglo-Canadians' avowal of Britishness as the penultimate form of whiteness cannot be separated from their desire to assert their own national whiteness as unassailable and their statehood as unquestionable, in the wake of perceived threats to privilege posed by anti-imperialism and the “rising tide of color.” Even though whiteness might have been a meaningless abstraction for working class Britons, for Canadian racial nationalists, whiteness became an ideal to strive for. Even as they articulated their own personal whiteness, racial nationalists sought to construct Canada as a nation “white enough” to merit their claims. For in Canada, as in Britain, not all whites were equally white. British-derived whiteness was at the core of white Canadian identity, and other versions of whiteness were more marginal to it, yet they were made to be acceptable, in order to support nation-building.

*Ethnicity, Class, and Making Whiteness in Canada*
The centrality of British identity and relative marginality of other white ethnicities is clearly depicted in a 1903 cartoon in the political pamphlet *Laurier Does Things*, intended to help re-elect Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal Party. One of the accomplishments attributed to the Laurier liberals was increasing Canada’s population through an “open-door immigration policy” overseen by Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior (Coleman, 1996: 20). In the image, a multi-ethnic group of white men stands in a tall field of wheat—a perennial symbol of Canada's bounty—singing the nationalist song, “The Maple Leaf Forever” (Fig. 1.8). The chorus includes Germans, Icelanders, Belgians, Russians, Austrians, Frenchmen, and Scandinavians.

But it is John Bull and Uncle Sam who stand in the center holding the songbook. The prominent placement of these British-derived exemplars of whiteness—one imperial, one republican—highlights their position not only as the most desirable immigrants but as the most powerful demographic, cultural, and trade influences on the emerging Canadian nation-state. The American and the Englishman are most closely flanked by a Scotsman and an Irishman—British subjects like Canadians.18 “Jack Canuck,” an early cartoon depiction of Canada dressed in garb like that of a Canadian Mounted Police

18 This relationship was sometimes fraught and conflicted, as in the case of Ireland. Similarly, based on the placement of the German man, this image also suggests that despite racial nationalists’ expressions of “Anglo-Saxonism,” German “Saxon” migration, culture, and identity is not nearly as central to Canadian identity as the British, “Anglo” component of this formula. Perhaps this reveals the flimsiness of “Anglo-Saxon” as a usable racial, ethnic, or cultural category.
officer, conducts the chorus, symbolizing the ability of state power to achieve a harmonious blending of ethnic white identities, forged around an Anglo-Canadian core.

The patriotic song featured in the cartoon, “The Maple Leaf For Ever”, had been penned by Scottish immigrant and schoolteacher, Alexander Muir (1830–1906) in 1867—the year the Confederation of four British North American colonies marked the first step toward Canadian statehood.19 Thus, the cartoon is doubly symbolic—not only for its celebratory nationalist lyrics but also for its association with this initial act of unification. The song commemorates Britain's founding of the Dominion, and goes on to recognize the commingling of English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh ethnicities, in an emerging national vision of British Canadian identity.20 In White Civility: The Literary Project of

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=U1ARTU002484>, viewed April 8, 2011.

[20] Both the song and the image are a metaphorical slap in the face for French Canadians. For as Daniel Coleman explains, this song became something of an Anglo-Canadian anthem (2006). In keeping with the song’s mythologization of the conquest of the former French colony by the British in 1759, French Canadians are notably absent in the song, as well as the political cartoon, which instead depicts the sole representatives of the French speaking world as a Belgian and a Frenchman, eschewing the widely-circulated image of a rural habitant farmer, well-recognized as a portrayal of the Québécois. This apparent disdain for French Canadians is also evident in the work of J.S. Woodsworth, who does not take French Canadians seriously at all—a common position amongst Anglo elites, as French Canadians complained. But aside from this notable exclusion, the image celebrates a more inclusive definition of white Canadian identity than does the song, showing a wide array of cultural and ethnic groups, uniting in a celebration of national pride.

Siegfried also argued in his chapter XV, “The English Canadians: Their Attitude Towards England” (115) – says: “After a study of the complex emotions of our compatriots in the Dominion, the state of mind of the English Canadians will seem simple, for, unlike, their rivals [French Canadians], they are not drawn in opposite directions by sentiment and self-interest. They have but one flag, the Union Jack, which symbolizes to them the love and unity of the British Empire, and if they cherish a special love for Canada herself, there is in this nothing to detract from their loyalty to England. Their position, therefore, would be exactly similar to that of the Australians, New Zealanders, and other British colonists, were it not that they are always conscious of having alongside them, tolerated with impatience, a foreign race [Québecois] whose destinies are inextricably involved in theirs. This could not be but a source of violence and conflict and, as a consequence, of an intensified fervour of nationalism in their hearts. Their patriotism is made up in large measure of haughty belief in British superiority, asserted sometimes offensively, at the expense of the impliedly inferior French” (115). Siegfried, André. The Race Question in Canada. London: E. Nash, 1907.
English Canada, Daniel Coleman reads this political cartoon as reifying the sense of “Pan-Canadian Britishness” established by the song—namely through its lyrics: “[t]he thistle, shamrock, rose entwine” (2006: 18). The song elevates this topiary trifecta of British imperial belonging under the banner of the maple leaf, dominant state symbol of (Anglo-)Canadian nationalism.

The cartoon actually does even more than this. What is being celebrated here is not only a broad sense of “Britishness”—a conception Coleman argues was used by Lowland Scots to “manufacture a looser cultural identity that would represent them not as junior partners in the larger project of English imperialism, but as senior members and equals” (17). Instead, the image actually presents a more expansive definition of Canadian identity that includes ethnic white males as Canadians, albeit less centrally. For, despite their more marginal placement, what is important is that they are there at all. There are no black, brown, or yellow people anywhere in the image. In depicting the immigrants that Canadian racial nationalist James Shaver Woodworth dubs an “army,” a “mighty stream,” “[i]n tongue it is polyglot; in dress, all climes, from pole to equator” (12)—the cartoon highlights ethnic difference, as well as inclusion. But by including particular ethnicities from amongst the “vast procession of varied humanity” (12) gracing Canada’s shores, the cartoon is also creating whiteness.

*The Britishness of Canadian National Identity in the Early 20th Century*
Not all Europeans were deemed equally desirable migrants to Canada. Janice Cavell notes in her article, “The Imperial Race and the Immigration Sieve”, that “[a] major aim of Canadian immigration policy in the first decades of the twentieth century was to preserve Canada’s predominantly British character” (2006: 345). And Andre Siegfried argued in The Race Question in Canada (1907), that there was a strong sense of “English Canadian patriotism” in this era, and that “[l]ike all colonials, the English Canadians have a natural love for England” (119). He went on to say that English and Scotch emigrants cherish, it is well known, a deep and lasting tenderness for the Old Country”. He even added that “[t]he Irish as a rule carry away with them into the new countries in which they establish themselves only a feeling of hatred for their oppressors; but in Canada their attitude is somewhat exceptional.... It may be said, then, that the Mother Country stands well in the affections of the British in Canada” (119).

Love for and loyalty to the Mother Country meant a strong preference for immigrants of British descent. In its bid to attract “desirable racial stock” of “Anglo-Saxon” immigrants, Canada's Ministry of the Interior also launched vigorous recruitment efforts in Britain, the United States, and to a lesser degree elsewhere in Western and Northern Europe. As Charles and Cynthia Hou explain, “Clifford Sifton, minister of the interior under Laurier, strongly promoted immigration to Western Canada. Sifton successfully bombarded the United States and Europe with posters, advertisements and pamphlets
describing the benefits of settlement on the prairies” (94). To this end, Canada was promoted to potential migrants as the “Last Best West” (Fig. 1.9). Western Canada was envisioned as the “Best West”: a bountiful land that surpassed the American west in both peace and prosperity. The 1909 “Last Best West” ad, issued by the Department of Agriculture boasts of “homes for millions”, and “farms free” in Western Canada for “ranching,” “dairying,” “grain raising,” “fruit raising,” and “mixed farming”. In addition to the “Best West”, Western Canada was also seen as the “Last West”, which still had plentiful arable land for farming, even after the “closing” of the American frontier in the 1890s. For the historical context was one of colonial contest, and Canadians were competing with their American neighbors to attract the “best class” of immigrants to help build their nation-state.

Another political cartoon from *Laurier Does Things* shows a flock of American settlers, suitcases in hand, pulled across the Canada-U.S. boundary line, running, tumbling, all drawn inexorably northward by a gigantic magnet (Fig. 1.10). This pamphlet boasted to

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21 The U.S. Census of 1890, indicated that the American frontier had officially broken up. Shortly after, in 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner delivered a paper to a special meeting of the American Historical Association, held in conjunction with the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. Turner’s paper, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” was later published in the Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. In conjunction with the 1890 Census, Turner’s lecture and essay were widely interpreted as pronouncements that the American frontier was now closed. What is more, Turner’s work helped to enshrine the idea of the “frontier” as inherently connected to dynamism and progress in the American national imaginary. This “frontier” mythology also applied to the symbolism and significance attributed to the Canadian west. See: Turner, Frederick J. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History: Address Delivered at the Forty-First Annual Meeting of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, December 14, 1893, 1894.*

22 Idealizing Canadian peace and prosperity, James Bryce wrote in *Canada: an Actual Democracy* (1921) that “[t]here is hardly any pauperism [in Canada] and need be none at all. No such opposition is raised to immigration as has been raised in Australia, so the population is likely to go on increasing for generations to come, especially in the western half of the country” (2).
Canadian voters of Laurier’s role in promoting population growth. The magnet motif represents the pull of free land and subsidized travel to Western Canada. As L.M. Fortier, Chief Clerk of the Immigration Department, in Ottawa wrote in a letter, “Canada gives no cold and niggardly reception to desirable settlers who seek her shores in response to her invitation” (Woodsworth: 35, emphasis mine). Like Fortier and Woodsworth, many British Canadians advocated a path of selective openness to immigration. Canada needed immigrants to fulfill its own vision of westward expansion. In the cartoon, Uncle Sam looks on in alarm as his countrymen rush across the boundary line north toward the “golden opportunity” that awaits them. Uncle Sam clings to a post bedecked with the Stars and Stripes to anchor him against Canadian’s powerful pull. Tailcoat flying behind him, and star-spangled hat whisked off his head, poor Sam muses in dismay: "That magnet's got an awful pull. Seems as though I cant [sic] hardly resist it myself".

In addition to the obvious material lure of free farmland and cheap passage, the cartoon also presents a number of more symbolic attractions. The magnet's polls are laden with symbolic imagery depicting Canadian nationalism and pride. Crowning the magnet, “golden opportunity” is flanked by "good government" and "law and order". The magnet's lower poles read "churches; schools" and "home rule". Canada's national credo of “peace, order, and good government” is echoed in the magnet's very pull. Euro-Canadians felt they enjoyed special status through this blend of accountable
government and membership in a powerful Empire. Based on the recommendation of the Durham Report (1838), the British Empire had since the 1850s accommodated colonial desire for increased self-government without sundering the bonds of imperial unity. Given the republican leanings of their southern neighbor, Canadian pamphleteers were wise to emphasize “home rule” in their bids to lure “desirable” farmers away from a nation suspicious of strong central government.

Nationalists recognized that in the colonial contest between “white men’s countries”, part of how Canada could hope to truly become a “great power” and not simply a “great government”, was to increase its affluence and influence. This could only happen if it first increased its population. So Canadian nation-builders did their best to recruit farmers who could convert the land’s fertility into material wealth. Even while nationalists articulated a vision of the Dominion as profoundly British, they also knew they needed large numbers of able-bodied settlers. With the “open-door immigration policy” under Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier and Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton, the category of admissible immigrant was expanded to include Eastern Europeans and other ethnic whites.

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23 Francis, Daniel. *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997. 59. As Daniel Francis elaborates in his study of history textbooks, “[g]enerations of schoolchildren learned that Canada’s example was a beacon to the rest of the world, illustrating how the British Empire could transform itself into a federation of self-governing societies without disintegrating in the process” (59-60).
J.S. Woodsworth’s Taxonomies of Ethnicity

It was not because most ethnic whites were considered ideal “racial stock” that they were entitled to migrate to Canada. On the contrary, it was in spite of their relatively low placement on taxonomies of whiteness and Europeanness. We can learn a great deal about the ethnic hierarchy understood by Canadian racial nationalists by turning to the work of James Shaver Woodsworth (1874-1942). A vocal racial nationalist, like Agnes Laut and Lothrop Stoddard, Woodsworth was a Methodist minister who later became a social democratic parliamentarian. In his now-infamous 1909 book, Strangers Within Our Gates, or Coming Canadians, Woodsworth sets out to tackle the “problem of immigration”.

Woodsworth’s perspectives can be seen as emblematic of his era. As historian Marilyn Barber explains in her academic introduction to a reprint of his book, “Woodsworth's view of the immigrants was that of an actively involved and well-read English-speaking Protestant Canadian of 1909” (xi). Woodsworth wrote for a similarly Protestant, English-literate readership. And from the outset, it is clear how central the notion of “whiteness” is to Canadian identity in this era. In his preface, Woodsworth asks: “[w]hat does the ordinary Canadian know about our immigrants? He classifies all men as white men and foreigners” (9). So as Woodworth explains: “[t]his little book is an attempt to introduce the motley crowd of immigrants to our Canadian people and to bring before
our young people some of the problems of population with which we must deal in the very near future” (9).

Woodsworth opens his chapter “The Problem of Immigration” with a quote from Commissioner Watchorn that perfectly captures his own position: “[t]here are two classes who would pass upon the immigration question. One says, 'Close the doors and let nobody in'; the other says, 'Open wide the doors and let in everybody.' I am in sympathy in neither of these classes. There is a happy middle path – a path of discernment and judgment”. So the bulk of Woodsworth’s book weighs the merits and shortcomings of various groups of potential immigrants, mostly from Europe, so that his young “Canadian” readers can evaluate the newcomers. And it is clear that, for him, not all Europeans were created equal. And these ideas were not Woodsworth’s alone. Rather, he was as a participant in transnational conversations about race, nation, and migration, and positioned himself as such, continually engaging with his contemporaries’ similar works of racial nationalist literature. In his chapter on “The Problem of Immigration” Woodsworth cites John R. Commons—a vocal American

24 (161). Woodsworth is probably referring to Robert Watchorn, an English immigrant who had been written up in a 1905 issue of Success Magazine, in an article by J. Herbert Welch, as “The Man who Climbed Out: The Life-Story of a Boy Immigrant who has Become Commissioner of Immigration” (Vol. 8, No. 133, New York, p. 386).
proponent of immigration restriction—who had invoked the metaphor of a line dividing desirables from undesirables: within Europe.25

J.S. Woodsworth quotes Commons, who wrote that there was “[a] line drawn across the Continent of Europe from northeast to southwest, separating...countries not only of distinct races but also of distinct civilizations” (164, citing Commons). This invisible line divided “Protestant Europe from Catholic Europe....representative institutions from absolute monarchies...lands where education is universal to land where illiteracy predominates”. It also divided “progressive”, “skilled” labor, manufacturing, and agriculture from “primitive hand industries, backward agriculture and unskilled labor”, and separated “educated, thrifty peasantry” from “a peasantry scarcely a single generation removed from serfdom” (164). But most importantly, this line “separates Teutonic races from Latin, Slav, Semitic and Mongolian races” (164).

This last point gets to the heart of the matter. Woodsworth’s and Commons's discussion of the boundaries of this color line dividing superior and inferior European races, cultures, and civilizations attests to the obsessive fear of racial nationalists of this


(<http://umanitoba.ca/centres/ukrainian_canadian/ucpbl/conferences/multiculturalism.html#shkandrij21->)
era to the prospect of racial mixing. Woodsworth dismisses antiracists’ “unfounded optimism that confidently asserts that the mingling of the races is in the highest interests of our country. We get the strength of the North, the beauty of the South, and the wisdom of the East; such is the line of thought often presented in after dinner speeches” (182). By contrast, Woodsworth and his peers “must [also] confess to a certain optimism...that ultimately a higher [racial and national] type might be developed” (182). He goes on to argue that “[i]n the older and more permanent races and civilizations there is little variation from type; they are conservative, fixed, stationary. But with the mingling of the races there is a tendency to variation. The newer nations are in a state of unstable equilibrium” (182). For Woodsworth, this meant “an opportunity for change” but would that “change be for better or for worse?” (183). This was what he and other racial nationalists hoped to determine, by acting as architects of nation-building.

In the prevailing paradigm, this European color line was an extension of the global color line. Part of the reason Eastern and Southern European “races” were viewed with suspicion was because of their proximity to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and the history of interaction between these regions. In the racial nationalist imagination, the body politic and character of Eastern and Southern Europeans had already been contaminated by contact with the darker-skinned peoples of the world—the damnable and degrading effect of which imparted these lesser races’ inferior traits—rendering
these ethnic whites more “primitive”, “backward”, and of questionable value to new nation-states. Racial nationalists envisioned a crucial link between race/ethnicity—in this era, the terms were frequently used as synonyms—and inherent capabilities for citizenship.

In keeping with dominant notions of race and ethnicity in his era, Woodsworth saw these categories as fixed and essential—and as having moral, social, and political, as well as biological dimensions. Woodsworth wrote, that “[t]he ethnic character has a profound influence on the choice between the two modes of government. With some peoples individual autonomy – independence of character – is strongly traced”, as was the case “among the Germanic nations” (182, quoting Grasserie). By contrast, “with the Latin nations in general – it is quite different...they...prefer to discharge the functions of thinking and wishing upon others” (182, quoting Grasserie). In their mental sluggishness, their lack of initiative and of a keening desire for freedom and

26 Woodsworth explicitly references Social Darwinist ideas, writing: “[s]urely the whole concept of evolution is founded on the implicit faith that the world is moving towards higher things, and that spiritual forces are destined to prevail. Example, training, higher motives, religious impulses are more potent than race characteristics, and will determine the future of our people” (183). While he believes that “nurture” and the guidance of the state can help people to improve, he also believes that “nature” and state intervention are inadequate remedies for the inherent biological inferiority of some groups. For instance, he says of the “Levantine races” of the “Eastern Mediterranean,” that is Greeks, Armenians, Turks, and Syrians that: “these people are manifestly not fitted for life in Western Canada” (139), saying “they are generally of a most undesirable class; and, while not vicious, their intellectual level is low” (138), and that in addition, “[t]he most dangerous feature is the general prevalence of loathsome and contagious diseases” (138). Woodsworth also quotes Dr. Allan McLaughlin, who “is even more emphatic in his disapproval of these immigrants” (139) and who argues that “the mental processes of these people have an Oriental subtlety,” including “intrigue, deceit, and servility...they lie most naturally and by preference, and only tell the truth when it will serve their purpose best” (139). McLaughlin also claims that these “parasites from the near East” boast a “miserable physique and tendency to communicable disease” and are a “distinct menace, in their crowded, unsanitary quarters, to the health of the community” (139). These ethnic whites were ostensibly so undesirable that they “do not compare favorably even with the Chinese, and the most consoling feature of their coming has been that they form a comparatively small part of our total immigration” (139).
individualism, these ethnic white races were for all the world like the inferior black, brown, and yellow races Woodsworth and his contemporaries so feared might undermine their national vision.

Woodsworth deeply recognized the need for immigration, in order to build both the symbolic and material foundation of the nation-state. But he desperately wanted newly-minted citizens to be capable of fulfilling his dreams for Canada’s future. So he exhorted policy-makers and the Canadian public to only accept the most “desirable” immigrants, and spent most of the book identifying and cataloging them. Interestingly, while he claimed to have written the book to inform “the ordinary Canadian”, he never defined this existing in-group. But what is clear, however, is that “Canadian” was a both a favorable and relatively new category. Woodsworth wrote that “[w]ithin the past decade Canada has risen from the status of a colony to that of a nation. A national consciousness has developed – that is, a nation has been born. A few years ago Canadian-born children described themselves as English, Irish, Scotch or French...To-day our children boast themselves Canadians, and the latest arrivals from Austria or Russia help to swell the chorus, 'The Maple Leaf Forever!’” (16). He goes on to say that “[t]here has not been sufficient time to develop a fixed Canadian type, but there is a certain indefinite something that at once unites and distinguishes us from all the world besides. Our hearts all thrill in response to the magical phrase — 'This Canada of Ours!' We are Canadians” (16).
As with the 1903 *Laurier Does Things* cartoon, it is clear to Woodsworth that Canada needed Canadians, that these Canadians could be *made*, and that ethnic whites were not considered completely irredeemable as material from which to make them. Assimilation to Anglo-Canadian ways could ameliorate some of the harm caused by centuries of interracial contact. But the most important consideration was that Canada, by extension, not be contaminated. As Woodsworth argued: “[i]t is extremely undesirable that thousands of foreigners of questionable value from a mental, moral and physical point of view should be allowed to invade well-governed and prosperous communities...expose healthy people to contagious diseases common to the poorest classes of Europe, [and] corrupt the body politic” (180, quoting Whelpley).

**The European Color Line and “Inferior” White Men**

So the migration of these Southern and Eastern ethnic whites of “questionable value” could be permitted, but had to be contained, controlled, and managed with caution. This concern for appropriate distribution resulted from the fear that ethnic white immigrants might not assimilate and become “true” Canadians, but would instead form isolated pockets of Old World “backwardness”—an ever-present preoccupation that saturates *Strangers Within our Gates*. Woodworth writes with grave seriousness that “[w]hen immigrants segregate themselves in various quarters of our great cities, our
language ceases to be a necessity to them. The most essential elements of their foreign environment they have brought with them” (212). Assimilation, integration, and “Canadianization” was required to turn “alien races” into good citizens, particularly since Woodsworth believed that certain ethnic groups had inherent tendencies to cling to their countrymen and Old World ways.

For instance, in Woodsworth’s estimation, “[t]he Hungarians are inclined to be clannish. They form clubs of their own, and seem content to live largely by themselves” (118). Yet they were ostensibly suited for Canadian life in other ways, since they were also “a race of farmers, [and] easily adapt themselves to conditions on the prairie” (116). According to Woodsworth’s racial/ethnic taxonomy, “[t]he Hungarians or Magyars, are on the whole probably more progressive than the majority of the Slavs. Someone has said that they are ‘more intelligent and less industrious’” (116). The Hungarians were, in Woodsworth’s opinion, “better educated than the Slavs” (118) as well as “more ambitious, and readily rise above the heavy plodding kinds of work in which both are at first engaged” (116). Thus, since the Magyar “ambition seems to be to own their own land...they soon make a home and become prosperous settlers.” Despite the fact that the Hungarians were “intensely patriotic,” in combination with their “clannish” disposition, “since they have decided to make Canada their home, [they] are taking a great interest in politics. In time they ought to make good citizens” (118).
Similarly, Woodsworth writes that the Ruthenians (Ukrainians), “a Slavic people” also known as “Galicians” were generally held “[i]n so low an estimation...that the word Galician is almost a term of reproach” (110). However, despite widespread stereotypes of Ruthenians as violent criminals, “[m]uch of the rough work of nation-building is being done by the despised Galician” (110). Referring to the ongoing national project of railroad construction, Woodsworth stated that “where the steel is being laid for the coming settler, can be found the grimy, stolid Galician, puffing his ever-present cigarette and working with a physical endurance bred of centuries of peasant life and an indifference to hardships that seem characteristic of the Slav”.27 What was more, these migrants were at last “beginning to intermingle with the peoples of other nationalities”, which shows signs of “the leaven of Western civilization at work upon the mind of the Ruthenian immigrant”, ‘revealed’ by the “spirit” of the “freedom of the new world” (113). Woodsworth concluded that there was some hope for the Ruthenians after all, and that “[p]roper distribution and education seem the two most important factors in transforming these Slavs into Canadians” (114).

27 Woodsworth, James Shaver. Strangers within Our Gates; or Coming Canadians. Introd. Marilyn Barber. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972. 112. Woodsworth’s discussion of the “Slav invasion” (184-6) strikingly parallels discussions of Chinese migration in some ways – mainly in terms of the freighted language of “invasion” and also the idea that some “foreign” minority was responsible for diminishing the standard of labor for white, English-speaking workingmen.
Some ethnic groups were more difficult to define on the taxonomy used by Woodsworth and other racial nationalists. For instance, Lithuanians, who are “neither Teutons nor Slavs, but belong to a separate branch of the Aryan race” (102). But clearly, Woodsworth managed to slot Lithuanians in somewhere, as he did with all groups, as well as to conclude that they “are industrious and good-natured, but, like their Slavic neighbors, are addicted to drunken sprees” (102). Similarly, of the Balkan states and “far Eastern Europe” and its “almost inextricable tangle of races,” Woodsworth ventures to his readers: “there are few civilized portions of the globe concerning which you know so little” (120). He goes on to explain that “the Balkan peninsula has formed the battleground between the east and the west; it has been the buffer between Europe, and Asia with its westward sweeping hordes” (120). Though he discounts it as being “far from credible,” he explains that these Eastern European migrants “are said to refuse work, and prefer to starve rather than labor” (122), he does brand them “naturally suspicious” and argues that “their ignorance of Canadian customs and the English language has added to the difficulties. They are a simple, sluggish people, who have been oppressed and down-trodden for ages; therefore, it can scarcely be expected that they can land in this country, and at once fall in with our peculiar ways, and understand or appreciate our institutions” (122).

“Desirable Races“ and Canadianzation
By contrast to these lesser ethnicities, other groups were deemed unambiguously “desirable as new Canadians, such as the Scandinavians. Swedish and Norwegian men were “big, brawny, broad-shouldered, fair-haired giants; the women, pretty, healthy, clear featured and rosy-cheeked, with great masses of golden hair” (74). “Serious, thoughtful, sober, determined, the Swedes are astonishingly like the Scotch’. This was the compliment paid to the Swedish settlers of the Canadian West...’in their purity of life, and in their general temperament, they are for all the world like the sons of the heather. I have no hesitation in saying that we have no better settlers’” (74, quoting an unnamed superintendent of the Baptist Missions). Similarly, the Finnish people, though “[r]acially they are more connected with the Magyars and Lapps” had been greatly influenced by the Scandinavians, and so had also became “intelligent, sturdy people” (74). Icelanders were also “[s]ober, industrious, and thrifty[,] they are in every way excellent citizens” (80).

And part of what made settlers desirable was their ability to assimilate. In Woodsworth's estimation, the Scandinavians “easily assimilate with the Anglo-Saxon peoples and readily intermarry...quickly learn English, and intermingle with the families of Canadian farmers” (76). In addition to being “a very sociable people”—forming social and political clubs wherever their numbers permit—the Scandinavians are also “naturally a religious people, practically all of them being Protestants” (77). What is more, they are “very ambitious, are anxious to become Canadian citizens, and readily
adapt themselves to Canadian ways (77). Thus, they end up “wealthy and as successful farmers” (76)—just the sort of immigrants the Dominion needed. Woodsworth concluded his section on this group by insisting: “[t]aken all in all there is no class of immigrants as certain of making their way in the Canadian West...Accustomed to the rigors of a northern climate, clean-blooded, thrifty, ambitious and hard-working, they will be certain of their success in this pioneer country, where the strong, not the weak are wanted”. 28

**Color Lines Across Europe and the Globe**

But despite the position of some ethnic groups lower on a hierarchy of desirable European immigrants, what is striking is that they are there at all, and that they are deemed both capable and worthy of citizenship, “Canadianization”, and membership in the imagined community. In this regard, the European color line was infinitely more permeable than the global color line. For Woodsworth saw all non-whites as hopelessly inassimilable. Let us not forget that the dividing line he drew across Europe notably separated Europe from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The elasticity of the European

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77. It is important to note that, according to Marilyn Barber’s intro, Woodsworth didn’t write some of the chapters on various racial and ethnic groups (x). These sections written by another author made some of the most exaggerated and extreme claims about migrant groups. However, Barber’s introduction also makes the valid point that Woodsworth took credit for authorship of the book, and so apparently saw fit to circulate and promote these ideas to his reader as his own.

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color line owed in large part to the increasing solidification and rigidity of the global color line. Part of how more questionable white ethnicities crossed the line and become “white” was by hardening the color line for other potential migrants. The tenuous inclusion of ethnic whites was based on the exclusion of the unambiguously non-white.

Woodsworth’s and Laut’s treatises help to reify notions of “whiteness”. So too does the political cartoon from *Laurier Does Things*, which attempted to counter the notion of politicians as inactive and ineffectual—Laurier actually *did* things—by boasting of his prowess at attracting European immigrants to settle Western Canada. Simultaneously, the image whitens the migrants. Laurier would not boast of attracting this population if it was not deemed desirable. Similarly, in Woodsworth’s tract, racial exclusion and xenophobia directed against black, brown, and yellow peoples, makes the various shades of ethnic whites more acceptable and palatable—for all their shortcomings, at least they were still better than darker-skinned people—and helps foment a more inclusive white Canadian identity and belonging.

It was not only ethnic white migrants that racial nationalist discourse helped to whiten. It was also the poor. Andre Siegfried argued in *The Race Question in Canada*, (1907) that English Canadians carried an “intensified fervour of nationalism in their hearts”, and had “but one flag, the Union Jack, which symbolizes to them the love and unity of the British Empire, and if they cherish a special love for Canada herself, there is in this
nothing to detract from their loyalty to England” (115). Yet we have also seen that at times Britain’s own imperial interests—notably the alliance with Japan, and British colonial rule in India—buttock up against those of racial nationalists, who resented being told whom they could include or exclude from the imagined community they were building. Anglo-Canadian nationalists' sometimes ambivalent relationship to the Empire extended not only to its policies, but also to its subjects themselves.

**British Immigrants and Class**

In racial nationalist discourse, British migrants embodied the best and worst of the Empire. As Janice Cavell argues, during the nation-building era, “ambivalent feelings [existed] among Anglo-Canadian politicians, journalists and the general public. The eagerness to see increased British immigration to Canada was paradoxically but very strongly tinged with hostility towards the migrants themselves and British society in general” (345). Cavell’s statement perfectly captures Woodsworth’s own feelings on the subject. In his section on British immigration, he wrote: “[w]e need more of our own blood to assist us to maintain in Canada our British traditions and to mould the incoming armies of foreigners into loyal British subjects” (46). But soon after, he complained that “[o]n many western farms, certain Englishmen have proved so useless that when help is needed 'no Englishman need apply’” (48) and that, when it comes to salaries, “[a] good Canadian can get whatever he asks, but [not] men from the Old
Country...The supply of labor is not what it should be because nearly all Englishmen are itinerants; they want to be on the move” (48, quoting Ontario Department of Agriculture bulletin).

In his discussion, “good Canadians” are often counterpoised against “useless”, ineffectual British migrants. Apparently, the blood that carried vaunted “British traditions” did not run through the veins of these poor “itinerants”. While they were ethnically and culturally desirable, “the trouble has been largely with the class of immigrants who have come” (Woodsworth: 46). So ostensibly, Britain's poor were not the ideal settlers to strengthen the state and instill appropriate Anglo-Canadian values in the “alien races” of ethnic whites arriving everyday (Woodsworth: 182). For the Anglo-Canadian values nationalists wanted to instill in ethnic newcomers were not only cemented in ideologies about race but also about class, which—like race—was seen as being tied to character and morality. The poor were viewed with suspicion and condescension, as troublesome and shiftless, a burden to the state, rather than an asset, and thus of dubious benefit.

As part of a scheme to people the Empire with ‘British blood’, settlement programs were created to assist working class migrants to move to British colonies, where they could learn to farm or take up a trade, and begin a new life in the New World. But clearly, their reception was often far from welcoming. As Janice Cavell goes on to
explain, “[a]ssisted immigrants were often described as the inferior and undesirable ‘dregs’ of the mother country’s urban slums, and some Canadians suspected the British government of ‘dumping’ this human refuse in Canada so that Britain’s unemployment problem might be alleviated at the expense of the Dominion’s taxpayers” (345-6).

Woodsworth certainly promoted this perspective, complaining of the “dumping of undesirables by friends and others, aided by charitable organizations” (190), and stating that British charities “have assisted thousands of immigrants. So great has been the distress in the cities of the Old Land that the authorities themselves have spent large sums in sending the poor to Canada. This is much the easiest and cheapest way to get ride of them, and, from the Old Country standpoint, doubtless highly to be commended)” (174). Woodsworth and other racial nationalists wanted hardworking, morally upstanding farm-folk, who could generate wealth, settle the land, and create communities, and resented what they saw as the offloading of inferior British immigrants onto Canadians, further complicating their already challenging task of nation-building.

In his critique, Woodsworth indignantly relates an anecdote about blatant British disregard for the welfare of Canada's burgeoning body politic: “Mr. Bruce Walker, Immigration Commissioner, tells a story of an English magistrate who was reprimanding a youthful criminal. 'You have broken your mother's heart, you have brought down your
father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. You are a disgrace to your country. Why don't you go to Canada?” (49). Needless to say, Canadian racial nationalists wanted nothing to do with the “youthful criminals” of England's crowded urban slums, and the circulation of such anecdotes inflamed nationalist antipathy toward the mother country, further heightening the atmosphere of defensiveness and virulent xenophobia that saturated discussions of immigration policy in the era.

Woodsworth did not invent these perspectives: they were also prominent in the national press. A March 5, 1908 Montreal Daily Star article also cites Bruce Walker as an authority on British offloading of the poor and shiftless. The article boasts the inflammatory headline: "UNDESIRABLES ARE SENT TO CANADA". Bruce Walker's perspective is summarized in the subheading: "Mr. Walker Denounces Methods of Charitable Bodies". The article recounts: "Mr. Walker says the work of these societies has always given him the gravest anxiety", concerning the fact that "frankly in his judgment, the classes which these organizations sent to Canada are for the most part not desirable citizens". The newspaper article cites Ottawa, stating that the Department of the Interior has just published a report by Mr. Walker, which includes a “sweeping condemnation” of some of London’s charitable agencies.

Completely in step with Woodsworth’s “happy middle path...of discernment and judgment”, the article decries, in another bold heading: "NO DISCRIMINATION USED",
followed by the smaller subheading: "Immigration to Canada is Not a Solution of the London Unemployed Problem”. So in his analysis, Woodsworth engaging with widely-read and cited reports that many other literate Canadians were already familiar with. Admittedly, he did little to diminish existing fears, but he did not create them either. While most ethnicities had to be Canadianized, British migrants could preserve Canada's cultural inheritance—as long as they could manage to hold down a job, avoid drink, and stay on the right side of the law. Woodsworth scathingly condemned the “'younger sons' and remittance men, and ne'er-do-wells, who are shipped to Canada to 'learn farming' – or because they can live here more cheaply – or that they may reform – or in plain English, to be got rid of. Useless at home, they are worse than useless here. The saloon gains most largely by their presence” (49).

Ironically, or perhaps simply with an ambivalence that characterized Canadian racial nationalists' view of the Empire in general, Woodsworth actually attributes the shortcomings of the “culls from English factories and shops” to their ethnicity and culture. In his estimation, the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh have done well in Canada, while “[t]he greater number of failures have been among the English” (46). He blames this failure on a “national characteristic which is at once a strength and a weakness – lack of adaptability” (46). This “lack of adaptability” could mean either a steadfast holding to one’s principles, or an inability to make a better life for oneself by adjusting to new
environments: “[s]omeone has said that ‘the English are the least readily assimilable of all the English-speaking nationalities’” (46).

In a context of nation-building, where assimilation was paramount, this was is a damning critique of British migrants—and in some ways a perplexing one—given that the values that varied newcomers were expected to assimilate to were British Canadian values. However, Woodsworth's condemnation of the coming migrants, and England's decision to send them, is complicated and layered. For it is bound up with larger moral panics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. If anything, these deep-seated anxieties took on even greater significance in a historical context of nation-building. Woodsworth's critiques are saturated by Victorian and Progressive era panics about class, urban life, and morality. And according to Woodsworth, and Canadian other social reformers and American progressives, immigration both caused and exacerbated existing social woes.

*Fears of Cities and Urban Vice*

By contrast, an 1846 image from *Punch* (London): "emigration a remedy" shows that the British had long believed that emigration could relieve the desperation caused by unemployment and crowding in urban centers—but in a way that was beneficial to both settlers and colonies (Fig. 1.11). Above the heading “here” (London), the image shows a
family homeless and destitute in the streets. This is contrasted to an image of a contented, well-nourished family thriving "there": overseas in one of Britain's colonies. In the image showing the family in urban England, signs behind warn of the dangers that threaten to destroy both them and the fabric of society: "CAUTION All Vagrants", and "LECTURE socialism". This depiction implies that the crisis of urban poverty will create socialists intent on overthrowing the established order, and wreaking havoc on British society and class structure. The image also implicitly contrasts the unhealthiness and disease of the cities—with a backdrop littered with factories, smog, and smoke stack—with the "purity" of the family's rural life: where sun streams in, and plump hams hang from the rafters of the family's farmhouse, surrounded by trees and fresh country air. We also see a shovel, symbolizing industry and “wholesome” hard work.

In England, as in North America, discourses about migration and class were part of a larger concern about the “dangerous” and “degrading” effects of cities and urban life.29 One reason why Woodworth deems these poor British immigrants inassimilable, unadaptable, failures is because they are from the city—a zone thought to be teeming with vice, temptation, and other corrupting influences—in stark contrast to the safe,

29 For more about fears of urban vice and sexual danger in post-Industrial revolution England and North America, see:
quiet, moral, life of the idyllic countryside. As he reports with dismay, in his discussion of opportunities for farm laborers, some British immigrants “are not worth their board” since “[m]any of the Old Country men actually seem helpless on a farm”; not only are do they come to Canada “without any knowledge of farming...They don’t know, and they don’t seem to ‘want to learn’” (48, quoting an Ontario Board of Agriculture report). But of course the presumed lack of adaptability of these British working class migrants had little to do with their aptitude or work ethic, and far more to do with the fact of their being abruptly transplanted from London and other urban centers into rural farming communities and expected to effortlessly adopt an entirely different way of life. Clearly, integration was not always so seamless and successful as presented in the optimistic 1846 “emigration” cartoon.

Woodsworth blamed a lack of integration on the motherland’s selfish and shortsighted settler selection, saying that “Canada has needed farmers and laborers, and these should be resourceful and enterprising. England has sent us largely the failures of the cities” (46). In Wordsworth’s mind, the failure of working class settlers is not simply a question of training. Instead, in the Victorian and Progressive era racial nationalist imagination, this question of success or failure took on a strong moral dimension. Ostensibly, the inherent and inevitable shortcomings of the poor were only further exacerbated by the depravity of city life. In the Victorian English and Progressive American imaginations, cities were fearful places, rife with poverty and squalor, filth,
and chaos. These physical threats to the Victorian Era obsession with purity, cleanliness, and order, were matched by equal measures of spiritual and existential threat. In contrast to tranquil and wholesome pastoral life, cities were thought to be places of vice, disorder, and dangerous social mixing.

For social classes were thought to be as stratified as ethnicities. As he had done for these other categories, Woodsworth used a taxonomy of the poor: dividing the working class itself into “classes.” In his detailed analysis of England's poor, Woodsworth turned a social scientific lens on the various working classes, citing in depth a study of London's poor, in which “[t]he 'poor' are divided into four classes or strata” (50). Within the prevailing Social Darwinist and eugenicist paradigm that dominated pseudo-science in this era, as with race and ethnicity, class has moral dimensions as well as economic and social ones. Lacking a structural model for understanding inequality, the poor were blamed for their poverty and other shortcomings, just as were ethnic whites and non-whites. And as with ethnic whites, impoverished city-dwellers were often vested with the sort of negative traits attributed to non-white people, such as “savage”.

For instance, the lowest strata of the poor were “hopeless, helpless city savages who can be said only by courtesy to belong to the 'working classes'. Their life is the life of savages, with vicissitudes of extreme hardship and occasional excesses. Their food is of the coarsest description and their only luxury is drink...They render no useful service;
they create no wealth; more often they destroy it” (50). Just above this group was a “thicker stratum” of “shiftless, broken down men, widows, deserted women and their families. Most of them are incapable of regular, effective work...Most of the wreckage of city life is deposited in this stratum, which presents the problem of poverty in its most perplexing and darkest forms” (50). And for “Class C” of London's poor for whom “[t]he curse of their life is not so much low wages as irregularity of employment, and the moral and physical degradation caused thereby” (50).

But even as he decried the wretchedness of the urban poor, Woodworth also understood the forces of urbanization as part of a larger global historical shift: “in Europe, Asia and Africa we find that a redistribution of population is taking place, a movement from country to city. It is a world phenomenon” (212). He went on to argue that “some have imagined that it would prove temporary; that this flowing tide would soon ebb. But its causes are permanent....[t]he sudden expansion of the city marks a profound change in civilization” (212). So Woodsworth properly identified larger social forces, and understood their causes and consequences. But again, his chief concern was that Canada not be tainted in the process. Racial nationalists envisioned Canada as the antithesis of the urban slums, as a crisp, pure, wholesome northern land. They did not want “England's poor transplanted to Canada” (51) unless they could boldly embrace New World opportunities and Canadian culture head-on.
If other settlers were better able to do this, they were the desirable immigrants Canada sought. According to Woodsworth, not only were the poor and urban, including “recent arrivals from England” (189) more likely to be lazy, alcoholic, indigent, and incapable of work—they were also more likely to be “insane” or otherwise “unfit” for entry to Canada. As he explains in his discussion of asylums and deportation, of those admitted to Toronto Asylum, “less than half were Canadians,” whereas a high number were “recent arrivals, who should have been deported if a satisfactory law had been in force” (190). According to existing law, “the majority of these people should not have been allowed to enter Canada,” and some were deported, though many were unable to be shipped back to England, “[o]wing to technicalities” (190). Calling for more “effective methods to prevent the dumping of undesirables” (190), Woodsworth explains that “there was a strong suspicion that many were deliberately sent out from Great Britain to be got rid of. An analysis showed that entire families of degenerates were included among arrivals, and that weaklings of all objectionable types were represented, as well as many with criminal records” (190).

**Eugenicist Ideas and Racial Nationalism**

This language of “weaklings,” “degenerates,” and the “unfit,” is strongly tinged with the eugenicist language prevalent in this age, which tied race, ethnicity, class, and gender to pseudoscientific and “biological” classifications of humanity. Within the circular logic of
eugenicist and Social Darwinist discourse, marginalized populations were blamed for their marginality, which were attributed more to personal shortcomings than to the entrenched structural inequality caused by historical legacies of colonialism, slavery, feudalism, and unbridled industrialization-era capitalism.\(^{30}\) Ostensibly, the poor and non-white were already inherently prone to vice, a predisposition which their low social position and constant exposure to other doomed and debased populations served only to exacerbate. As with their own socio-biological inferiority, which made them more likely to succumb to “wanton” behavior, this biology of debasement and moral bankruptcy would make their children even less able to succeed, especially when combined with a lack of moral guidance, as the result of being raised by immoral and inferior parents.

So “feeble-mindedness,” insanity, promiscuity, alcoholism, and criminality were ostensibly more naturally rampant among the poor. This propensity to commit crime owed not only to pressing economic necessity, but also to inherent moral inferiority and

\(^{30}\) Like other Social Darwinists and eugenicists, Woodsworth was preoccupied with disease, contagion, ability, and aptitude, as indicated in his table on 194-196 about immigrants “detained at ports of entry.” Physical complaints, including not only contagious illnesses, but also such as “hunchback,” “epilepsy,” “deaf and dumb,” “lame,” “senility and debility,” “old age,” “eczema,” and “poor physique” are listed alongside mental conditions, such as “feeble-minded,” “insane,” “hysteria,” “nervous disease,” and “melancholia”; and also moral shortcomings, such as “suspected immoral,” “likely to become a public charge,” “bad character,” “degenerate,” “prostitute,” and “opium fiend” (194-6). Ostensibly, vice was biologically hardwired into the moral and mental makeup of working classes: a natural state which debased urban living served only to amplify. The nature of white working classes supposed biological inheritance was complex. It was at once, the legacy of Western civilization and greatness, meaning a capacity for self-government and the ability to take on the white man’s burden over black brown and yellow peoples—but also an inherent inability to rise to the greatness of this legacy. The latter part of this formula was used to argue that the poor were best fitted for the very forms of servitude or indentured servitude that had determined and maintained their subordinate condition in the first place. Stories like that of Commissioner Watchorn in Success Magazine further stigmatized the poor for their poverty by suggesting that their position was the result of their own lack of initiative.
lack of instruction in appropriate social conduct. J.S. Woodsworth related a description by Mr. Bogue Smart, Chief Inspector of British Immigrant Children and Receiving Homes in Canada, of Liverpool's urban “procession[s]...of ragged, shoeless and hatless children, 50 percent of whom were bright, healthy and alert, and good types for immigration from a Canadian point of view” (54, emphasis his). However, Woodsworth goes on to coldly remark: “[w]e venture to dissent from Mr. Bogue Smart's conclusion. Children from such surroundings with inherited tendencies to evil are a very doubtful acquisition to Canada” (54).

In his discussion of poor youth, Woodsworth states: “[w]e sympathize with these poor people, but we are glad that the Canadian Government is taking steps to prevent the 'dumping' of these unfortunates into Canada” (51). He and other racial nationalists who wanted to oversee the development of their country resented what they suspected British presumption that, for a vast, far-flung, and largely uninhabited land like Canada, any settlers would do.31 Some might have thought that all Canada needed was warm bodies, (warm white bodies, that is). But racial nationalists wanted able, healthy, pure bodies. In a clever reversal of the notion that Canada was a frigid barren wasteland, Canada's newness, expansiveness, and its northern-ness, made it a land of purity and

31 Woodsworth and other racial nationalists put Canada first. In fact, there was an organized political movement called the “Canada First” movement. For more, see:

promise. As Carl Berger explains in his study of English Canadian nationalism in this era “[a] lengthy catalogue of desirable national attributes resulting from the climate was compiled. No weather was so conducive to maintaining health and stimulating robustness”. 32

Racial nationalists wanted to make sure that the Canadian character remained pure and virtuous, and was not tainted by the rejects of the Old World. Woodsworth empathized with the plight of assisted immigrants, and the crushing inequality and deprivation endured by the poorest dwellers of “the slums of the great cities – a people described by the Archbishop of Canterbury as 'a suffering population which can hardly exist, hanging on the sharp edge of illness and hunger, and in full sight of abundance, luxury and waste'” (49). While he recognized the magnitude of the poverty and suffering in England’s urban slums, it seems he also largely felt that it was England's problem to deal with, and thus, imperial offloading of Britain’s urban poor onto its innocent colonies was not an appropriate solution to hunger and overcrowding in the metropole. A nationalist, Woodsworth always put Canada's own nation-building project first. These

32 (Berger, 1971: 129)

For more on connotations of the north and moral purity, see:
groups should not be allowed to migrate to Canada in unrestricted numbers: “we must express the fear that any large immigration of this class must lead to degeneration of our Canadian people” (54).

Whiteness and the Permeability of the Class Line

Yet despite all of Woodsworth’s concern over poor English immigrants, as with ethnic whites, he did not consider this “class” entirely beyond redemption. He certainly did not want the large-scale, unregulated migration of British paupers. Yet he also recognized that some people, especially amongst the “higher strata” of the working poor, were simply disadvantaged and would flourish when given the opportunity. For Canada was also part of the New World, and racial nationalists imagined it as a blameless land of opportunity, where people could improve their lot in life if they worked hard. This was part of Canada’s national mythology, particularly with the settlement of the west, and it was on such grounds that nationalists “sold” the idea of Canada to potential migrants on the ‘right side’ of the global color line. Clearly, Woodsworth welcomed only the best and brightest, believing that only select populations were capable of meaningful growth and change. Yet he was also deeply ambivalent about British paupers, and especially about youth.
At times, it appears that he thought the poor and otherwise disadvantaged hopelessly doomed by their circumstances, particularly since he suspected that they might already possess inherent tendencies towards immorality. In an ambivalent mix of empathy and cold-heartedness, Woodsworth speaks of “organized bands” of approximately 2,000 children “of Anglo-Saxon origin” migrating to Canada annually (51-52). Yet it is also clear throughout his book that he thinks that some enterprising migrants, especially children, are particularly adaptable and capable of assimilation, salvation, and ultimately Canadianization. He reproduces for his readers several images of starving British pauper children, including a before-and-after picture of one “boy who was given a chance” (53), and managed to ascend from rags to middle class status and respectability. Although he is often harsh and condemning in his discussion of juvenile immigrants, Woodsworth acknowledged that “change is generally good for the children”, that “many have succeeded”, and that, of course, “we would not refuse to help the needy” (54).

Ultimately, Woodsworth’s overall position on English immigrants is that “[t]he majority are those anxious to better their condition or give their children a better chance, and so seek the advantages of a new country. These are quickly absorbed into Canadian society; they form no separate class. Their children are as Canadian as our fathers were English” (49). Non-white migrants, by contrast—regardless of culture, social strata, skill-set, level of education, or what have you—were always identifiable as un-Canadian “others” in this era. They could never become invisible, for they could never become
white. As Richard Dyer argues, the ultimate position of power in a society that controls people in part through their visibility is that of invisibility” (1997: 44). The ethnicity line became more elastic as the color line became more solidified. The racial exclusion of black, brown, and yellow peoples helped to make the various shades of white ethnicity and class more palatable and to foment a more inclusive white Canadian identity.

Even ethnic and working class whites could hope to eventually become “Canadian”. By contrast, Woodsworth argued: “[t]he Orientals cannot be assimilated” (198). Of the “Hindu Problem” (188), Woodsworth concludes that while Sikh migrants are British subjects, like Canadians, “[h]owever estimable they may be in India, they are sadly out of place in Canada” (189). Of Chinese “Celestials” (171), he stated that as long as this migration had been limited to “a few odd Chinamen a year, who were quite content to do work distasteful to a white man, no particular objections were raised” (170). As for Japanese migrants, “the little brown men” who control the west coast fishing industry and “competes—and successfully, too—with the white man”, Woodsworth was pleased that an exclusion law had limited their numbers to six hundred per year, to “prevent an inundation such as threatened British Columbia during the fall of 1907” (187).

Similarly, Woodsworth writes that “[n]either the negro nor the Indian are immigrants, and yet they are so entirely different from the ordinary white population that some mention of them is necessary if we would understand the complexity of our problems”
(190). Of Native peoples, he opines that “the Indian of to-day is very much nearer to the civilized white man than to his pagan ancestor” (194) but there are still many in Canada who are “grossly pagan as were their ancestors, or still more wretched, half-civilized, only to be debauched” (194) by “the white man’s vices” such as “fire-water” (192). Black Canadians he deems incapable of citizenship, as the result of centuries of slavery, and states that “we may be thankful that we have no negro problem in Canada” (191). So the dividing lines of class and ethnicity were still far more permeable than the global color line, segregating migrants on the basis of skin-color. Even as he endlessly dissected the category of “whiteness” on the basis of class and ethnicity, it is clear that for Woodsworth, this quality was a prerequisite for being truly Canadian.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored how identifying some people as “non-white”, “inassimilable”, and “un-Canadian” helped racial nationalists both make whiteness into a meaningful category, and attach it to “Canadianness”, and citizenship in general. As we have seen, despite continually referring to “Canadians” and “Canadianization”, Woodsworth never defined exactly who or what this was. He wrote as though his readers were already supposed to know what being Canadian meant—as if simply apprehending some universal, commonsense definition of identity and belonging. And in fact, maybe readers *did* understand identity and insider status in this way. For Woodsworth's
description suggests that he conceived of Canadianness as the spontaneous coalescing of some natural zeitgeist, some undirected and ephemeral will to nationhood. But of course, national identity and belonging was not the outcome of some organic process. In reality, it was the work and ideas of Woodsworth and other racial nationalists, such as Laut and the cartoonists who created the images discussed in this chapter, that helped to *create* these categories, and the sense of belonging that went with them. These categories were never simple or transparent. Rather, they were elusive and slippery, and defied definition.

Yet paradoxically, these same indefinable categories were presumed to somehow already be *understood*, at least by “true” Canadians. These identity markers were under formation and constantly shifting—expanding and contracting to best fit the rigors of nation-building—defined, if at all, mainly through circular logic: Canadians are Canadians, of course. And so “true” Canadians must have both known what that means, and recognized themselves as such. While they spoke as though these categories pre-existed, in actuality, it was the debates and discussions that nationalists participated in, the ideas they disseminated, that helped shape these categories. In a very real sense, Woodsworth didn’t need to define “Canadians.” He was helping to *create* them. If “inferior” whites could *become* Canadian, there was clearly nothing inherent, organic, or spontaneous about Canadianness, or any national identity, for that matter. Rather,
becoming “Canadian”, creating “Canada” was a process of nation-building, which Woodsworth and his contemporaries were both part and product of.

Woodworth seems to engage more with his American counterparts than with his British colonial contemporaries. Possibly, this was because of Canada's contiguity with the United States, and the particular set of anxieties this created for Canadian racial nationalists. Canada's place as a white settler colony that was simultaneously part of the British Empire and North America posed great challenges for the project of national identity formation. The northern nation's dual situation as at once imperial and North American, and located alongside a defector from the Empire—gave rise to competing desires and priorities, and was a source of continual tension, friction, and debate, over the course the nation-building era. As I have outlined above, Canadian racial nationalists had an ambivalent relationship to the mother country. The emerging state's Britishness was at once a source of pride and frustration. Racial nationalists cited Canada's predominantly British ancestry as irrefutable proof of the nation's unassailable whiteness. Racial nationalists claimed British roots as evidence that they deserved a seat at the table of global governance, with other white men's countries across the globe, even as they critiqued Britain for limiting their ability to control membership in their imagined community.

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Figures for Chapter 1

Figure 1.1

1907, Vancouver Saturday Sunset
Figure 1.2

July-December, 1881, *The Wasp*
LOOKING AHEAD
What it may come to if the oriental invasion is not stopped.

Figure 1.3
1908, Montreal Daily Star and Vancouver Daily Post
Figure 1.4

August 3, 1907, B.C. Saturday Sunset
Figure 1.5

1920, Lothrop Stoddard, *Distribution of the Primary Races*
Figure 1.6

June 15, 1907, B.C. Saturday Sunset
Figure 1.7

1921, Second International Eugenics Conference Logo
Figure 1.8 1903, Laurier Does Things

One of a number of illustrations published by Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton to promote immigration to Canada.
Figure 1.9

1909, *Canada West: The Last Best West* (National Archives of Canada, C-30620)
Figure 1.10

1904, Laurier Does Things (PAC C17193)
Figure 1.11

1846, *Punch* (London)
CHAPTER 2 Colonial Contest: National Exceptionalism(s) and Alternative Articulations of Whiteness and Masculinity

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw not only the global articulation of a sense of whiteness and entitlement, but also the rise of nationalisms and new imperialisms. This was an age of global migrations, an age of empire, and an age of nation-building. Nation-builders spearheaded projects of national identity construction that took place simultaneously across the New World and British Empire, and articulated their states' legitimacy on the basis of their whiteness. Yet these same “white men's countries” were also in competition with one another, to secure land, labor, and resources, invariably at the expense of the world's “darkest and weakest of peoples”. This chapter explores how competing national exceptionalisms and definitions of white supremacy emerged within the broader context of transnational Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism in this era. Specifically, I discuss Anglo-North America, and explore how Canada and the United States articulated competing definitions of white masculinity, citizenship, and civilization. Additionally, this chapter examines how the presence of two internal “others” within each nation-state—indigenous and African-descended peoples—engendered a symbolic battleground upon which competing nationalist definitions of whiteness warred, particularly in public visual culture.
As I have explained, by creating and reinforcing emerging discourses of race that identified darker skinned peoples as unassimilable, and thus as eternal others forever outside the nation, racial nationalists built a sense of national belonging, based on whiteness. This articulation of white identity ameliorated other social cleavages, such as ethnicity and class, laying a foundation upon which claims to citizenship entitlement could be made. Despite ambivalence about some “classes” of white immigrants, unambiguous racism against non-whites eased uncertainty about the migration of British working classes, and facilitated their inclusion as assimilable citizens in the emerging nation-state. The exclusionary discourse generated by racial nationalists defined a sense of “Canadianness” and reinforced the existence of a global color line across the Anglophone colonial world.

This chapter further explores the themes of whiteness and ambivalence, but marks a shift in the analytic frame. Here, I focus on the tension between global discourses of white supremacy and the divergent versions of white superiority articulated in particular instances of nation-building. The “new imperialism” was characterized not only by “the doctrine of the divine right of white people to steal”—but also by “the rage for one's own nation to own the earth” (Du Bois: 34). The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw not only the formation of transnational white solidarity, but also a colonial contest among white men's countries.
This dogged competition to acquire and expand individual nation-states and imperial ventures had subtle but important effects on individual iterations of racial nationalism. Through analyzing the ambivalent portrayal of white Americans in Canadian racial nationalist discourse, this chapter complicates the notion of white men's countries, and the racial solidarities they engendered. This chapter also focuses on the portrayal of two racialized populations which could not be characterized as immigrant invaders—for their presence had not only predated state-formation, but in fact had facilitated it. African and Aboriginal peoples were at once both inside and outside the nation-state. Here I will examine how the mythologized portrayal of the relationship between the state and black and Native populations in both Canada and the United States was used to generate discourses of national exceptionalism and superior white masculinity in Canada—in contrast to Americans’ own distinct exceptionalism.

*Transnational Nationalisms and Unexceptional Exceptionalisms*

In trying to better understand the formation of racial ideology and nationalism in this era—or its confluence, in what I term “racial nationalism”—it is crucial to interrogate discourses of whiteness, and how they diverged in particular national and regional contexts. For the concept of whiteness was taken up in different ways by racial nationalists across the Anglophone colonial world, though always in ways that maintained what Stuart Hall sees as “social relations structured in dominance” (Gilroy,
Analytically, this chapter skirts the tension between national and transnational history, as does my whole project. The validity of national versus transnational approaches to history is a contested subject among historians and other scholars. The national and the transnational approach each offers something the other cannot. National history gives us historical specificity and close attention to context, but it can also reify nation-states as singular entities, and even be used to promote exceptionalist readings of history. Transnational histories can remedy such parochialism by decentering the nation-state as a discrete unit of analysis, and focusing instead on connections and continuities, by tracing larger flows of people, commodities, and ideas.

National histories, Lake and Reynolds explain, often fail to account for the larger circulations of knowledges and identities (10). They argue that it is “important to view colonial and metropolitan formations in same analytical frame”, in order to move away from a “colony-metropole binary” (10), which neglects the transnational character of racial ideologies and shared qualities of emerging nationalisms. Instead, they believe this era saw a “convergence between republican and imperial discourse” (8). They compellingly argue that “[i]mmigration restriction became the quintessential expression of the masculine sovereignty of 'self-governing communities', a popular formulation that worked to collapse the distinction between independent republics and British colonies, thereby recasting the meaning of sovereignty itself” (8). This is an exceedingly
useful analytic framework for analyzing how the national and transnational were mutually reinforcing spheres.

Lake and Reynolds insightfully argue that the concept of “self-governing communities” helped racial nationalists articulate their whiteness and sovereignty, even in the absence of full national independence: “[i]n the figure of the white man, the imperialist became a democrat, and the democrat an imperialist” (9). It is certainly true that racial nationalists throughout the British Dominions articulated their identities and national visions in terms of a racially inherited right to self-government. However, this “right” was framed differently in independent republics and imperial Dominions: “[t]he British Empire drew a distinction between ruling and ruled races; republican ideology drew a distinction between races fit and not fit for self-government” (Lake & Reynolds: 9, emphasis mine). Thus, if we hope to pin down the complex functioning of concepts of race and nationalism, it is important to bear in mind both larger transnational and specific regional and national contexts. Dominions and republics did not have the same level of self-determination and political autonomy. As a result, negotiating the distribution of power required a complex balancing act and ongoing process of contestation—both within the imagined community itself—and also between Dominions and their Empire. This debate was particularly heated over the question of whether white British subjects should be allowed to determine the composition of their imagined communities.
Immigration policy was a contested ground, especially for British Dominions, whose racial nationalist agendas frequently clashed with British imperial policies. Debates about racial inclusion and exclusion were a site of tense negotiation between colony and metropole, which at times tested the limits of sovereignty. Sometimes nationalist interests trumped, other times imperial ones. Take for instance, the issue of Chinese exclusion in Australia: “[i]n 1887, the Queensland government had introduced both an entry tax and immigration restriction with the Chinese, measures which, despite British treaty commitments [to China], received royal assent” (30). But at other times, imperial will thwarted racial nationalist goals, as in it did a year later, when “in 1888, the colonial governments resolved to introduce uniform legislation...that would effectively ban Chinese from entering Australia, regardless of whether they were British subjects” (43). Ultimately, the Bill was modified because of political pressure: “[i]n deference to the Chinese Minister in London, the poll tax would be dropped, but severe penalties would apply to Chinese arriving overland from other colonies” (43). As in Canada and other British settler colonies, Australians' racial nationalism remained consistent, but its implementation was always subject to negotiation—the policy outcome contingent on numerous factors. There was a constant diplomatic tug-of-war between settler colonies and the mother country, a perpetual gentle jostling for control over national policy.
As elsewhere in the Anglophone colonial world, there remained an irresolvable tension. This struggle was comparatively staid, since Australians, like Canadians, ultimately relied on British aid and support. “In comparing their situation with that of the United States”—and arguing that “the principle has been asserted by the Chinese Exclusion Acts that a community is justified in refusing admittance”—“Australian colonists invoked a republican discourse on self-government, even while forced to acknowledge their dependence on the Empire for their ultimate defence [sic]” (Lake & Reynolds: 39). Similarly, Canadian racial nationalists stridently protested Britain's alliance with Japan and British insistence that Canada ameliorate its anti-Japanese immigration policies. But as with their Australian counterparts, all the Canadian racial nationalists could do was protest, for ultimately they greatly valued and relied upon their place in the Empire.

In the United States, by contrast, British attempts to determine the course of American policy had led to violent revolt. Three decades after the revolution that formed their republic, Americans again took up arms against their former mother country in the War of 1812.\footnote{For more on the War of 1812, see: Taylor, Alan. The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies. New York: Knopf, 2010.} Outraged by British attempts to intervene in American trade and slave trafficking, the United States declared war and compelled Britain to acknowledge American sovereignty and independence. This war once again proved that Americans wanted nothing less than complete separation from Britain and would readily take up
arms to defend their definition of freedom. Lake and Reynolds have argued that, “crucially, the idea of the 'white man's country' crossed and collapsed the imperial republican divide, drawing on the discursive resources of both traditions to enshrine the dichotomy of white and not white” (9).

*Matched Masculinities and Warring Whitenesses*

Yet it is also undeniable that America’s radical republican conception of liberty and independence was a far cry from the “complex repertoire of imperial power” that existed between Britain and its Dominions (Burbank and Cooper: 301). As Burbank and Cooper explain in their study of empires in world history, Americans' demand for full autonomy affected how Britain went on to govern other white men: “[t]he British government did not repeat the mistakes of the 1770s in North America in its remaining colonies of settlement; it instead allowed them to move slowly towards responsible government within the empire. It thus gave rise to another version of its composite polity, suited to an age of fledgling, if exclusionary, democracy—an amalgam of political units, each exercising sovereign functions but recognizing another layer of sovereignty at the imperial level” (Burbank and Cooper: 300-301).

What is more, United States was simultaneously a nation and an undeclared *empire*. In addition to solidifying American autonomy, the War of 1812 was also about U.S. designs
on the control of North America. As in previous eras of American nation-building and expansionism, this protracted conflict between the United States and Britain saw several failed American attacks against Upper and Lower Canada. So in colonial Canadian nationalists’ minds, the war also jeopardized the very existence of the nation-state they were trying so hard to build. American expansionism further heightened this sense of threat. If Americans feared that British imperialism threatened their national independence, so too did Canadians fear that American imperialism jeopardized the British imperial connection. Canadians, like Australian nationalists, also saw the “surrender of the right of self-government’, [as] a surrender of their manhood” and resented the need for constant deference to British authority (Lake & Reynolds: 39). However, they also recognized that their nation’s existence depended on British support—and saw themselves as a semi-autonomous extension of Britain. An expansionist America, by contrast, threatened their sovereignty and national manhood much more.

Some white Canadians feared the “rising tide of color” and passed racially restrictive immigration laws that carefully skirted the balance between imperial and national power. Yet even as they feared that the “colored races” of the world could undermine their nationalist project, so too could their fellow white men, by gaining leverage in the colonial contest. Even as Canadian racial nationalists collaborated with other “race patriots” across the Anglophone colonial world, they also articulated their national
identity defensively and in opposition to Americans, who they feared might annex Canada. And even as they created transnational discourses of Anglo-Saxonism and hardened the global color line, they also created nationalist exceptionalisms within this larger Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism.

Thus, even as they banded with Americans to pull the color line taut, Canadians also cited their fellow white men as a national threat—as with the “yellow peril” and other perceived threats from without. Despite their fraught relationship with the British Empire, Canadians articulated a British imperial definition of masculinity, and framed their nation-building project in these terms. Through a reading of Canadian racial nationalism and the ambivalence in their colonial contest with the United States, I analyze the formation of competing discourses of whiteness and masculinity.

Lake and Reynolds argument that the concept of “self-governing communities” created a point of commonality between white men's countries is useful. They argue that, for racial nationalists, self-governance became a way of erasing colonial-republican distinctions. While legal, political, and economic distinctions still existed, this notion of self-governance and a “master race” was strategically invoked by racial nationalists in British Dominions to advocate for their inclusion in conversations about global affairs, even though they lacked full political autonomy such as that boasted by Americans. And for nationalists throughout the Anglophone colonial world, white men's claims to
privileged global position were articulated not only in terms of race, but also in terms of gender.

Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Nationalist Iterations of Anglo-Saxon Superiority

Du Bois's and Lake and Reynolds notion of a global color line fails to account for the plurality of “whiteness”, which was not always and everywhere the same. Adding the Canadian case to the equation helps rectify this shortcoming. Similarly, just as whiteness was pluralistic, not all people of color were viewed or treated in the same way. By necessity, they could not be. In Canada, the presence of Native and black populations challenged fictions of superior white civilization and culture, as we shall see in this chapter. As J.S. Woodsworth pointed out, these populations were generally not newcomers. Rather, their presence on North American soil predated the founding of the nation-state. Unlike the “yellow peril”, the “Negro problem” and “Indian problem” could not be solved by restricting migration. As elsewhere in the Anglophone colonial world, indigenous and African-descended peoples had already long been on the “white” side of the global color line. In fact, they had been there before the concepts of “whiteness” and the “color line” had even been constructed. These lines had been drawn around them, so “white men” in North America had to negotiate the presence of
these “internal” others. They did so through the passage of racist laws restricting the exercise of full citizenship rights, such as voting.²

But in an age of citizenship, reconciling the presence and national meaning of these racialized minorities within “white men's countries” with the denial of civil rights required the construction of complex discourses about race, nation, and civilization. Discourses about the superior capacity of white men to govern helped to violently quash the threat of racial equality. Immigration restriction was a form of inequality predicated—along with the establishment of nation-states themselves—upon the necessary displacement of Native peoples through European colonial expansion. The “doctrine of the divine right of white people to steal” was alive and well throughout the Anglophone colonial world.

In the English Canadian view, a major aim of the state’s glorious destiny was to preserve the British Empire in North America, and state policies towards Aboriginal peoples achieved this brilliantly. As historian J.R. Miller explains in his chapter “From Alliance to

² As James W. St. G. Walker explains, “[i]n the case of native Indians, explicit legislation at both the federal and provincial levels denied them the vote” (Walker, James W. St G. “Race,” Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997, pp. 24-5). Walker also explains that other racial minorities in Canada were prohibited from voting, namely people of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian descent. And while African descended people could legally vote, they were also sometimes barred from civil rights in other ways, for instance, subjected to segregation and other forms of unequal treatment. For another excellent legal history that discusses segregation and other forms of racial discrimination under Canadian law, see: Backhouse, Constance. Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
Irreverence,” nation-building marked a significant shift in relations between white settlers and Native peoples. The earlier era from the 1790s-1830s, a time of British colonialism, was characterized by militarily alliances between white settlers and First Nations. But this conciliatory relationship began to sour with the immigration of British settlers and United Empire Loyalists from America to Eastern Canada. Miller explains that reconciliation between the United States and Great Britain diminished the military importance of Aboriginal peoples to the British. During the nation-building period: “[t]he association was no longer one that emphasized military alliance, but one in which the dominant partner sought the removal of the Indian from the path of agricultural settlement” (104). Miller goes on to explain that “[t]o both the British official and the frontier farmer, the Indian became less desirable as a comrade-in-arms; increasingly, the Indian was an impediment to the objectives that the white population had in an era of peace and settlement” (103-4).

In Canada, as in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, the creation of nation-states meant the displacement and marginalization of the land's...
indigenous inhabitants.\[^{5}\] Imperial ownership was taken for granted, and the fact that this world was only “new” to Europeans was at most a point of passing interest. As racial nationalist J.S. Woodsworth remarks in *Strangers Within our Gates*: “perhaps, in one sense, we are the strangers. Throughout the long years before the coming of the white man the Indian possessed the land” (16). But after a brief discussion of Native peoples, he swiftly moves on to discuss how best to oversee white settlement and realize Canada's great national destiny.

Initially, Woodsworth’s views on First Nations may seem compassionate. He laments the social order of European superiority, writing “[o]ne of the most pathetic sights is that of an Indian stepping off a sidewalk to let a white man pass, or turning out of a prairie trail to give a white man the right of way” (159). Yet this commentary on social inequality seems largely lip-service. For in his discussions of nation-building and Native rights, it is clear that Woodsworth, like many of his contemporaries, sees ‘white civilization’ as superior to Aboriginal cultures, and sees Native peoples as vestiges of the past, doomed to extinction. In his accounts of Aboriginal dispossession, he writes in a tone that is superficially critical, yet far more wistful and romantic, about what was

\[^{5}\] Under the rubric of the “divine right of white people to steal”: in addition to land and other material resources—taken forcibly by conquest or subterfuge, such as via duplicitous treaties and manipulation—this theft, of course, also included the freedom of enslaved indigenous peoples. While this history is relatively little-known today, not only African-descended people but also First Nations were enslaved in Canada. In fact, more Aboriginal people were enslaved in Canada than African-descended people.
widely perceived as a vanishing race: “[o]nce the Indians were proud autochthones; now they are despised natives; aborigines, yet outcasts; belated survivors of an earlier age, strangers in the land of their fathers” (159). Woodsworth invokes the prominent notion of Native peoples as “noble savages”, unable to endure the rigors of civilization. So despite his seeming sensitivity, Woodsworth reproduces a convenient transnational narrative about the impossibility of modernizing and assimilating “ancient” populations. Elevating “primitive” and “natural” lifestyles of indigenous peoples, the “noble savage” narrative presented their decline as inevitable. This narrative could then be used to naturalize “white” nation-states by legitimating the land-theft required for nation-building.

What is more, Woodsworth complains that “[t]he Indian is growing up with the idea firmly fixed in his head that the Government owes him a living, and his happiness and prosperity depend in no degree upon his individual effort...The system destroys his energy, push, and independence” (192). Thus, Woodsworth argued, “it is our duty to set him on his feet, and sever forever the ties that bind him either to his tribe or the Government” (159-60). But this discourse of Native “dependency” was yet another way to justify dispossession, and decreased state aid, on the basis that it supposedly limited individual enterprise. Initially, Native peoples were valued allies, but ultimately European colonial conquest disrupted First Nations communities’ ways of life and means of survival—through land appropriation and excessive hunting, fishing, and
trapping. This overzealous harvesting of resources—largely as commodities exported to lucrative European markets—created scarcity. So too did confining people on reservations, which effectively prevented tribes from seeking out more fruitful lands, which would allow them to be self-sustaining, as they had been for centuries.

On the contrary, European colonizers had long propagated the notion that because First Nations did not use the land in the same way as European settlers, they did not have a right to own or control it. In the dominant narrative, First Nations were squandering the bounty of the land by failing to accumulate substantial wealth and establish permanent homesteads. Thus, the reservation system became a way to contain people on less desirable land and forcibly attempt to impose European acquisitiveness; uses of space; and versions of domesticity. Yet Woodsworth also wrote that “[b]oth Church and State should have, as a final goal, the destruction and end of treaty and reservation life” (129). First Nations had to be penned into reservations so that European colonists were free to use the land as they chose, but this was ostensibly for the good of Aboriginal communities, who were eventually to somehow be ‘set on their feet’ in the process. Racial ideologies of Native inferiority were used to justify acts of blind theft, which were then symbolically softened by filtering them through the rosy lens of state paternalism.

6 Not to mention language, religion, and other such values. As Woodsworth writes: “[m]any [Indians] are devout Christians living exemplary lives, but there are still 10,202 Indians in our Dominion, as grossly pagan as were their ancestors, or still more wretched, half civilized, only to be debauched” (160).
As Daniel Francis explains, “Canadians prided themselves on the fact that they, unlike their American neighbours, did not believe that 'the only good Indian was a dead Indian.' But in practice this is exactly what they did believe. True enough, Canadians did not engage in the outright extermination of their Native population. However, they wholeheartedly endorsed the assimilation of the Indian, which in the long run meant the same thing, an end to an identifiable Indian people” (Francis, 1992: 59-60). Similar processes of nation-building and myth-making were taking place throughout the Anglophone colonial world, and there too they rested upon the displacement and dispossession of the lands' existing inhabitants. In Australia, “the Aboriginal population had been decimated by the rapidity of dispossession in Victoria, where a lack of natural barriers meant that settler moved into Aboriginal lands as fast as any expansion in the history of European settler colonisation” (Lake & Reynolds: 25). Westward expansion in Canada and the United States was equally swift and ruthless, and equally predicated on “the divine right of white men to steal.”

As in North America, proponents of colonial expansion in Australia argued that “[w]hoever had created Australia, white men were certain that this 'land of promise' belonged to them. It seemed fortuitous that the original inhabitants appeared destined to fade away before the superior forces of civilization and progress” (Lake & Reynolds: 25). Eliding the plurality and cultural specificity of indigenous peoples, discourses of
Aboriginal inferiority circulated transnationally and were used to legitimate parallel processes of nation-building that occurred across the Anglophone colonial world. But even as these discourses moved between white men’s countries, they took on distinct national inflections in each location, particular to its historical context and dominant values. For instance, unlike in the United States, in Canada’s national imaginary, nation-building was articulated in terms of British imperialism. Native peoples were an impediment because the state was envisioned as “magnificent and fertile a region, to be inhabited...in the course of years, by millions of thriving and contented subjects of Her Majesty” (House of Commons, 4th Session, 4th Parliament, 1882).

Though this view represented a reversal of state-Native relations, rather than openly admit that they had chosen to fundamentally alter their relationship with First Nations because of shifting self-interest, nation-builders crafted conciliatory narratives about how they were not actually mistreating the land’s rightful owners. Nineteenth century political elites presented their dispossession of Native peoples as inevitable: “[c]ivilization has driven back the Indian tribes, and the whites are filling the places of their dusky brethren;” and as something that Native peoples accepted: “the Indians seem to understand the course of events, and expressed...their confidence in the Canadian Government” (House of Commons, 4th Session, 4th Parliament, 1882). In contrast to the policy of violent extermination of which Canadians accused the United States, elite Canadian nationalists argued that theirs was a gentle and benevolent reign
intended to protect Native peoples from the expansion of white settlement: a noble extension of the British imperial mission.

Even so, First Nations were swiftly displaced and dispossessed, and Kornel Chang explains, the “racial geography” of the Pacific Northwest “naturalized the presence of white colonists in the Pacific world and thus seamlessly transformed colonizers into settlers” (680). This racial geography “was born out of U.S. and British imperialism and the large-scale project to demarcate the boundaries of a ‘White Pacific’” (680). But North America's Pacific Northwest was also a battleground for the competing national ambitions of white men. If American and Canadian westward expansion had virtually identical consequences for Native peoples, the process was described using divergent articulations of whiteness and national identity.

**American Exceptionalism, Expansionism, and Manifest Destiny**

Images such as John Gast's 1872 painting “American Progress” portrayed U.S. westward expansion and nation-building as a project that was both exalted and inevitable (Fig. 2.1). The image depicts the coming of “civilization” and prosperity—depicted in the form of technology (telegraph wires, trains); domesticity (homes, cultivation); and knowledge (a “school book”)—borne westward across a majestic landscape, by white settlers and an angelic-looking Miss Columbia—illuminated by rays of sun. Symbols of
wilderness and savagery—buffalo, bear...and Native peoples—are spurred on by this westward push. They are literally in Miss Columbia’s shadow, and by extension the shadow of western civilization, and America’s mission to extend and improve it.

This imagery is strikingly similar in the 1907 B.C. Saturday Sunset frontispiece I discussed in Chapter One, which shows Miss Canada in an ethereal realm above the Pacific Coast: greeting a cherub walking on rays of sun, and surrounded by farm tools and a bountiful harvest (Fig. 1.6). The most obvious difference? Miss Canada’s Union Jack dress: a garment Miss Colombia would never be caught dead in. Broader symbols of Anglo-Saxon progress and civilization were taken up in national terms, to legitimate specific instances of nation-building.

As in Canada, in the United States, portrayals of national destiny were part of larger concepts of European territorial expansion, articulated within a framework of national exceptionalism. As Reginald Horsman explains in Race and Manifest Destiny, the term “Manifest Destiny” was coined by John L. O'Sullivan in 1845, in response to the annexation of Texas “to describe the process of American expansion” (Horsman: 219). Specifically, “O'Sullivan first used the phrase...in criticizing other nations for attempting to interfere with a natural process: other nations had intruded, he said, 'for the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by
Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions” (219). Within a larger moment of transnational “Anglo-Saxon expansion” (Lake & Reynolds: 51), Americans, like their competitors, distilled their expansionist endeavors through the filter of national exceptionalism. In fact, “[b]y 1850 the emphasis was on the American Anglo-Saxons as a separate, innately superior people who were destined to bring good government, commercial prosperity, and Christianity to the American continents and to the world” (Horsman: 1-2, emphasis mine).

The United States’ vigorous imperialism at home and overseas contradicted the radical republican ideology presented in American nationalist narratives as an antidote to imperial power. As Paul Kramer explains, many, including historians, have uncritically understood “the United States not only as a non-[e]mpire, but as an anti-[e]mpire” (1316, citing Kaplan). Yet nationalist discourse is capable of reconciling even such glaring contradictions—and through the concept of Manifest Destiny, anti-imperialism cohabited alongside unbridled expansionism. As Horsman goes on to explain, O’Sullivan had articulated American expansionism as a radical republican imperative, arguing for the God-given “right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess

7 The question of American foreign expansionism was highly contested. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, some anti-imperialists such as Andrew Carnegie argued that Americans had no “white man’s burden” and should refrain from engaging in foreign imperialism.
the whole of the continent which Providence had given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us” (220).

Manifest Destiny was explicitly framed in terms of liberty and self-governance. Given its revolutionary past, in the American national imaginary, these ideals were considered so fundamentally anti-imperialist that they could be projected abroad even in ways that obscured their American imperialist implications. As Paul Kramer explains in “Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910”, some reframed American overseas intervention, not in terms of empire, but rather in terms of "expansive republicanism" and "tutelage in self-government" (2002: 1350). So ultimately, aggressive expansionism was part of America's particular brand of national exceptionalism, and “[t]hose actual differences inspired exceptionalist enthusiasms that were virtually absolute, erasing what the empires had in common, including the exchanges they engaged in” (Kramer: 1316).

Canada’s British Imperial Exceptionalism

In Canada, by citing “providence”, divine right, and the innate superiority of their political system, Canadians’ own subsequent rhetoric of nation-building and expansion echoed Americans’, but modified to suit their role in the British Empire. Just as the American Revolution had inadvertently created Canada, the process of westward
expansion in Canada was largely a response to America’s, in terms of both the physical processes and the very different myths that were told about it. While Canadians were not themselves a vigorously expansionist empire, they were a proud part of one. As with Americans, Canadians invoked particular national values when exercising the “divine right of white people to steal”, and created distinct myths and images about this process. John H. Thompson uses the term “manifest duty” to describe Canada’s process and framing of westward expansion. If the masculine archetype of America in this moment was a lawless hotheaded cowboy with a finger on the trigger, in Canada, it was a calm, dispassionate officer of the Mounted Police – one represented free enterprise and rugged individualism, while the other stood for law, duty, and state authority.

Because Canadian racial nationalists saw American expansionist ambitions as a threat to their state and identity, they generated both alternate readings of America’s nation-building project, and alternative conceptions of whiteness and masculinity. Canadians built their own narratives of national progress which invoked motifs similar to those in American visual culture, even as these images responded to the perceived threats to Canadian whiteness and sovereignty posed by American land-hunger.
A June 18, 1869 political cartoon from the English-language, Montreal-based journal, *Diogenes*,\(^8\) performs the same cultural work as John Gast’s “American Progress”. The artist shows a female allegorical figure overseeing the process of nation-building and westward expansion (Fig. 2.2). As in Gast’s image, she is barefoot and white-robbed, suggesting deification, and again invoking some the idea of nation-building as an outcome of divine providence. But, in contrast to the intent of Gast’s imagery, Canadians were to understand their expansionist movement as reactive and protective. In Canada, western settlement was not presented as an impulse to dominate the continent, so much as an urgent imperative to stave off greedy American profiteers. While there was not yet a railway construction project underway in Canada in 1869, this was the year when the first U.S. transcontinental railroad was completed. The new railroad line linked the Atlantic and Pacific coasts by land and made the American west more accessible. Canadians feared that it would also make their west more accessible. This image urges Canadians to follow suit, so they could settle their west on their terms.

In the image “From Halifax to Vancouver” Miss Canada points towards a railway car wending its way westward. Miss Canada explains to Uncle Sam\(^9\): “[t]his is what we want, Cousin Jonathan. It will give us real independence, and stop the foolish talk about

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\(^8\) Diogenes of Sinope (412–323 BC), also known as “Diogenes the Cynic”, was a Greek Philosopher. One of the founders of Cynic philosophy, he attempted to debunk social conventions and to prove that action better indicated virtue than did theory. Thus, “Diogenes” is an appropriate name for a news publication.

\(^9\) Uncle Sam is referred to as “Cousin Jonathan” in this cartoon. He is also sometimes called “Brother Jonathan”.

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annexation”. Uncle Sam responds skeptically: “Wal, miss, I guess you're about right thar, but I'll believe it when I see it.” In the context of colonial competition, Uncle Sam's doubt about Canadians' ability to build the railway present the project as a national challenge—no doubt also meant to encourage taxation-averse naysayers into supporting the controversial project. In this defensive white nationalist reading of nation-building, the railway is presented as necessary to forestall annexation and win independence against the threat posed by a radical revolutionary rival lying in wait to snatch up this bountiful white man's country to further enrich his own.

**Gendered Visual Metaphors and the National Body Politic**

In keeping with dominant gender narratives and the notion of women as “the weaker sex,” Canada was usually feminized (or infantilized) in visual culture when threatened or bullied, and masculinized when dominant. In chapter one, we saw “Miss Canada” invoked when Laut argued that the nation had been ordered to cover “her mouth” and “never speak above a whisper of the whole Brown Brother problem” of Asian immigration. Yet, as we have seen, Canada was depicted as strapping young Jack Canuck when triumphantly leading a symphony of ethnic whites in nationalist song.

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10 As Reginald Horsman explains, “[a]ny drive to obtain Canada in the 1850s was, of course, slowed by southern fears of additions to the free states, but the ultimate problem was British power” (283). Even after the height of active American annexation in the 1830s and 1840s Canadians continued to fear this possible threat to their national sovereignty. As the political cartoons reveal, elites harnessed—and in turn reinforced—these fears to push for controversial political agendas, such as railway construction.
thereby forging a sense of white Canadian identity (Fig. 1.8). Similarly, an 1898 cartoon from the *Globe* (Toronto) shows Jack Canuck boasting of Canada's peaceful prowess in parallel processes of western expansion (Fig. 2.3). The caption reads "Jack Canuck 'points with pride'." In the image, Jack preaches pompously to the older Uncle Sam, seated like a schoolchild, glowering, but attentive. Images in the background illustrate “the wild west U.S. style” and the “wild west Canada style”—contrasting the violence and unruliness of lynching in the American west with the calm diplomacy and restrained “Yukon justice” of Western Canada. Uncle Sam concedes, “Yes, Jack, I'm a pretty big considerable nation, but I see I kin sit at your feet and learn a few things!”

This image captures the very heart of Canadian national identity and white masculinity constructed in relation to nation-building and westward expansion in this era. In contrast to Lake and Reynolds’ argument that a sense of republican manhood was taken up by white men everywhere (41), I argue that Canadian nationalists constructed competing discourses of whiteness and masculinity, which I term “British imperial manhood.” The “elevated sovereign masculine subject” (8) Lake and Reynolds argue was taken up everywhere was actually framed very differently in Canada than in other “white men’s countries”.

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11 This cartoon trope of Canada “teaching” Uncle Sam was already old in 1898, and is still around in Canadian political cartoons. The Spanish-American War also occurred in 1898, over American interference with Spanish imperialism in Cuba, Guam, and the Philippines.
An 1880 political cartoon from the Canadian Illustrated News hints at the roots of this identity—in conveying Canadian fears that, without British support—Canada would be a helpless babe in Uncle Sam's grasping arms (Fig. 2.4). Thus, in defining their national identity and version of white masculinity, English Canadians meticulously subverted American revolutionary values. To counter the dramatic appeal of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” extolled in the American Declaration of Independence, Canadians celebrated the comparatively bland national values of “peace, order, and good government” – a phrase from the British North America Act of 1867 – as their national credo. These safe, restrained, practical—eminently British imperial—values

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12 Canadians’ choice to stay loyal to Britain was not only about ideological differences, but also about power and political control. While official national discourse stressed loyalty and service, it is also undeniable that British Canadian elites held a degree of status and influence within an imperial context, which they might have lost had all Anglo-North American colonies revolted, and become a single sovereign entity. For even French Canadians in Quebec had also chosen to support the British over the Americans. This was a pragmatic choice to support the British whose dominance they loathed and resented, which they made not out of any special loyalty, but rather because they believed the British would permit them to preserve their distinct language and culture more readily than would Americans (Thompson & Randall). So for the English Canadian elites charged with nation-building, the confluence of ideology and self-interest aligned to make loyalty to Britain an obvious, if not inevitable, choice. As George Elliott Clarke explains in his article, “White Like Canada”: “In a sense, Canada would not exist were it not for the irresistible boundary that America, quite unwittingly, provides...as political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset suggests, Canadians have never forgotten that two nations, not one, resulted from the American Revolution. While Americans laud the decision of the Thirteen Colonies to break away from Britain, they tend to forget that six colonies to their north remained loyal. Clarke, George Elliott. “White Like Canada.” Transition, no. 73 (1997): 98-109. 100.

13 Central in terms of American national identity and values, the Declaration of Independence was “a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies then at war with Great Britain were now independent states, and thus no longer a part of the British Empire”. The Declaration reads, in part: “[w]e hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. This is fundamentally opposed to the rigid hierarchy of the British imperial system.


Woodworth writes: “[i]n whole Europe the word ‘America’ is synonymous in all languages with freedom, prosperity, and happiness. The desire to reach America is the first sign of awakened ambition, the first signal of revolt against harsh environment, the dream of age and youth alike” (13, quoting Whelpley)
reinforced English Canadians’ self-perception as a pacifistic, well-behaved, and law-abiding people.¹⁴

An 1882 House of Commons Debate boasted that providence had smiled on Canada: “[w]e have peace in all our borders, and order, harmony, and contentment among all classes of our citizens” (House of Commons, 4th Session, 4th Parliament, 1882). In a sense, the Canadian national motto captures perfectly imperial values par excellence. For these are the inherited values of rulers: and rulers were most successful when there was peace and prosperity throughout their kingdoms, fiefdoms, or Empires. For monarchs and aristocracy, discord meant having to expend resources to restore peace, and thus, it was in their best interest to keep their subjects happy—even as they kept them in their place. This imperial ethos, in addition to emphasizing communitarian values such as social harmony also reinforced the importance of social hierarchy.

This hierarchy was seen as part of a divine and unassailable order, based on heredity and birthright. In striking contrast, republican ideologies are far more individualistic, and tend to prize personal rights and freedoms over social harmony. For in the

¹⁴ The phrase “peace, order and good government” appears in many 19th and 20th century British Acts of Parliament, such as the New Zealand Constitution Act (1852), the Colonial Laws Validity Act (1865), the British Settlements Act (1887), the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (1900), the South Africa Act (1909), the Government of Ireland Act (1920), and the West Indies Act (1962). Canadians further fetishized these imperial values by enshrining the bland phrase as their national motto.
republican view, discord is part of the democratic process—without dissent and debate, tyranny must ostensibly prevail. Similarly, republics are avowedly less hierarchical. Even if great disparities still exist, it is not because some people are deemed inherently better than others. Despite massive structural inequality in practice, republics are nonetheless founded upon a principle of radical equality of opportunity. This marks a point of profound difference between republics and empires in general, which we can observe in Canada’s and America’s divergent definitions of whiteness and national values.

As John Mackenzie writes in _Imperialism and Popular Culture_, the British imperialist was “resolved to accept readily the burden of inherited dominion, with every development and expansion to which the operation of natural and legitimate causes may give rise and to use the material forces of government to protect the rights and advance the just interests of all the subjects of the Queen”.15 Canadians were proud British subjects, and considered it an honor to loyally serve their monarch, in return for just governance. By contrast, they branded America’s republican values _unnatural_ and _illegitimate_. In the

15 I believe that this quotation from Mackenzie’s _Imperialism and Popular Culture_ (1986) is worth reproducing in full here: “The Imperialist feels a profound pride in the magnificent heritage of empire won by the courage and energies of his ancestry, and bequeathed to him subject to the burden of many sacred trusts. This is his emotion. He is convinced that the discharge of the duties of his great inheritance has an educational influence and a morally bracing effect on the character of the British people, and that the spread of British rule extends to every race brought within its sphere the incalculable benefits of just law, tolerant trade, and considerate government. This is his conviction. He is resolved to accept readily the burden of inherited dominion, with every development and expansion to which the operation of natural and legitimate causes may give rise and to use the material forces of government to protect the rights and advance the just interests of all the subjects of the Queen. This is his determination. He believes that the strength and resources of our race will be equal to the weight of any obligation which the sense of duty of our people may call upon our Government to undertake. This is his creed” (citing: J. Lawson Walton, “Imperialism,” _Contemporary Review_, LXXV, 1899, 308).
imperial imaginary, legitimacy emanated from divine will, which was actualized through the hierarchical social structure, in which the monarch was chosen by God.

So to revolt against this God-given social order was considered inherently unjust. Like their imperial forbears, Anglo-Canadians branded the United States violent, unruly, and treasonous. For Americans, the Revolutionary War\(^\text{16}\) (1775–1783) and subsequent nationalizing narrative highlighted the bravery of fighting for independence, and the glory of seizing the reins of national destiny from the grasp of a controlling, imperialist despot. America’s military victory and the eventual British recognition of American independence further entrenched this ethos of autonomy, self-determination, and individualism as cornerstones of American national identity.

Unlike America’s militant process of identity construction, the creation of white Canadian masculinity was largely defensive and oppositional, just as was its process of nation-building. While America was an influential superpower—touting a national identity centered on prowess and might—Canada great power itself as a superior moral force to be reckoned with. A good British imperialist was “convinced that the discharge of the duties of his great inheritance has an educational influence and a morally bracing

\(^{16}\) Also known as the American War of Independence, though even this semantic difference is very significant, since it determines whether the war is deemed to be an unjust act of rebellion of a legitimate bid for self-determination.
effect on the character of the British people, and that the spread of British rule extends
to every race brought within its sphere the incalculable benefits of just law, tolerant
trade, and considerate government." Canadians could not compete with Americans
economically, militarily, or demographically, and so choose the symbolic realm as the
battleground upon which they could triumph: an identity framed in terms of restraint,
justice, and loyalty.

For Anglo-Americans, manly honor meant independence, of standing up for individual
rights and not accepting subjugation or subjection. But for Canadians, honor and white
masculinity was a question of fealty and restraint. It meant never acting rashly or out of
self-interest, but instead carrying oneself with the comportment and dignity befitting a
subject of the British Crown. But of course, in Canada, as in the United States, nation-
building rested upon the displacement and oppression of Aboriginal peoples. Yet the
state's relationship with First Nations became the ground upon which a sense of
Canadian moral superiority could be built—and nationalist public culture filled this
canvas with portrayals of American violence and brutality toward Native Americans.

**Canadian Kindness and American Aggression in Visual Culture**

An 1876 cover image from the *Canadian Illustrated News* presents Canadian and American values in stark relief, praising Canada's treatment of Native peoples, while condemning America's (Fig. 2.5). The two-panel frame compares “Indian” policy in the United States and Canada. The upper frame, depicting the U.S., shows a vicious battle underway. American soldiers vastly outnumber the few Native combatants, most of whom lie dead or dying on the grassy plain, or retreat into the distance. In the background, towering flames consume the skeletal remains of village *tipis*. The sky is dark, and filled with billowing clouds of smoke. This negative space provides a perfect backdrop for the inset image depicting the America’s version of “government aid”. This is indicated by the sign on the trading post, which reads “U.S. Indian Commissioner.” Here, in some dark corner, a grimacing state agent offers whiskey and meager provisions to a group of gaunt and stooped Native Americans. Their bony backs and shoddy attire attest to their deprivation and desperation. To round out this sordid scene of state neglect, a mangy cat roves around, advancing menacingly toward an emaciated and scantily-clad child, who raises his arm as if in self-defense.

Below these pathetic scenes of deprivation, misery, suffering, and death, lies the bright and cheerful contrast of Indian Policy in Canada. Euro-Canadians and First Nations alike bask in the warm glow of camaraderie and mutual respect. Some unknown light source

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18 The word “tipi”, also spelled “teepee”, though used in a very general was more culturally specific, from two Lakota words meaning “to dwell in”.

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illuminates Native art in the background—a shining sun, a man on horseback, another hunting on foot—scenes of the bounty and wonder of life in Canada. In the foreground, a healthy, well-dressed group of Native Canadians reclines in comfort and safety, leisurely smoking pipes, and seated around a wealth of plentiful provisions. Blankets lie neatly stacked, alongside bulging sacks of grain, adorned with maple leaves, symbol of national cohesion and state authority.

Guns, gunpowder, and ‘tomahawks' sit in the center of the circle, untouched. The large box of guns is labeled “Indian Commissioner, N.W. Territory, Canada.” Unlike in the American scene, the government is giving guns to First Nations, without concern. As the Native art illustrates, this is a land where weapons are used to hunt game, not brandished in war and conflict. This is clearly a peaceful meeting, and no one in attendance appears troubled by the presence of so many weapons. Instead, the calm gaze of most of the group is directed at a European, or possibly Métis, man in the center of the group, unfurling a warm-looking blanket for their appraisal. A few Europeans, one in full military uniform, oversee the scene, and a Native Chief holds up a hand, as if in approval. And unlike in the American scene, there is not a drop of whiskey in sight.

19 The term "Métis" refers to French speaking people of French and Native ancestry.
In presenting this dramatic transnational contrast, this cartoon draws upon a series of symbols and discourses that circulated popularly and politically concerning the mythologized relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state. The symbols of whiskey, Native art, and guns, are of particular significance within the historical context of nation-building and national identity construction. For instance, whiskey figured prominently what scholar Eva Mackey calls the “benevolent Mountie myth” or the “myth of the mild west” (*House of Difference*, 1999). That is, the idea that the national police force, the Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP) peacefully subdued a potentially tumultuous west with integrity and fairness, eschewing the violence and deception critics decried in U.S. Indian policy.  

As historian Daniel Francis explains, a considerable mythology sprung up around the “Mounties”, which glorified their role in nation-building. The role of the Mounted Police in nation-building is enshrined in a patriotic song, which describes the Mountie mission: “Our mission is to raise the Flag/Of Britain’s Empire here,/Restrain the lawless savage,/And protect the Pioneer;/And ‘tis a proud and daring trust,/To hold these vast Domains,/With but three hundred Mounted Men,/The Riders of the Plains (Francis,

20 This with the exception of the Riel rebellion, which I will discuss at length, and the so-called “Cypress Hills Massacre,” which Canadians blamed on American whiskey traders.
Imaginary Indian, 1992: 62, citing MacBeth, R.G. Policing the Plains). So the Mounties' role was to enforce state interests and “protect pioneers” at the expense of Aboriginal peoples, who had to be “restrained”. State policies consistently disadvantaged First Nations, and it was the role of the NWMP carry out these national agendas.

Despite sharing similar aims and assumptions with U.S. Indian Policy, Canada's Mountie mythology framed “restraining lawless savages,” while taking their ancestral lands for state and settler use, as a noble and benevolent endeavor. Early historians emphasized the 'miraculous transformation' accomplished by NWMP intervention. A.L. Haydon (1912) claimed that “the north-west had witnessed a revolution take place within its borders, a bloodless revolution of the most remarkable kind. Over thirty thousand Indians, at war with one another and hostile to the white invasion, had been transformed into a peaceful community showing every disposition to remain contented and law-abiding” (Francis, 1992: 64, emphasis mine). Framing British imperialism and westward expansion as “the white invasion” is a surprisingly frank depiction of the process taking place. Yet European colonizers were nonetheless deemed to be entitled to the land. In fact, in the dominant narrative, these “civilized” invaders—and especially the Mounties who protect them—are credited with bringing peace, contentment, and

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21 In fact, in an 1882 Parliamentary discussion, state leaders had argued that European immigration and nation-building demanded the further suppression and containment of First: “[t]he rapidly extending settlements have rendered necessary the strengthening of the force of Mounted Police” (House of Commons, 4th Session, 4th Parliament, 1882: 7).
the rule of law to formerly “hostile”, warring, “lawless savages”. Despite a clear agenda to suppress native rights, combined with state and NWMP assumptions about Aboriginal racial and cultural inferiority, popular discourse consistently portrayed Canada as a friend to First Nations.

In contrast to the just, honest, and benevolent Mounted Police, Americans were often portrayed in Canada as bloodthirsty cavalry troopers, predatory whiskey traders, or unruly settler lynch mobs—all peddling destruction and death. This narrative created a discursive contrast between Canada and the United States, in which Mounties policed the prairies to keep both First Nations and white Americans in line. Part of the Mountie mission was to prevent self-interested American profiteers from preying on vulnerable Native peoples. For instance, an 1874 painting by Richard Barrington Nevitt, “a young surgeon and amateur artist who accompanied the North-West Mounted Police in the momentous March West of 1874”, shows NWMP intervene to dump out whiskey, and save Native peoples from the scourge of drink (Fig. 2.6). The image description explains that “[i]n this picture whiskey is being dumped into the Oldman River after the arrest of the first American bootleggers,” and that the “arrival of the Mounties ended the practice of exchanging buffalo robes for whiskey and established law and order in the
West”. Daniel Francis explains that “[i]ntegral to the Mountie myth was the notion that...’The first business our Mounted Police did was to stand between the Indians and the vile creatures who would give them drink and rob them of all they possessed’” (Imaginary Indian, 1992: 68, citing MacBeth). Through such myth-making, the Canadian state’s own acquisitive policies were presented as benevolent paternalism, while “Canadians, searching as ever for the Republic's feet of clay, denounced U.S. Indian policy as ‘white savagery’” (Thompson & Randall: 50).

Even while they shared the U.S. view of Native peoples as innately inferior and systematically marginalized them, Canadians condemned their American counterparts and used these critiques to articulate their own superior version of white masculinity and national identity. Discourses of racial and cultural superiority also meshed well with Progressive Era values of thrift, modesty, piety, hard work, and moral purity, which were just as prevalent in Canada as in the United States. It was within this historical context that an emphasis on the honorable, manly, upstanding conduct of the NWMP became


23 For more on moral reform in this era, see:


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meaningful. So too did the state’s mission of ‘racial uplift’ through “Christianization” and “civilization”.

Moral reformers’ rampant fears of “white slavery”—a common euphemism for prostitution—and intemperance—usually alcoholism—attest to the anxiety of the Victorian and Progressive Era. Semantically speaking, terms like “white slavery” naturalized the enslavement of non-white peoples, just as “white savagery” naturalizing the presumed savagery of non-whites. Thus, attaching “whiteness” to the conditions of slavery or savagery suggested a perversion of the natural order, in which white people were both free and civilized. This terminology, even when used critically, implicitly reinforced notions of racial inferiority, and, by extension, the naturalness of subordinating darker-skinned peoples. Such presumptions were used to justify the advancement of “civilization” and the “white race”, at the expense of darker skinned peoples, and through the form of the nation-state.

24 One way this state aim was accomplished was through the system of residential schools for aboriginal youth. As in Australia, the children of indigenous communities were taken by force or coercion, to be assimilated to European culture, language, and religion, in residential schools, where the children were required to live. Many Aboriginal communities today accurately consider these policies of forced assimilation and Christianization a historical theft of culture, language, and spiritual practices, on the part of the state and some churches. Scholar Eva Mackey terms this process an act of “cultural genocide” (Mackey, Eva. The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada. New York: Routledge, 1999). The last residential school in Canada only closed in 1998.
So for Canadians to accuse Americans of “white savagery” was a biting insult, which suggested that Americans were both uncivilized and un-Christian, little better than “savages” and “heathens” themselves. But, even if it appeared critical, such condemnation was complicit with the violence of colonialism, since it implicitly reinforced ideas about Native savagery and inferiority. Despite seeing First Nations as lesser peoples, Anglo-Canadians nonetheless felt proud that their state supposedly treated them with kindness and care. As Daniel Francis explains, the dominant national mythology runs as follows: “[i]n Canada, we sent the Mounted Police to befriend and protect the Indians...[w]e 'know' that the absence of a Wild West in Canada was no accident of history; it was a result of our moral superiority and the superiority of British justice as exemplified in the Mounted Police” (*National Dreams*, 1997: 34). But in fact, it was arguably the state itself that Canada’s Native peoples most needed protection from.

As scholars Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock explain in *Making of the Mosaic*:

> During the first ten years of Confederation, the Canadian government succeeded in acquiring most of the Indian lands between Ontario and British Columbia. According to the terms of the treaties, the Indians gave up all rights, titles, and privileges they held in their lands, in return for annuities, reserves, and the right to hunt on Crown land. The unfavourable terms of settlement are explained in part by the fact that, in many instances, the Indians believed they were selling only the temporary use of their land in return for peace, and federal assistance when necessary. Others were compelled to forgo their land claims, weakened as they were by disease and starvation (1998: 67-68, emphasis mine).

In this climate of misinformation and dispossession, it was the role of the NWMP to carry out state agendas and further the material process of nation-building through land acquisition. Historian Hugh Shewell argues in *Enough to Keep Them Alive*, “Euro-
Canadian civilization – liberal democratic capitalism – has laid waste to aboriginal peoples and their cultures” (2004: 4). Mounted police were the agents of the dominant state agenda, entrusted with the task of carrying out policies of dispossession and displacement, segregation and forced cultural assimilation. And yet the Mounties have been consistently portrayed as kindly protectors. And as Daniel Francis explains: with repetition, national myths become true (1997). The continuous replication of tales of Mountie honor and heroism made up part of the symbolic process of nation-building, such that these myths became interwoven with the fabric of national identity. And as with articulations of Canadian superiority, the specter of American aggression was also mythologized and repeated, particularly in popular culture of this era.

Probably the most damning Canadian critique of U.S. Indian Policy comes in another 1891 political cartoon, this one from the Dominion Illustrated (Toronto), which depicts the Battle of Wounded Knee (Fig. 2.7). This cartoon uses American violence as a means of creating a sense of Canadianness. The image explicitly critiques the disjuncture between the stated American values of freedom and justice and the brutal treatment of Native Americans. Ironically titled “The Greatest Nation on Earth,” the cartoon shows Uncle Sam in mid-proclamation, as he makes a grandiose gesture toward a scene in the background. The disturbing tableau depicts Native Americans being brutally slaughtered by white American troops. The cartoon's sub-caption reads "Uncle Sam: We hold that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are the inherent rights of every
man! (?).” The cartoon presents a Canadian critique of American hypocrisy in claiming to uphold universal human rights, even while engaging in racial violence. If the juxtaposition within the image does not drive the point home, the question mark in brackets at the end of the sentence should. The well-placed punctuation forces viewers to ask how white Americans could claim to uphold the rights of every man, even as they deprived Native Americans of the basic right to life, not to mention liberty or the pursuit of happiness.

And yet this cartoon is doubly ironic, for Canadians were equally guilty of such hypocrisy. The cartoon openly invites viewers to question stated American values, even while it works to ameliorate contradictions between Canada’s official values and actual policies. For even as they derided the United States for its treatment of Native Americans, Anglo-Canadians systematically oppressed and displaced First Nations in Western Canada to further their own 'divine mission' of making way for European settlement. As one Toronto publication exhorted in 1891—the same year as the Wounded Knee massacre Canadians so hotly condemned—"[t]his is God's heritage for our children, and we must go up and possess the land for our Lord and Christ" (321).25 Visual culture was used to bolster support for nation-building policies, as well as to

25 From John McLean in his chapter entitled "Christianity and the Red Race", in Indians, Their Customs, and Their Manners (1889: 320). To clear up any ambiguity, the author's name is listed as "John McLean" in the book, but officially catalogued as "John Maclean" (1851-1928).
make national myths “true” through repetition. Through its sardonic reference to America as "The Greatest Nation on Earth," the political cartoon relies on an implicit sense of Canadian superiority. Even as it presents a valid critique of American exceptionalism, the cartoon uncritically reinforces a sense of Canadian exceptionalism by reiterating the time-worn trope that Canadian treatment of Native peoples was relatively humane.

What is more, in yet another layer of irony, in condemning America’s Indian policy, Canadians were not creating an original critique—rather they were echoing the critiques of progressive and anti-racist Americans of their state’s treatment of Native Americans. As an 1891 article from the North Dakota Churchman, reprinted in the Church Guardian (Montreal), argued: “[i]t is impossible to speak of our last 'Indian War' with equanimity. From whatever point of view we look at it, it bristles with the thorns of a righteous indignation. It is a shame to America that with the liberal disposition of the government and people towards these Indians, so much just complaint as to their treatment should exist.”

Canadian nationalists condemned America’s policies, and praised Canada’s; to their delight, so too did some Americans. For instance, “U.S. critics such as Helen Hunt Jackson...held up Canada in her book A Century of Dishonor (1884) as an example for the United States to emulate” (Thompson & Randall, 2002: 50). Some Canadian nationalists

26 Reprinted as follows: “The Indian Troubles in the U.S.” The Church guardian. 12, no. 36 (1891): Montreal, Quebec: L.H. Davidson. 3.
used American critiques of U.S. policy, and/or lauding of Canadian policy to bolster their uncritical elevation of Canadian Indian policy, despite the relative similarity of both states’ westward expansion. As the *North Dakota Churchman* piece went on to argue: “[i]t is a shame that the fearful scenes of Wounded Knee, should ever have been seen...That the Indians have grievances cannot be denied”.

Yet, as we shall see, Canadians denied the grievances of First Nations, even as they derided white Americans. The 1891 Wounded Knee cartoon is also particularly strident in its critique of Americans because the Native American victims of military aggression are unarmed. What is more, upon close examination, it becomes clear that the victims are all women and children. Near the front of the frame, a woman lies next to a dead child, and slightly to the left and back of her, a child cries on the body of its dead mother. In the background are again the *tipis* of a village—symbolizing that this is not some battlefield, but rather a domestic space—ideally a site of peaceful daily village life. Choosing to portray the Sioux victims exclusively as women and children represents a meaningful editorial choice on the part of the cartoonist—and arguably an ironic one, given the Canadian government’s neglect of the Sioux refugees (also mainly women and children) had forced them to return to the United States a decade earlier, in 1881, to escape the cold and hunger they suffered in Canada.

*Native Resistance and Critiques of State Violence*

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While Canadian popular culture largely emphasized dramatic U.S. Indian Wars, the *North Dakota Churchman* article thoughtfully condemned these more subtle forms of state violence and deprivation. The 1891 article went on to argue that: “[a]ll the evidence goes to show that after penning these Indians on a reservation, and so depriving them of their ancient dependence, we fail to either feed and clothe them decently, or to make them self-supporting. One army officer says that if he were an Indian knowing what he knows of the wrongs they have suffered, he would kill every white man he meets on sight”. 27

And some Native Americans did indeed resist violently. But this was something of a double-bind, for as Reginald Horsman explains, in the United States, desire for land led white Americans to further portray Native peoples as savage. Horsman explains that “Indian resistance to the rapid appropriation of their lands was used to condemn them further as semihuman savages” (204). Yet by revolting against their unjust treatment, Native Americans were arguably acting upon the most American of impulses. By fighting against colonial incursions upon their land and liberty, Native Americans were

27 “The Indian Troubles in the U.S.” *The Church guardian*. 12, no. 36 (1891): Montreal, Quebec: L.H. Davidson. 3. I should note that while critical of the state’s treatment of Native Americans, the article still reinforced ideas about racial inferiority, stating that “[i]t is a shame that their progress towards civilization should be so sadly hindered”. Churches could be either critical or supportive of state policies, and similarly, Christian values could be invoked either in support of a divine mission to conquer the land for the monarch and god, or towards more progressive, anti-racist ends. As with discourses about slavery, where scriptural interpretations were used to justify both pro-slavery and abolitionist agendas, religious discourse is a tool that can be interpreted in progressive or hegemonic ways.
resisting in terms that were deeply resonant with dominant American values. Yet even if such revolt against injustice was considered legitimate when undertaken by white men—“the mistreatment of Indians was increasingly justified by arguments of their inferiority” (Horsman: 204).

In Canada too, the grievances of First Nations were de-legitimated by presumed Native inferiority. Aboriginal peoples were considered childlike and in need of state paternalism, which justified the use of state authority and force in ways that consistently denied sovereignty and self-determination. Articulating views of First Nations as what one Reverend MacBeth called “Children of the Plains” (Francis, 1992: 64) allowed state leaders to act as though they were representing First Nations' best interests when they denied Aboriginal rights to suffrage, self-government, control of land, and religious freedom. As Daniel Francis explains, professional historians also colluded in promoting this paternalistic perspective, and undermining Native resistance: “[e]arlier historians...did not admit that Indians had policies. Like children, Indians had appetites, and they followed them” (65).

In the late nineteenth century, Anglo-Canadian expansionists lauded the “destiny of English Canada in the West” and ridiculed the French-speaking Mètis, of mixed French and Native ancestry (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998: 66). Louis Riel had originally led a rebellion of the Mètis in 1869—applying sufficient political pressure to force John A.
Macdonald to meet most Métis demands, culminating in the *Manitoba Act* (1870). Fifteen years later, another government led by Macdonald refused to recognize Métis land rights in Saskatchewan, and a Métis alliance and further rebellion, again led by Riel, was crushed. In a controversial decision, Riel was hanged for treason, enshrining him as a French-Canadian martyr and symbol of Anglo hegemony.

Two 1885 political cartoons, one from an English language newspaper, the other from a French one, respond in different ways to Riel’s execution and the trampling of indigenous resistance and land rights. The cartoons both depict First Nations peoples being pushed off a cliff by the advance of white “civilization.” The first political cartoon, which appeared in *The Toronto Evening News* on June 20, shows four Native Canadians at the edge of a steep precipice, overlooking the Pacific Ocean (Fig. 2.8). They look behind them in alarm at an advancing mass of white settlers, and an approaching train. A cloud of smoke from the train’s chimney reads “Civilization.” Beside the First Nations, leading the large group of white settlers is Sir John A. Macdonald—who menacingly waves a club in their faces. The caption below the image reads "What it must come to (With the Encroachment of Civilization).” The sub-caption reads, "Officer: [Sir John A. Macdonald]: Here, you copper colored gentlemen, no loafing allowed, you must either work or jump".
The *Church Guardian* article would later critique American state violence against native peoples on the basis that “General [William Tecumseh] Sherman says in substance 'the Indians must work or be annihilated’” (1891: 3). And it is clear that the Canadian state had a very similar stance, which dovetailed with dominant views of Native peoples as lazy and indigent, such as those promoted by J.S. Woodsworth. These discourses were transnational. The cartoon shows Native peoples in Canada being given the very same ultimatum attributed to Sherman’s policy: work or perish. But another cartoon from the same year turned the idea of state entitlement on its head, to critique state encroachment and oppression. These tropes of nation-building could also be invoked critically, as in a related political that ran in the French-language publication, *Le Canard*, on July 18, 1885. The second image is largely identical to the first, only the settlers are shown moving eastward, and rather than “civilization”, the smoke cloud reads "immigration" (Fig. 2.9).

But more importantly, in this critical iteration, Macdonald is standing on the dead bodies of Métis and on a crumpled French flag—symbolizing quashed Aboriginal resistance and Francophone rights. The caption of the second cartoon reads "SIR JOHN: (standing on the Métis and the French flag): Let’s go, savage gents. You have reached the end of my territory. You must either jump into the Pacific, or work with the rest of the settlers. Choose" (translation mine). Contrary to dominant popular portrayals of the Canadian state as benevolent, as Hugh Shewell explains in *Enough to Keep them*
"the 1885 Riel Rebellion revealed a 'policy of starvation' that 'attempted to force Indians onto their reserves...out of frustration and impatience at their stubborn reluctance to embrace a new social and economic order’" (2004: 70). Rather than the benevolence portrayed in images contrasting Canada and U.S. policy, in reality, “[r]elief had become a tool for subjugating Indians. The government was using it to force the treated back onto the reserves and to make the taking of treaty seem a better choice than hunger” (Shewell, 2004: 70).

Lynching and National Whiteness

As they did with Native peoples, Canadians characterized their state's relationship with African-descended peoples as pacific and paternal. And as with the portrayal of U.S. Indian Wars, Canadians cited the spectacle of post-Reconstruction era violence against African Americans as evidence of their superior brand of British imperial masculinity. Despite harboring similar views of Native peoples and African-descended peoples as their white American brethren, Canadians cited the violence of their American neighbors to bolster their own national exceptionalism, and their specific whiteness, civilization, and masculinity. We have already seen portrayals of the United States as a nation of lynchers in the images of American westward expansion—specifically in the 1898 political cartoon “Jack Canuck 'points with pride','” contrasting the “wild west” in Canada and the United States (Fig. 2.3).
Three years later the *Montreal Daily Star*, an English-language newspaper published in Montreal, featured a far more damning depiction of lynching in America, this one explicitly racialized (Fig. 2.10). The 1901 image shows Uncle Sam about to burn a black man to death. Rendered in blackface style, the frightened man is chained to a stake, wood piled around him. A wickedly grinning Uncle Sam dances around in bloodthirsty glee, a can of flammable liquid in his left hand, a torch in his right. A shotgun lies on the ground nearby. Uncle Sam wears a large button that reads “LYNCHING champions of the world.” In the background are pictured the hanged bodies of seven other unfortunate victims, two of them women (as indicated by their dress), dangling lifeless from trees.

As in the 1891 Wounded Knee cartoon, portrayals of violence against women of color were used to further highlight the racism and brutality of Canada’s southern neighbors, fellow white men, and colonial competitors. The 1901 cartoon’s caption reads, “NATIONAL SPORT. He can be beaten at yachting, rowing, running, bicycling and every other sport, but holds the world’s championship at his favourite amusement.” By suggesting that racialized violence was a preeminent American pastime, which enlightened Canadians condemned, Canadian nationalists could uncritically reinforce a belief in their own exceptionalism, even as they systematically excluded African Americans from both the imagined community and the nation-state. Yet within this
colonial contest, these visual images and other nationalist narratives were used to form the symbolic base upon which Anglo-Canadians could articulate competing white masculinities.

One of Canada's most dominant and enduring national narratives concerned the Underground Railroad. As in the idealized relationship imaged between the white Canadian nation-state and First Nations, Canadians claimed to be far more just, benevolent, and tolerant than their American brethren in their dealings with African-descended peoples. In their claims to superior British imperial whiteness, Anglo-Canadian nationalists cited the British abolition of slavery in 1834, and the subsequent legacy of the Underground Railroad. In this narrative, it was Canada—not America—that was the land of liberty, opportunity, and equality. Eliding Canada's own history of slavery, this dominant narrative stressed the fact that slaves had fled American oppression to find freedom in the British Dominion.

For instance, an 1852 poem by Joshua McCarter Simpson (1820-1876), “Away to Canada”—set to the tune of “O' Susannah!” and popularized by fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad—literally sung Canada's praises as a place of freedom, albeit a "cold and dreary" one. The poem's opening verses read:

I'm on my way to Canada,
That cold and dreary land;
The dire effects of slavery,
I can no longer stand.  
My soul is vexed within me so,  
To think that I'm a slave;  
I've now resolved to strike the blow  
For freedom or the grave.

O righteous Father,  
Wilt thou not pity me?  
And aid me on to Canada where colored men are free.

The portrayal of Canada as the place “where colored men are free” makes sense in the context of antebellum America, though the reality was somewhat more complicated. Of course, runaway slaves could and often did also find freedom in U.S. free states. Similarly, when fugitives did come to Canada, their reception was often far from welcoming. Yet, the perception of Canada as a place of freedom endured well after the abolition of slavery in North America, and was incorporated into the state's founding mythology. And later, during the context of nation-building, American popular cultural portrayals of Canada as more harmonious and less racist could be easily invoked by Canadian nationalists, as evidence of their superior white masculinity. Other lines also resonate with Canadian national mythology, explicitly referencing Canada's Britishness and reputation as a land of peace—commingling in the portrayal of Queen Victoria as benevolent maternal figure:

I heard Victoria plainly say,  
If we would all forsake  
Our native land of slavery,  
And come across the Lake  
That she was standing on the shore,

With arms extended wide,
To give us all a peaceful home,
Beyond the rolling tide.

Citing American popular culture to reinforce their own elevated national mythology, Anglo-Canadian nationalists articulated claims to superior British masculinity, and the qualities of justice, benevolence, and tolerance that characterized this alternate articulation of nationalist whiteness and masculinity. And while this poem was written in a very different historical moment from the nation-building era it preceded, its legacy not only endured, but was incorporated into the Canada’s founding mythology. Of course, by the late 1800s and early 1900s, when nation-building was underway, Americans had also abolished slavery, but as Canadians emphasized, it had taken them a bloody Civil War to do so. Thus in the Canadian nationalist narrative, even the process of emancipation reinforced the dominant view of Americans as unruly and quick to pick up arms—while in Canada, the light of British justice and wisdom peacefully prevailed, and slavery simply vanished—apparently with such rapidity that this history was quickly forgotten.29 This short and spurious historical memory in turn allowed nationalists such as Agnes Laut to make bombastic claims, such as: “Canada has always been free”—claims that strategic comparisons to the adjacent white man’s country were used to bear out.

The theme of American violence also saturates the printed content that accompanies the “Lynching champions of the world” cartoon; in fact, much of the Star page is dedicated to the specter of American racial violence. The poem, entitled “Southern Delights,” sardonically celebrates the joys of lynching. Its name is probably a satirical play on the title of the anti-lynching tract, Southern Horrors. Lynch Law in All Its Phases (1892), published by prominent activist, journalist, and editor, Ida B. Wells. The poem's second and fourth stanzas read:

And don’t forget the matches,  
For, if we miss the black,  
We’ll scare up some excitement  
And burn his mother’s shack.  
The wretch may not be guilty,  
But for old custom’s sake,  
We can’t call off the barbecue  
Till [sic] a nigger’s at the stake.

Put strong drink in the pocket flask,  
To oil your father’s rage;  
Those niggerfests are wearing  
On one of father’s age.  
And his poor old head goes reeling  
And his poor old fingers ache  
Through pinching red hot tid-bits  
From the nigger at the stake.

Through its faux-celebratory depiction of lynching as a sadistic form of entertainment, the poem presents white American lynch mobs as cowardly, drunken buffoons—devoid of the most “manly” and elevated qualities of “civilized” white men: namely self-control, sobriety, and respect for law and justice. But in its critique of lynching as a cruel form of

racial terror, designed to maintain racial inequality and perpetuate the legacy of slavery, well-after it abolition, the poem echoes African and Northern U.S. critiques of the American south. This makes perfect sense, since this poem had previously run in the Detroit Journal. In many regards, discourses of Northern superiority and condescension towards the south are much like Canadian exceptionalism, minus its British inflections.\(^{31}\)

So essentially, this “Canadian” nationalist critique of lynching mirrors African American and progressive white American critiques, gussied up to serve nation-building agendas. Borrowed from a U.S. context, this poem takes on very different meaning when re-printed in a Canadian newspaper, alongside a political cartoon accusing not just some Americans—but instead America as a nation—of being the lynching champions of the world.\(^{32}\) While the title “Southern delights” implies a more region-specific critique, the nationalist appropriation of the poem is used to give Canadians a leg-up in the symbolic realm of the colonial contest between white men’s countries.

\(^{31}\) As in Canada, many northern states have cited racism and lynching in the south to detract attention away from their own problematic history. Many northern cities had race riots, including New York and Chicago, but like Canadians, northerners felt their shortcomings paled in comparison to those of southerners. Wells also cleverly exploited this north-south rivalry to galvanize anti-lynching sentiment. In Southern Horrors, Wells writes that “the Commercial of May 17, under the head of ‘More Rapes, More Lynchings’ gave utterance to the following: The lynching of three Negro scoundrels reported in our dispatches from Anniston, Ala., for a brutal outrage [a euphemism for “rape”] committed upon a white woman will be a text for much comment on ‘Southern barbarism’ by Northern newspapers”. Though as Wells explains, the article goes on to defend lynching, claiming that the only “Southern barbarism” practiced was the rape of white women by black men, and stating that “[n]othing but the most prompt, speedy and extreme punishment can hold in check the horrible and beastial [sic] propensities of the Negro race” \(^{32}\).

\(^{32}\) It was in part the strategy of national shaming on an international level that Wells and other anti-lynching activists relied on to call attention to and end lynching. Wells decried lynching as a national shame in her tours and talks.
Unflattering stereotypes of the American South helped Canadians build their national identity. Many Canadian racial nationalists saw their state as the precise opposite of this negative portrayal of all things “southern”. In many ways, Canada’s northernness was used as evidence of the robust purity of its people—and by extension, its models of white masculinity. In this sense, Canada’s frontier myth was arguably even more intense than America’s. Social Darwinist ideas were used to present Canada as an inhospitable land, where only the most hardy and resourceful could thrive. As Carl Berger explains, “[t]he adjective 'northern' came to symbolize energy, strength, self-reliance, health, and purity, and its opposite, 'southern,' was equated with decay and effeminacy, even libertinism and disease” (1971: 129). Similarly, as Daniel Francis explains in National Dreams (1997), the north was also mythologized as conducive to freedom and a love of liberty. Perhaps this was an effort to counter American revolutionary and republican exceptionalism. In any case, Francis explains that Canada was seen as a land of progress, while the south was believed to breed stagnancy and an unprogressive spirit (130-131). To some extent, Canadians leveraged these ideas of southern inferiority to apply to America in general.

Anti-Racist American Critiques

As with accusations of “white savagery” in the treatment of Native Americans, Canadian condemnation of U.S. Republican whiteness, masculinity, and civilization, resonates with
anti-racist Americans’ own critiques of their nation’s hypocrisy. Du Bois writes in the “Souls of White Folk”: “[w]e have seen, you and I, city after city drunk and furious with ungovernable lust of blood; mad with murder, destroying, killing, and cursing; torturing human victims because somebody accused of crime happened to be of the same color as the mob's innocent victims and because that color was not white! We have seen—Merciful God! in these wild days and in the name of Civilization, Justice, and Motherhood—what have we not seen, right here in America, of orgy, cruelty, barbarism, and murder done to men and women of Negro descent” (24). Du Bois crafted his critique of lynching in terms of stated American values and claims to superior civilization. He held up America’s dominant exceptionalist myths as an ideal standard in his demands for racial equality.

Similarly, in her international campaign against lynching, Ida B. Wells highlighted the gaping disjuncture between stated American ideals of freedom and liberty, as they coexisted alongside brutal forms of racial oppression. Wells attacked white American masculinity, arguing that lynching was a cowardly, unmanly act, which debased America as a nation. In _Southern Horrors_, Wells argued that rape charges were used to “excuse some of the most heinous crimes that ever stained the history of a country, [and that] the South is shielding itself behind the plausible screen of defending the honor of its women” (30). Wells lamented “the decay of manhood” demonstrated by lynchers, through their “dastardly submission to the mob reign”, going on to argue that “[w]e
have reached the unprecedented low level; the awful criminal depravity of substituting the mob for the court and jury” (38). So white Canadian condemnations of lynching directly echoed those leveled by African American critics—a glaring difference was that African Americans sought to achieve social justice and civil rights—rather than to serve a different nation-building project by parading a competing version of white masculinity and superior model of racial inequality.

In addition to the lynchers themselves, Ida B. Wells also used America’s stated national values to condemn those complicit with lynching, arguing that the cry of “rape” had “hushed the voice of press and pulpit on the subject of lynch law throughout this ‘land of liberty’” (30). Wells went to question the manliness, honor, and Christianity, of idle American onlookers, arguing that “[m]en who stand high in the esteem of the public for Christian character, for moral and physical courage, for devotion to the principles of equal and exact justice to all, and for great sagacity, stand as cowards who fear to open their mouths before this great outrage” (30). Thus, with these condemnations of American manliness and honor, the “defense of white womanhood” promoted by lynching advocates, such as South Carolina Governor, Ben Tillman, in his 1907 speech before Congress. Tillman’s famous speech, in which he claimed that he “would lead a mob to lynch any man, black or white, who had ravished a woman, black or white”, was put on trial on the international stage, against plentiful evidence that racial terror was
used—not to avenge alleged rape cases, as Tillman and others claimed—but rather to quash African American demands for justice.

Wells discusses the slipperiness of the rape defense in *Southern Horrors*, noting that “[m]en who, like Governor Tillman, start the ball of lynch law rolling for a certain crime, are powerless to stop it when drunken or criminal white toughs feel like hanging an Afro-American on any pretext” (30). And certainly the fear of racial equality bled through in Tillman’s speech, when he exhorted: “[l]ook at our environment in the South, surrounded, and in a very large number of counties and in two States outnumbered, by the negroes—engulfed, as it were, in a black flood of semi-barbarians.” The truth of the matter emerged further still when Tillman admitted: “[w]e reorganized the Democratic party with one plank, and only one plank, namely, that ‘this is a white man’s country and white men must govern it.’ Under that banner we went to battle.”

As Robyn Wiegman argues in “The Anatomy of a Lynching” this “rape mythos” was “an overwhelmingly southern response to enfranchisement” (1995: 95). In fact, in 1901, the

34 In his speech, Tillman also stated: “I here declare that if the white men of South Carolina had been content to obey the laws which had been forced down our throats at the point of the bayonet and submit to the reconstruction acts which had thrust the ballot into the hands of ignorant and debased negroes, slaves five years before, and only two or three generations removed from the barbarians of Africa, the state of South Carolina to-day would be a howling wilderness, a second Santo Domingo. It took the State fifteen years to recover and begin to move forward again along the paths of development and progress; and in consequence of the white men interpreting the word ‘liberty’ to mean the liberty of white people and not the license of black ones, the State is to-day in the very vanguard of southern progress.”

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year as the Star’s lynching cartoon ran, “Alabama assembled a constitutional convention to disfranchise the states' African American voters. Some at the convention urged that the new constitution protect blacks from lynching in exchange for giving up the right to vote. Thomas Goode Jones, who had stood up to Birmingham mobs as a colonel in the Alabama National Guard, spoke forcefully on behalf of a constitutional measure against lynching” (Waldrep, 2005: 151). Yet, proponents of lynching framed this ‘heinous crime’ as a natural outcome of the white male duty to protect white women. In his 1907 speech before Congress, Tillman also argued that “[t]he white women of the South are in a state of siege.” He goes on to idealize white women and conclude that “[s]o far as I am concerned the [alleged black male rapist] has put himself outside the pale of the law, human and divine....Civilization peels off us [white men]...and we revert to the...impulses...to 'kill! kill! Kill!'”35

In “The Souls of White Folk”, Du Bois responds to lynching proponents like Tillman who invoked the protection of white femininity (and white privilege in general) as a justification for lynching, writing: “let the murderer be black or the thief brown or the violator of womanhood have a drop of Negro blood, and the righteousness of the

35 (96) Wiegman, Robyn. American anatomies: theorizing race and gender. Durham: Duke University Press. 1995. The full text from Tillman’s speech is: “[s]o far as I am concerned he has put himself outside the pale of the law, human and divine. He has sinned against the Holy Ghost. He has invaded the holy of holies. He has struck civilization a blow, the most deadly and cruel that the imagination can conceive. It is idle to reason about it; it is idle to preach about it. Our brains reel under the staggering blow and hot blood surges to the heart. Civilization peels off us, any and all of us who are men, and we revert to the original savage type whose impulses under any and all such circumstances has always been to ‘kill! kill! Kill!’”
indignation sweeps the world” (25). Robin Wiegman argues in *American Anatomies* that, in his idealization of white womanhood, Tillman framed white women as an “emblem of the keeper of the purity of the race,” and in turn, “white men cast themselves as the protectors of civilization” (1995: 97) against the supposed threat of black men. As we see in Tillman’s speech, this frequently-invoked “rape defense” permitted white men to revert to a savage, uncivilized state which was supposedly the status quo for black men.36 White men reverted from civilization when faced with the primitive urge to defend white women’s purity, and by extension white civilization—the very “civilization” Wells and Du Bois argued was ignored when inconvenient. Of course, the real threat was of racial equality, and lynching was a form of terror, designed to maintain white supremacy in the wake of Reconstruction and some whites’ corresponding fears about the loss of power. But nevertheless, such prominent arguments in defense of lynching forced anti-lynching activists to respond accordingly. Thus, these conflicting versions of white masculinity and civilization—Tillman’s and Wells’ were put on trial on the world stage. Critics in the United States and abroad condemned lynching and American complicity as a national shame (and a debasement

36 Wells mentioned Tillman by name in *Southern Horrors*, when commenting on the inconsistency with which charges of rape were punished, depending on the race of accuser and accused: “Governor Tillman, of South Carolina, in the month of June, standing under the tree in Barnwell, S.C., on which eight Afro-Americans were hung last year, declared that he would lead a mob to lynch a negro who raped a white woman. So say the pulpits, officials and newspapers of the South. But when the victim is a colored woman it is different. Last winter in Baltimore, Md., three white ruffians assaulted a Miss Camphor, a young Afro-American girl, while out walking with a young man of her own race. They held her escort and outraged [i.e. raped] the girl. It was a deed dastardly enough to arouse Southern blood, which gives its horror of rape as excuse for lawlessness, but she was an Afro-American. The case went to the courts, an Afro-American lawyer defended the men and they were acquitted".

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of white masculinity). Aware of this colonial contest between white men’s countries, Ida B. Wells cleverly used this strategy of national shaming as a tool to call attention to, and thus to end this racial terror. In doing so, Wells invoked ideas of whiteness and manliness very similar to those touted by Canadians—emphasizing justice and the rule of law—albeit to very different, and much more subversive, ends.

**Appropriating Anti-Racist American Critiques**

In contrast to Wells’ more radical anti-lynching discourse, Canada’s dominant nationalist condemnation of American manliness and civilization was even more apparent in a news report that ran alongside the cartoon and poem. The article, “Six Days' Record” lists the lynchings that occurred across American within the six days prior. It reads: “[o]n Tuesday of last week a mob at Dexter, Tex., burned a negro alive. On the same day a mob at Pierce City, Mo., hanged two negroes, neither of whom was even supposed to be guilty of the assault that had been committed. Then the mob drove all negroes out of the town and burned their home [sic]. One old man was burned to death in his house.” After enumerating several more lynchings, the article concludes—sounding for all the world like Du Bois—“[t]hat is the lynching record for only six days in the United States. If such a series of race atrocities occurred in Armenia, the civilized

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world would be discussing the duty of overthrowing the barbarous Turkish rule and establishing a reign of law. Yet the United States claims the respect of the world as one of its most civilized nations. Where is this insanity to lead us? What is to be the end of it? Slavery itself hardly represented a more alarming problem than does this ferocious craze for hanging and burning negroes.”

Originally printed in the *Buffalo Express*, from Buffalo, New York, this article also calls white American masculinity and civilization into question. As with the other anti-lynching media in the newspaper, this is a largely imported critique which resonates with African American attacks on racial terror and violence, including that of Du Bois in the “Souls of White Folk.” Yet it too stops short of these more insightful critiques. By framing lynching as part of some distinctly American “craze for hanging and burning negroes”, the article presents lynching as the result of American character defects, rather than a result of racial inequality more broadly.

By contrast, Du Bois framed his critique of lynching and racism in terms of a larger critique of imperialism in general, and of American imperialism in particular. Du Bois writes: “[c]onceive this nation, of all human peoples, engaged in a crusade to make the ‘World Safe for Democracy’! Can you imagine the United States protesting against Turkish atrocities in Armenia, while the Turks are silent about mobs in Chicago and St. Louis; what is Louvain compared with Memphis, Waco, Washington, Dyersburg, and
Estill Springs?”. Like Wells, Du Bois also framed the prevalence of lynching in this era in terms of the jarring hypocrisy between the bombastic claims of American exceptionalism—to uphold liberty, freedom, justice, and equality at home and abroad—and calls into question the duplicity of this discourse, given the preponderance of racial terror, and the complicity of those who sit by idly and allow it to happen. As Du Bois concluded in “The Souls of White Folk”: “[i]n short, what is the black man but America's Belgium, and how could America condemn in Germany that which she commits, just as brutally, within her own borders?” (24)

And by the same token, one might ask how Canada could condemn America when the existence of both states was equally reliant on racial inequality, and when Canadians were also complicit with lynching and racial violence? For Du Bois and Wells powerfully critiqued racism as a systemic set of practices, built into the very fabric of nationhood. And despite Canadians’ quickness to condemn lynching, they were not necessarily quick to intervene. For all their asylum and Underground Railroad mythologies, Canadian nationalists certainly did not offer their land as a safe haven from racial terror. While expressing vocal outrage to bolster their national identity—they actively discouraged African American migrants from coming to Canada. They didn’t really want black people in Canada either. But they did want to look better than Americans.
So there is a distinct difference between African Americans’ critiques of lynching and the Star’s reprinting of the poem and article, to supplement its political cartoon. For African Americans’ critiques did not stop at the level of condemnation and moral outrage, but instead cited lynching as part of a larger series of abuses, part of a platform of demands for social justice and racial equality for black people in America. And Du Bois took this further still, calling for an end to colonialism and imperialism and for justice and equality for all black, brown, and yellow people of the world. These insistent demands for citizenship rights and full inclusion are a far cry from what is going on in the Star. That is not to suggest that Star’s decrying of lynching is unwarranted or insincere, but rather that it is limited. For this Canadian importation of American anti-lynching texts, decontextualized, and shorn of their broader demands for social justice and racial equality—has an implicit nationalist dimension for claims of superior Anglo-Canadian masculinity. Ultimately, the Star’s focus on American violence, devoid of a larger critique of white supremacy and racial inequality—and lacking any introspective examination of Canada’s own racist policies—serves to bolster Canadian exceptionalism and nationalist articulations of a superior version of white masculinity and civilization.

Anti-racists, by contrast, strategically invoked a notion of the superior white masculinity and civilization critically, towards the larger end of attaining radical social justice. Undoubtedly, few, if any, African American critics actually believed in discourses of white superiority and American exceptionalism. But like Du Bois and Wells, they...
recognized the strength of both (a) transnational Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism and (b) specific racial nationalist inflections of this discourse, within the context of a colonial contest between white man's countries. As Du Bois writes, “[t]hese supermen and world-mastering demigods listened, however, to no low tongues of ours, even when we pointed silently to their feet of clay” (25). Thus, public shaming on the world stage, before their fellow white men, was an excellent strategy for motivating white Americans to take action to end the horror of lynching. If the murder of poor blacks in America was not the problem of white American elites, Wells and Du Bois made it their problem, by calling their whiteness, civilization, masculinity, and ultimately their qualifications as world leaders, into question. Wells, Du Bois, and other critics brought to light the gaping disjuncture between the American exceptionalist claim to spread freedom and democracy—a shining beacon for the world to emulate—and the specter of racial terror at home.

Anglo-Canadians, on the other hand, could use such critiques of American exceptionalism to advocate their own version of national exceptionalism. Of course, there were Afro-Canadian and white anti-racists as well. And as in the U.S. and other white men's countries, the perspective of real anti-racists was frequently marginalized, since the dominant discourse of self-congratulatory exceptionalism served the nation-building project far better. And certainly, in the mainstream context of the political cartoon, the critique of U.S. lynching stops at the level of condemnation and outrage,
not going beyond this framework to entertain the prospect of racial equality and social justice. Thus, while African Americans and their anti-racist allies used discourses of whiteness and civilization to end lynching and other forms of racial oppression, white Canadians used it to argue for the superiority of their own nationalist iteration of white masculinity and civilization. This bolstered sense of national white supremacy was in turn used to legitimate Canada's own violent and oppressive nation-building project. By relying on the readily-available and self-congratulatory mythology of the Underground Railroad, white Canadians could condemn their American counterparts even as they harbored very similar views of black inferiority, and actualized these in policy.

**A British Critique of Lynching in America**

Discourses of American barbarity were also taken up in England, as they were in Canada. When Ida B. Wells lectured in England, her ideas were well-received by many white audiences to whom she spoke about lynching in America. However, this context again changed the meaning and implications of U.S. lynching critiques. One example of critique of U.S. “barbarity” appeared in a June 1893 edition of *Fraternity*, which ran an article titled “Brutality in America”, reporting on a lynching in Kentucky. The London publication’s formula mirrored the *Montreal Daily Star*’s: an article on lynching coupled with a poem about lynching. Then in August, the publication also featured a cartoon depicting the act (Fig. 2.11). The article recounts how "the mob ran mad with
excitement, yelling out 'Burn him, burn him!' The wretched man protested his innocence to the last, and there are those who believe him to have been speaking the truth" (5). The article goes on to mention Wells by name, stating that an article about "the lynching of three negroes", "which caused a great deal of indignation" and which was learned to have been published by "Miss Ida Wells, a negress belonging to the editorial staff, now said to be in England for the purpose of arranging a course of lectures on the condition of the black race in the Southern States, and the brutality attendant upon lynchings" (5).

The poem is entitled “When and Where?” and like “Southern Delights”, it condemns the act of lynching, albeit in a much more serious tone. And like Wells’ work, it uses the strategy of national shaming to urge Americans to end lynching. The poem’s first stanza refers to “the great Republic [which] stretches/Strong arms from sea to sea,/And calls her wide dominion/The Land of Liberty”. Its second and third stanzas read:

*There*, where the southern summer
Smiles on a fruitful land,
Where all should share the bounty
Of the great All-father’s hand,
Where black and white together
One brotherhood should be,
Sons of a common country,
Equal, erect and free.

*There*, justice is dishonored,
Law hangs her head in shame,
 Humanity is outraged,
And Freedom but a name;
Not liberty, but license—
Such is the white man’s creed,
With cord and bullet ready
For each ferocious deed.

As with the poem, the tone of the lynching image is also very different from the later Montreal Daily Star political cartoon (1901). Rather than a sensationalist image that borders on an attempt at humor (as with the exaggerated expressions of both the black man and Uncle Sam in the 1901 image), the Fraternity portrayal presents a far more realistic depiction of a lynching. The hanged black man looks much more like a real human being, rather than a racist caricature. If anything, the symbolism in the image leans towards the idealization of the hanged man—there is arguably even a suggestion of his martyrdom. Given the lynching victim’s limp body, exposed torso, clothed groin, and elevation on a wooden scaffold, the image in many ways mirrors extensive iconography of Christ’s crucifixion. But certainly, this depiction is far more sympathetic and far less sensationalist than the 1901 image. Rather than depersonifying lynching by attributing it to an allegorical figure, Uncle Sam, we see a crowd of white people, mostly boys and men, but also it seems, one woman in a wide-brimmed hat. We can see parasols, and the assembled crowd gazes expressionlessly at the viewer—perhaps with moral ambivalence about the killing. This image actually looks a great deal like the lynching photographs that circulated widely in postcards and other cultural forms in this era.  

are portrayed in a manner that seems calculated to convey their humanity. This image brings the specter of racial violence to life, rather than caricaturing it.

In some ways, this condemnation of American racial violence is similar to that in the Montreal Star, in that it points out the disjuncture between America’s exceptionalist claims and the reality of racial inequality and violence. But again, the national meanings of this British critique are distinct from Canadian ones. The context of the publication is very different as well. Fraternity was the official publication of the British organization, the Society for the Recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of Man. This organization was co-founded in 1893 by Ida B. Wells and Catherine Impey (1847-1923), a British Quaker, and founder of Anti-Caste, Britain's first anti-racist journal. Like Wells, Fraternity's editor, Celestine Edwards (1858-1894), was also of African descent. And like Wells, he also lectured on lynching and racial inequality. Edwards even wrote the introduction for one of Wells’ books, which he advertised in a March 1894 edition of Fraternity: “United States Atrocities by Ida B. Wells (a coloured woman of Tennessee) with an Introduction by S.J. Celestine Edwards”. The Society for the Recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of Man was explicitly opposed to segregation and championed racial equality, and was specifically created to promote this goal. Both this organization

and its publication were committed to—in fact, were the result of—meaningful anti-racism on the part of their white creators.

The idea of kindred manhood and brotherhood had a long history in Britain, and had also been used by abolitionists to end slavery in British colonies. So U.S. national shaming is just an instance of a strategy that had long been used to champion for social justice: including the shaming of Britain itself as un-Christian, uncivilized, and hypocritical. So while the critique might initially sound like that from the Montreal Star, with its reference to American lynchers as “blood-thirsty negro-haters” (6) and “bloodthirsty demons” (7), it actually means something very different. There is a level of critique and self-reflexivity here which is completely absent in the Star. What is more, like Wells, Fraternity’s editors are deeply committed to racial equality and so attack American claims to whiteness, masculinity, civilization, and Christianity, specifically towards the ends of social justice.

This is a marked contrast to Canadian condemnation of America to make its own nation-building project and forms of racism seem superior. But while these distinctions are significant, they do not necessarily pose a meaningful challenge to Canadian mythologies and uses of critique. For just as with the Detroit Journal poem, “Southern Delights”, Canadian nation-builders could easily appropriate Fraternity’s content to their own ends. Rather than recognizing the gap between Fraternity’s critique and the Star’s,
they could simply use such anti-racist critiques to both corroborate the idea of American brutality and to bolster the mythology of superior British imperial whiteness and masculinity. Of course, there was real anti-racism in Canada as well, but there were also practices of segregation that Fraternity editors would also have surely opposed.  

Segregation and Racial Inequality in Canada

And as in the case of First Nations, Canadian racial nationalists' views of African-descended peoples were largely indistinguishable from that of their southern neighbors. In fact, anti-black racism was part of the very fabric on which Canadian national identity was built. As Colin Argyle Thompson explains in Blacks in Deep Snow, the Victoria Colonist had argued in 1860, seven years before Confederation, that “Negroes are aliens

39 Celestine Edwards is vocally critical of segregation, in both Fraternity, and also in his 1891 book, From Slavery to a Bishopric or the Life of Bishop Walter Hawkins of the British Methodist Episcopal Church Canada. In Slavery to a Bishopric, Edwards writes of segregation that if a black person “appears respectable, every effort is made in the United States to keep him down. The whites do not hesitate to say that ‘quashey’ is only fit to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water; no matter how well he is educated or how clean his body, he must not sit next to the most degraded white man...When he was a slave he could cook the food and serve at the table; but now he is free he must not eat in the same room as the white man...In many of the States even the right of citizenship is denied him. Whatever crime he commits is too often magnified an hundred fold; and, when he is wronged, justice is withheld from him in courts of law for no other reason than that he is a Negro. Very often his greatest oppressors are men who have been forced to flee their own country by want or crime” (xvii). Yet, to complicate matters further, Edwards uses the problematic language of racial “superiority” and “inferiority” used to further racial inequality, writing that “[n]o nation can be expected to advance in so-called civilisation whose faults are continually being paraded before them, as ours are in the literature of the superior race. It is well known, and most keenly felt, in every country where the Negro has been sent as an exile, that his superior brethren have used every means and meanness, not only to make him feel his position, but to prolong his degradation, and even to discourage any and every attempt on the part of the Negro to approach the social equality of the most abandoned white man” (xii). Though, given other remarks the author makes (see later footnote in the discussion of Rudyard Kipling’s “White Man’s Burden”), it seems that by “superior”, Edwards may be referring only to a position of social dominance, and/or the existence of constructed racial hierarchies. He may even be using such terms critically and sardonically, as does Du Bois. And again, it is unclear whether the use of such language is simply a rhetorical strategy to further social justice causes. As in the as in Royal Commission comments on the absurdity of the “manly” race fearing “weak,” “effeminate,” and clearly inferior Asian races, the intent of these remarks is ambiguous.

Edwards, S. J. C. From Slavery to a Bishopric: Or, the Life of Bishop Walter Hawkins of the British Methodist Episcopal Church, Canada. London: J. Kensit, 1891.
of the lowest type of humanity” (19). Similarly, in his section on education, Thompson argues that black schools in Canada were sites of “sporadic, badly financed, 'separate but equal' education” (20). What is more, “[i]n Ontario and Nova Scotia school segregation existed in fact and in law. White children, it was felt, should not attend classes with blacks who were lower in the social order, who learned less quickly, and whose physical presence was objectionable” (20).

Churches also tended to be segregated. Some even argued against educating African Canadians, on the basis that it could lead to social unrest by heightening the awareness of inequality. The Week (Toronto) queried in 1884: “[w]ill not the Negro, when educated become even more alive to the humiliation of his social position, and learn to brood with more bitterness?” (20) Segregation continued until at least 1946, as Constance Backhouse’s chapter on racial segregation in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, and Viola Desmond’s legal battle with the segregated Roseland theatre illustrates. Dr. Carrie Best, editor of the Clarion, a bi-weekly black newspaper in New Glasgow, wrote of Desmond’s case that there were “just as many racists in New Glasgow as in Alabama” (1999: 248). Best had herself been thrown out of the Roseland Theatre in 1942 for refusing to sit in the balcony (248). And New Glasgow had also been the site of a race riot at the end of WWI that Dr. Best recalled from childhood (248). Constance Backhouse also explains that Canada had its own chapters of the Ku Klux Klan. And
unsurprisingly, the Roseland Theatre had screened D.W. Griffith’s film, *Birth of a Nation*, which glorified the Klan’s racist exploits, and thrilled New Glasgow audiences (226).

In addition to “colour-bar tactics” and other ideas about racial inferiority, the mythos of the black rapist—a trope that *Birth of a Nation* had perpetuated—was also alive and well in Canada. While Canadians condemned white Americans for lynching, they did not necessarily question the dangerous stereotypes that undergirded this practice of racial violence. Rather, they often shared and reinforced these views. An 1896 article in the medical journal, *Canadian Practitioner*, promoted the castration of rapists, arguing that such crimes are perpetrated with “especial frequency” by the “ignorant Southern negro” (*Canadian Practitioner*, Vol. 21, No. 7 July 1896: 394). Similarly, some Canadian racial nationalists even went so far as to invoke the idea of black male rapists to argue against Chinese immigration, arguing that a people “totally alien in feeling and sentiment” were “source of great danger”, given that “[w]e can scarcely peruse an American newspaper that is not filled with details of foul outrages committed by that class of people upon the whites and accounts of fearful retaliation upon the perpetrators of them” (May 21, 1886 Chinese Immigration Bill: 679). Despite mythologies of British Canadian benevolence, blacks, like the Chinese, were also considered to be “a class of people...who will always be in opposition to the European and American races” (May 21, 1886 Chinese Immigration Bill: 679).
Dominant racial nationalist ideologies were part of a transnational discourse of race and citizenship that circulated widely in this era. Racial nationalists and influential Canadian thinkers such as J.S. Woodsworth were engaged with their contemporaries in the United States and British Empire, and collaborated in solidifying racial hierarchies, as by extension, the global color line. In *Strangers Within Our Gates*, Woodsworth cites his American contemporary, John R. Commons, to argue for the racial flaws of African-descended peoples, and their inherent unfitness for civilization and democratic citizenship. In keeping with Social Darwinist narratives, Africans ostensibly “exhibit certain qualities which are associated with their descendents in this country, namely, aversion to silence and solitude, love of rhythm, excitability, and lack of reserve. All travelers speak of their impulsiveness, strong sexual passion, and lack of will power” (191). Ironically, Canadians also imagined white Americans as plagued by impulsiveness and lack of reserve. But at least they were white, and so, exempt, when white Canadian nationalists invoked notions of black male hypersexuality. They reinforced the “mythology of the black male as rapist,” which Robyn Wiegman argues comprised a “rape mythos” narrative that “marks a particular historical configuration of the sexual and gendered in their relation to issues of race and nation” (96).

And as with “Anglo-Saxons,” racial characteristics were seen as inherent—and were framed in terms of masculinity, civilization, and citizenship. Woodsworth quotes Commons' widely circulated opinion that “[t]he very qualities that of intelligence and
manliness which are essential for citizenship in a democracy were systematically expunged from the negro race through two hundred years of slavery. And then, by the cataclysm of a war of emancipation, in which it took no part, this race, after many thousand years of savagery and two centuries of slavery, was suddenly let loose into the liberty of citizenship and electoral suffrage.\(^{40}\) Citing these competing racialized masculinities as justification, Woodsworth writes, “we may be thankful that we have no ‘negro problem’ in Canada. And unlike in the United States, “[a]t no time in Canadian history has the black population exceeded two percent of the total population” (Thomas Argyle Thompson, 1979: 10). While Woodsworth goes on to say that “[m]any negroes are members of various Protestant churches, and are consistent Christians and highly respected citizens” (191), he and other racial nationalists did not welcome blacks to Canada. Nor did they grant full citizenship rights to the African Canadians already within their borders.

\(^{40}\) John R. Commons’ statements in *Races and immigrants in America*, in his section “The Negro”, which Woodsworth cites in part are worth reproducing at greater length here:

> Just as in the many thousand years of man’s domestication of animals, the breechy cow and the balky horse have been almost eliminated by artificial selection, so slavery tended to transform the savage by eliminating those who were self-willed, ambitious, and possessed of individual initiative. Other races of immigrants, by contact with our institutions, have been civilized—the negro has been only domesticated. Democratic civilization offers an outlet for those who are morally and intellectually vigorous enough to break away from the stolid mass of their fellows; domestication dreads and suppresses them as dangerous rebels. The very qualities of intelligence and manliness which are essential for citizenship in a democracy were systematically expunged from the negro race through two hundred years of slavery. And then, by the cataclysm of a war in which it took no part, this race, after many thousand years of savagery and two centuries of slavery, was suddenly let loose into the liberty of citizenship and the electoral suffrage. The world never before had seen such a triumph of dogmatism and partizanship. It was dogmatism, because a theory of abstract equality and inalienable rights of man took the place of education and the slow evolution of moral character. It was partizanship, because a political party, taking advantage of its triumph in civil war, sought to perpetuate itself through the votes of its helpless beneficiaries. No wonder that this fateul alliance of doctrinaires and partizans brought fateful results, and that, after a generation of anarchy and race hatred, the more fundamental task of education has only just begun” (41-42). Commons, John R. *Races and Immigrants in America*. New York: Macmillan. 1907.
An August 1900 political cartoon from *Le Canard* shows a horrified *mademoiselle Canada* (arguably better named *mlle Québec*) barring her door to a group of racialized and ethnic white immigrants that Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, has just presented to her (Fig. 2.12). In “*l’immigration,*” Sifton cordially doffs his top-hat, saying “[h]ere's a fine lot of immigrants that I got for practically nothing” (Hou, 1997: 108, translation Hou). Aghast, *Mlle. Canada* responds, "My God! How much will it cost me to send them back?.” Among the group of immigrants is a black man, rendered in the stereotypical style reminiscent of blackface and minstrel shows, wearing a grass skirt and waving a staff. He eyes the frightened *Mlle. Canada*, with a sideways glance, his large, white lips curled into a malevolent grin. Even though the 1901 *Star* cartoon condemned U.S. lynching as unmanly and uncivilized, this cartoon hinted that Canadians shared the very same notion of black men as a sexual threat to white women—in this case, the feminized nation—and by extension, the white women and girls residing there. Thus, like their white American counterparts, Canadian men are called upon to defend white womanhood by excluding black men from citizenship and mobility rights by

41 During Clifford Sifton’s tenure as Minister, only three groups were officially prohibited from migration to Canada—"the diseased, the criminal or vicious, and those likely to become public charges" (11). But in 1905, after Sifton left office, his successor Frank Oliver, added to the list "medical problems, pauperism, and ‘moral turpitude’," in the Canadian Immigration Act of 1906—not only as caveats to entry, but also as grounds for *deportation* (23, emphasis mine?). In 1908, a “medical and character inspection” was instituted at the border between Canada and the United States. However, this inspection was unequally implemented, as I will explain further in the section on race and immigration. The Canadian Immigration Act of 1910 was even more exclusionary than that of 1906, prohibiting entry on the basis of both race and class, far surpassing "Sifton’s pro-agricultural bias" (23).
disbarring black people from both entering and fully participating in the imagined community.

As Harold Troper explains in *Only Farmers Need Apply* (1972), even as the Ministry of the Interior made vigorous efforts to recruit British and white American and settlers to develop Western Canada, they just as vigorously excluded African Americans. During this era, image after image showed white American settlers flocking to Western Canada—presenting it as a desirable home for the “best class of white settlers.” Too many to show here, these images illustrated a Canada that was not a barren and frozen wilderness as fellow white men claimed. In turn, nationalists invoked such images to argue for increased prestige in the colonial contest. In addition to showcasing the richness and bounty of the land, these images also bore out ideas of Canada’s superior British imperial masculinity and national values, and reinforced the mythology of Canadians as welcoming and inclusive and tolerant. Few cartoons showed black settlers, perhaps hoping to brush this controversial issue under the national rug. For political reasons, this was a sensitive issue, since the Liberal government wanted to avoid alienating African Canadian and progressive white voters. Consequently, the government used informal methods of exclusion—such as selective health screenings—

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42 Unlike First Nations, blacks in Canada were able to vote. And as Harold Troper explains *Only Farmers Need Apply: Official Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the United States, 1896-1911*, the government wanted to avoid alienating black voters. A 1909 letter made explicit reference to importance of black voters in Eastern Canada who vote for the Liberals (125).
which inevitably deemed black migrants “unfit” for entry into Canada—though such screenings posed little obstacle to coveted white farmers.

Under orders from the federal Ministry of the Interior, field agents stationed in the U.S. to recruit white settlers were directed to withhold immigration information from African Americans. Field officers systematically denied black Americans the special “Settler's Certificates” which granted reduced railway fare to Western Canada (Troper). In keeping with transnational discourses of black and brown people as “tropical races,” unsuited to the climate of “white men's countries”, Canada's Ministry of the Interior took this convenient pseudo-biological position, emphasizing Canada's cold climate (Troper). Agnes Laut also invoked this prevalent myth in her book, *The Canadian Commonwealth* (1915) where she argued that the Canadian cold spawned great leaders, true “Men of the North” (295), since the brisk weather and “heritage of a fur-hunting ancestry has entered into the very blood and brawn and brain of Canada in a kind of iron dauntlessness that makes for manhood” (295).

In Laut’s view, not only did the cold act as "tonic from the out-of-doors...which fills body and soul with zest", it also acted as a sieve, selecting out those who possessed “iron dauntlessness” from those who did not. Carl Berger explains that such sentiments were common in this era: “[a] lengthy catalogue of desirable national attributes resulting from the climate was compiled. No weather was so conducive to maintaining health
and stimulating robustness” (129). And of course these notions of “dauntless”, idealized manhood were strongly bound up with race. As Laut went on to argue, “Canada should serve notice on the softer races of the world that she does not want them. They can stand up neither to her climate nor to her measure of man, but far from cause of regret, this is a thing for gratulation [sic]. Canada can never be an overcrowded land, where soft races crowd for room, like slugs under a board” (296). This might have been intended as a jab at America, as a populous “melting pot”, that some Canadians declared “mongrelized” and “miscegenated”, especially in the South.

In a similar vein, in 1911, Britton Cooke in Maclean’s Magazine “stressed the importance of developing an ‘Ultimate Canadian Race’ and divided Canadians into two groups: Whites and others” (21). The “soft races” and “others” obviously included black settlers, who were considered hopelessly “tropical”, and thus supposedly incapable of adapting to cold weather. This claim was clearly preposterous, as African-descended peoples had lived in Canada and the Northern U.S. for over two centuries—not to mention the fact that the state had gone to great lengths to reassure “desirable” white American and British settlers that Canada was not a barren wasteland. Clearly, racial nationalists conveniently overstated or understated the coldness of the climate whenever it suited their purposes. Canada was the land of prosperity and plenty when recruiting desirable white immigrants, but it was inhospitably cold when it came to undesirable races, which were too “soft” and slug-like to thrive in the rigors of Canada’s “zest”. However, this appeal to a more neutral climactic factor was a perfect alibi for racist immigration policies. Policymakers acted as gatekeepers to the emerging national community, regulating mobility on the basis of race—even while maintaining a facade of tolerance—even as they condemned American intolerance and proclaimed their British imperial band of masculinity to be superior.

In fact, by citing the presumed incompatibility of “tropical” races with northern climates, state officials could claim to only be expressing benevolent, paternal, concern for the welfare of potential settlers. In a 1906 letter to a Texas minister, Departmental Secretary L.M. Fortier of the Immigration Department “observed that after some years of experience in Canada [Negroes] do not readily take to our climate on account of the

43 Harold Troper explains that “[w]hile on the one hand the Immigration Branch was doing all in its power to convince white Americans that the climate was not too harsh for productive labour, in virtually the same breath, it was trying to convince the Negroes that, at least in their case, the opposite was true” (127).
rather severe weather” (Troper: 127). Such claims of climatic unsuitability were also used to justify the exclusion of Sikhs and other non-white migrants. Such myths continued to be employed for decades. As C.D. Corbett notes, arguments about climatic unsuitability continued to be used until the 1950s (Tropper: 127). Whenever possible, the state crafted its racist policies in color-blind language, so as to disguise the intent of these policies and maintain its symbolic distance from Americans. Not only did explicit racism fly in the face of the careful self-image Canadians had taken great pains to construct, but it also had the potential to disrupt the status quo.

As a safer alternative, at times, black Canadians were even invited into the fold of Canadian superiority, when it served dominant interests to do so. In a transparent attempt to bar potential African American settlers without alienating black Canadian voters, the state even went so far as to try to convince black Canadians that Canada’s treatment of black Americans should not be a cause of concern or offense to them because they were a different type of black person. The rejection of black Americans his was not about race at all. Far from it. Rather it was simply that “coloured people from the South...were a different class altogether from those who have been resident in Canada for a long time[,] and they are not farmers in the way that we apply the term.
The farming that they did was indifferent and careless[,] and they were not desirable for Canada”. 44

But Du Bois depicts the prevailing attitude of Canadian officials more honestly in The Souls of White Folk, when he writes: “[d]arker peoples are dark in mind as well as in body; of dark, uncertain, and imperfect descent; of frailer, cheaper stuff...they have no feelings, aspirations, and loves; they are fools, illogical idiots—‘half-devil and half-child’”. 45 Du Bois goes on to add: “[s]uch as they are civilization must, naturally, raise them, but soberly and in limited ways. They are not simply dark white men. They are not 'men' in the sense that Europeans are men” (30). And thus, they were not suited for the rigors and responsibilities of citizenship. Despite the mythologies of tolerance Canadians proudly propagated, Du Bois was well aware of the Dominion's racial nationalism and participation in a erecting the global color line. For in 1911, Fortier had also written wrote to Du Bois personally, explaining that “[t]here is nothing in the Canadian Immigration law which disbars any person on the grounds of colour, but since coloured people are not considered as a class likely to do well in this country[,] all the

44 Troper: 130, citing a 1910 memo from William White to Frank Oliver (who succeeded Clifford Sifton as Minister).
45 (30) Du Bois is quoting Rudyard Kipling's famous 1889 poem “The White Man’s Burden”, in which Kipling refers to “Your new-caught, sullen peoples/ Half devil and half child”. I will discuss this poem in Chapter 4.
regulations respecting health, money, etc., are strictly enforced, and it is quite possible that a number of your fellow countrymen may be rejected on such grounds”.

And rejected they were. Some African Americans cleverly tried to appeal to Canadian exceptionalism in their inquiries about migrating to Canada. As Harold Troper explains, hopeful black settlers evoked the notion of Canada’s avowed British imperial benevolence and tolerance in their inquiries—referencing the Underground Railroad and the abolition of slavery (Troper: 125). One student at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania argued in his 1901 letter that Canada had a unique opportunity for “setting the civilized world an example that would live and bear fruit for untold ages to come” (Troper: 125). However, most Canadian officials had no interest in serving as a model of racial equality, and instead held fast to the position that blacks were inassimilable and therefore undesirable as migrants, informing Mr. Barrett that his letter would be filed away for future reference. As Troper argues, “[a]lthough Canadians may self-righteously have prided themselves on their distance from American racial troubles[,] Canadians proved just as racist as their American neighbours” (122).

Conclusion

As Constance Backhouse has argued, racial meanings differed for dominant and subordinate groups; that racial ideologies are never monolithic, even when normalized. What is more, Backhouse insightfully argues that it is unhelpful to “suggest that one cannot label past actors and events as racist”, since “the use of hierarchy to foster privilege and maintain subordination is remarkably similar across past decades” (11). It is not necessarily anachronistic to label particular actions, behaviors, or attitudes

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46 Harold Troper explains that many ‘Creek-Negroes’ from Oklahoma possessed more than sufficient funds to migrate to Canada, having valuable land holdings which could be sold for forty or fifty dollars and acre, in the early 1900s (135). In a 1910 report on his fact-finding mission to gauge Oklahoma blacks’ interest in Canada, inspector of United States agencies, William J. White, noted that these “Negro-Indians” actually “possessed...wealth much greater than most of the white settlers of the State” (134, subtractions Troper’s). Yet it is clear that racial ideology soundly trumped class concerns, for despite their affluence, these blacks were not deemed desirable settlers. In fact, White argued that “the prosperity of the whole region was 'kept back and held back by the preponderance of coloured people who [owned] most of the land” (134, quoting White, additions Troper’s). He went on to note that among the Creek blacks, “laziness is abundant and seems to have put its hallmark everywhere” (134), and that blacks misuse their revenues, moving into towns where “they drink and waste their capital, and often wind up in the penitentiary” (135). He even decried the “Negro-Indians” for their mixed-race ancestry, arguing that they were miscegenated and mongrelized, and that as a result, “[t]he Indian has brought into the mixed race the cunning that the Indian is credited with, and has raised the lower and more harmless instincts of the Negro, but only to a more brutal level, and with the combination, he thus becomes a more undesirable person. He has worked alongside of the Indian until he has acquired a lot of that individual[s] shiftless methods and added to his own indifference of surroundings to his own carelessness in everything that elevates [sic]” (135, additions Troper’s). White even discredited education as a means for integration into white Canadian society, arguing that on the contrary, education could lead to greater strife, since “[w]ith a little learning and a little prestige, they soon become first-class agitators, and this was to be feared” (135).
“racist”. Even if this precise term did not exist, the concept certainly did, and some critics cited the bigoted racial ideas of their peers, even as others highlighted the racism of the competing white men’s countries to elide their own. The construction of myths of American brutality and Canadian benevolence was part of a long historical process, which predated Confederation and formed the ideological basis of state formation.

As we have seen, Canadians clung to the myth of British abolitionism and the Underground Railroad, even while they oppressed and exclude blacks from their imagined community. And we have seen with westward expansion—and the dispossession and forced assimilation of First Nations—this process was being mythologized even while it was still underway. Meanwhile, Canadians told very different stories about the nation-building process of Americans. And in Canada and the United States themselves, these two states’ distinct yet linked histories led to the creation of very different national myths, which have endured, albeit in renegotiated forms, to this day. Of course, these myths were never “true,” but the precise nature of these Canadian origin myths and the way in which they have been continually repeated has caused them to become “true” in the national imagination (Francis, 1997). Many

47 As the Hon. Mr. Vidal has asked in a Parliamentary Debate in 1885: “Do hon. gentlemen think we have a perfect right to come in here and dispossess the native inhabitants of their country? and not only to consider that we have a better right to it than they have, but to consider it so exclusively to our own as to shut out from sharing in the advantages of this country others of God’s people who have as much right to it as we have?” But sadly, this was decidedly not the dominant perspective. It is also sad that, in some ways, Vidal had a much more progressive take on Canadian history in 1885 than did Prime Minister, Stephen Harper in 2009, with the benefit of hindsight (687) (Sessional Papers, vol. 11, 3rd Session of the 5th Parliament, 1885).
contemporary Canadians continue to deny the existence of “racism” in Canada, instead preferring to project this quality onto Americans, as they have done comfortably for centuries.

Thus I have chosen to read Canadian iterations of racial nationalism and Anglo-Saxonism within a larger transnational framework, in order to shed light on rich, complex, and subtle functions of racial ideology. For whiteness and masculinity were not monolithic discourses, but rather had a wide range of iterations, even if they fell under the larger common rubric of white supremacy and imperialism that Du Bois terms the “doctrine of the divine right of white people to steal.” Rather than a single fixed discourse that circulated the globe, articulations of white identity were nuanced and shifting. For racial ideologies, nationalisms, and imperialisms, the adaptability of hegemonic discourses is part of their power. These discourses are elastic and can be molded and reshaped continually to maintain relations structured in dominance. This is why the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century context of colonial contest between “white man's countries” gave rise to competing articulations of white masculinity, and concomitant definitions of citizenship and civilization.
Figures for Chapter 2

Figure 2.1

John Gast, “American Progress”, 1872
FROM HALIFAX TO VANCOUVER

MISS CANADA: This is what we want, cousin Jonathan. It will give us real independence, and stop the foolish talk about annexation. JONATHAN: Wal, miss, I guess you're about right thar; but I'll believe it when I see it.
Figure 2.3

1898, *Globe* (Toronto)
Figure 2.4

1880, Canadian Illustrated News
Figure 2.5

July 22, 1876, *Canadian Illustrated News*
Figure 2.6

1874, Richard Barrington Nevitt, “First Whiskey Spilled
Figure 2.7

1891, *Dominion Illustrated* (Toronto) - Wounded Knee
WHAT IT MUST COME TO
(With the Enroachment of Civilization)

OFFICER: [Sir John A. Macdonald]: Here, you copper colored gentlemen, no loafting allowed, you must either work or jump.
Figure 2.10

September 2, 1901, Montreal Daily Star
Figure 2.11

August 1893, *Fraternity*
Figure 2.12

1900, *Le Canard*
CHAPTER 3 “Threshing Machines Don't Need the Vote”:
Competing Visions of Whiteness and Identity in Debates over
Chinese Migration and Labor

Even as some modes of domination heaved their last gasps, others arose to supplant
them, ensuring the continuation of racial inequality. The demise of slavery and rise of
worker’s rights didn’t amount to the radical change many had hoped for. Du Bois
argues in “The Souls of White Folk” that although “the subjection of the white working
classes cannot much longer be maintained”, there still remains “a chance for
exploitation on an immense scale for inordinate profit”—“in the exploitation of darker
peoples. It is here that the golden hand beckons. Here are no labor unions or votes or
questioning onlookers or inconvenient consciences. These men may be used down to
the very bone...” (31) Forms of institutionalized inequality that had been officially
abolished throughout the western world were replaced by a racialized global caste
system of peonage and indentureship. These coercive labor systems, like those that
preceded them, disproportionately benefitted lighter-skinned peoples and kept darker-
skinned peoples amongst the lowest echelons of workers.

“Globalization” has often been understood as a “new” phenomenon, something
particular to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The twenty-first
century commentators who “discover” a contemporary “age of globalization” forget
that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was also marked by transnational
movement of goods, ideas, and of people. In a wave of mass labor migration, millions moved from the British Isles, Europe, and tens of thousands from Asia, to the overseas Dominions of the British Empire: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. As Lake and Reynolds argue, “Modernity meant mobility” (23), and “[t]he long nineteenth century was the great age of global mobility. The burgeoning fortunes made possible by economic liberalism fostered remarkable freedom of movement, while the advent of steam ships and railways made travel cheaper and faster” (Lake & Reynolds: 23). Patrick Manning describes the period between 1850 and 1930 as the most intensive period of migration in human history (Lake & Reynolds: 23).

This age of migration was equally an age of nation-building. Nation-building was at once a symbolic and material process, in which national identities were formed, and state infrastructure built. This remarkable movement of peoples to nascent nation-states in North America and across the British Empire strengthened the British and American Empires. In addition to expanding the global reach of these Anglophone empires, this new-found freedom of movement also allowed the architects of nation-building to pick and choose who was to become part of their imagined community, and who was to be disbarred from membership. Lake and Reynolds estimate that about “50 million Chinese, the same number of Europeans, and about 30 million Indians migrate to new homes around the world” (6).
As we saw in chapter 1, an emerging sense of “white” identity and national belonging was articulated in large part through identifying the perceived threat to white dominance posed by the so-called “rising tide of color.” This phrase from the title of Lothrop Stoddard’s (1894) book aptly captures racial nationalist anxieties engendered by the phenomenon of global migration and anti-imperialism. Racial nationalists felt threatened by the migration of Chinese workers as they did with other darker-skinned peoples. This fear was inseparable from the dominant characterization of Chinese migrants as “inassimilable” and unsuited for citizenship in new nation-states—particularly since the exclusion of these threatening racial “others” helped form the basis for the tenuous inclusion of ethnic and working class white migrants who troubled the racial nationalists less: migrants from Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, and the slums of British industrial cities.

Racial nationalism and anti-Asian ideologies helped to ameliorate class and ethnic cleavages and to create a sense of whiteness and national belonging, even as they spurred vigorous debate over ideas of race and nation. The initial creation of nation-state and national identity had relied upon the dispossession of Native peoples. Like symbolic discourses of national belonging and inclusion, racial nationalists justified this dispossession by the imagined inherent racial inferiority of Aboriginal peoples. Discourses of indigenous inferiority circulated transnationally, but also had particular historically-specific inflections in individual instances of nation-building. This tension
between national and transnational narratives about “the divine right of white men to steal” allowed Canadian nationalists to elide the violence of colonialism and articulate an imagined superior white British imperial masculinity. The abundant evidence of American aggression towards Native and African-descended peoples provided Canadian racial nationalists with further “proof” that their British-derived version of imperialism was more benign.

The emancipation of slaves within the Anglophone colonial world did not end the need for a subjugated racialized labor force. Chinese migrants and their Japanese “brown brothers” became the new mobile, racialized, “coolie labor” of the imperial age. Parallels to slavery became even more striking when Prime Minister John A. Macdonald denied the franchise to Chinese on the basis that Chinese workers in Canada were merely sojourners, and while “valuable, the same as a threshing machine or any other agricultural implement,” the Chinese immigrants “ha[ve] no British feelings or aspirations, and therefore ought not to have a vote” (4th Session, 5th Parliament, 1886: 97). Parallels to the enslavement of Africans become obvious through this reduction of a group to its productive labor, and the construction of racial attributes that deemed the group inferior—and thus unentitled to fair wages, full citizenship rights, or social equality.
In fact, racial strife between blacks and whites in the United States was explicitly cited by white Canadians in their arguments against Chinese immigration. Racial nationalist Agnes Laut wrote in *The Canadian Commonwealth* (1915) that “[t]heoretically the Asiatic should have the same liberty to come and go with Canada as Canadians have to come and go with the Orient. Theoretically, also, the colored man should be as clean and upright and free-and-equal and dependable as the white man; but practically—in an anguish that has cost the South blood and tears—practically he isn’t. The theory does not work out. Neither does it with the Asiatic” (139). Similarly, in an 1886 debate the Canadian Parliament on an Immigration Bill, one Member of Parliament explicitly invoked anti-black racism as a reason to exclude Chinese migrants. Citing racial strife in the United States, he exhorted, “[w]e can scarcely peruse an American newspaper that is not filled with fearful outrages committed by that class of [black] people upon the whites and accounts of fearful retaliation upon the perpetrators of them. It only shows that the importation of a people differing in feeling, in character, in culture and manners and customs, into a country with the population of which they cannot by any possible means assimilate, is calculated to be a great source of danger to the State” (679).

And like African Americans, Chinese migrants were treated as enemies of the state. In the U.S., the persistence of white supremacy, racial terror, and structural racism ensured that America’s promises of Emancipation and Radical Reconstruction would remain unfulfilled. Canada’s dominant nationalist narratives upheld white supremacy
just as successfully—and offered as an additional benefit an imagined moral high ground from which to point out their superiority over white Americans. Canadian articulations of moral superiority elided the history of slavery and the oppression of African-descended and Native peoples, who remained aliens inside the nation-state they had helped to build, subjected to unequal citizenship and mobility rights, and paid wages a fraction of those paid “white” workers. This chapter focuses on the process by which other groups of darker skinned workers joined them in racialized peonage, and the national meanings that racial nationalists attached to Chinese migrant workers in Canada and the United States.

The question of Chinese immigration brought to light both reinforcing and competing definitions of whiteness, masculinity, Christianity, and national values and the meaning of the “nation” within these two “white men’s countries.” Before I go on to discuss Canada’s 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration as a transnational interaction of racial nationalists and labor leaders, I will discuss the paramount importance of Canada’s national infrastructure project: constructing the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and the role of Chinese workers in its realization. To Canadian nationalists, the CPR was indispensable to an economically and politically integrated nation-state, but the Chinese workers who were imported to build it undermined the central tenets of nationalists’ racial narrative of identity.
The Historical Context of the Royal Commission

The push for Chinese exclusion came about as a result of the migration of Chinese workers to work in the mines, and later on national railways. “The first large influx of Chinese immigrants to stay in Canada came north from San Francisco following the gold rush to the Fraser River Valley in 1858. In the 1860s many moved on to prospect for gold in the Cariboo Mountains of British Columbia”. “When workers were needed for the Canadian Pacific Railway, many were brought directly from China. From 1880 to 1885 about 17,000 Chinese labourers helped build the difficult and dangerous British Columbia section of the railway. In spite of their contributions, there was a great deal of prejudice against the Chinese, and they were paid only half the wage of white workers.”¹

The Canadian Pacific Railway was vested with central national meaning, as a way of preventing American annexation and keeping Canada British. The railway would do this by increasing east-west trade within Canada, and filling the Northwest with desirable white settlers. Moreover, as Daniel Francis explains, the CPR was seen as a

¹ Chinese workers were also used as strike-breakers, which only served to increase the hostility against them, and make them seem all the more unfit to be union members.

<http://canadaonline.about.com/od/historyofimmigration/a/chineseheadtax.htm>
“consummation” of Confederation, and thus as an important symbol of Canadian national identity. America’s first transcontinental railroad had been completed in 1869.

**Chinese Workers and Railroad Construction**

Both the U.S. and Canadian railroads made use of the underpaid labor of Chinese workers, particularly for the heavy work of getting over and through mountains. These difficult and dangerous jobs posed a high risk of accidental explosions, landslides, and rockslides. But from the Canadian state’s perspective, the outcome seemed worth the risk. Looking with envy at America’s triumphalist national identity, strong economy, and booming population, which the railroad had helped facilitate, Canadian nation-builders sought to match—and ideally to surpass—the success of their neighbors and rivals. Nation-builders in Canada exploited popular fears of American expansionism to convince Canadian taxpayers that the massive expenditure and resulting presence of Chinese workers in their “white man’s country” was a small price to pay for national glory.

Railroad construction was spearheaded by Conservative Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald. We already saw Macdonald in political cartoons from Chapter 2, forcing First Nations off a cliff, and telling them to “work or jump”, to make way for the railway and new waves of European settlers (Fig. 2.8). We also saw him standing on the corpses
of slain Métis, in the satirical re-figuring of the earlier image (Fig. 2.9). As they had in the United States, white workers in Canada protested the presence of Chinese workers, as a perceived threat to their jobs and standard of living.

Yet the question of the railway brought politicians and labor leaders head-to-head. Despite the fact that both groups were racial nationalists, they had very different economic and political interests, which they harnessed to articulate conflicting visions of the best course of national development. Labor leaders critiqued the interests of corporate elites and their political representatives, and defended the rights of white workingmen. Let us return to John P. McConnell, introduced in Chapter 1, the editor of the viciously anti-Asian B.C. Saturday Sunset. In his founding editorial, McConnell condemned the interest of elites and capital, and lauded the efforts of “vigilant labor leaders.” McConnell not only protested that working-class white Canadians “will not stand to be made the dumping ground for Asiatics for imperial or any other reasons” but went on to argue: “[m]uch less will we stand for the wholesale importation of Jap coolies in the interests of railroads or other corporations.” Instead he called for politicians' active “encouragement of white immigration.”

To appease the popular racial nationalism of white workers and nascent labor organizations, Macdonald justified the presence of Chinese workers as a necessary evil to be forborne in order to complete the important national project that would link the
state from sea to sea. One Member of Parliament remarked in anticipation “in this short space of time we will be able to start from the Atlantic Ocean and cross on British soil to the Pacific shore” (House of Commons, 4th Session, 4th Parliament, 1882: 4). Though Macdonald himself was a racial nationalist, he understood that popular and state representations of Chinese as unassimilable were deeply intertwined and mutually-reinforcing.

In 1885, Macdonald was asked in Parliament: “Do I understand then that the policy which is being pursued and of which you approved is to encourage white immigration, and allow the present Chinese settlement to die a natural death?” Macdonald responded “Yes. I believe the in the course of time, by removal and death, these people will become so few in number that their presence will cease to be a serious objection, and that by giving encouragement to the whites we shall be able to supply their places with white people.”2 To respond to their working-class white critics, other members of

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2 48 Victoria; Sessional Papers, No. 54a. page 11. The belief that Chinese in Canada would eventually “die out” was reinforced by the fact that only male laborers were permitted to enter Canada for the work of railway construction. So addition to being racialized, discourse on Chinese was also heavily gendered. This policy was a form of natural population control, since relations between Chinese men and white women were strictly controlled. As Constance Backhouse explains in “White Women’s Labour Laws”, Chinese men were constructed as a sexual threat to white women. Supposedly, Chinese men threatened to take advantage of white women or get them addicted to opium. Thus, laws were passed to govern the interactions between these two groups. Pointing out the elasticity of racial ideology, Backhouse explains that Chinese men were at once constructed as weak, diminutive, and effeminate, and also as lascivious, predatory, drug peddlers. I argue that this dual construction allowed Euro-Canadian men to simultaneously maintain a sense of superior masculinity, while also preserving exclusive sexual access to white women, and exploiting the labor of Chinese men, while making it impossible for Canada’s Chinese-descended population to grow through sexual reproduction. This illustrates one of my overall arguments that the malleability of racial ideology allowed it to be constantly reshaped as best suited the needs of racial and economic elites. Ideology is constructed and can take any form, and so is an important tool in maintaining hegemonic forms of domination.

The following discussion from the1885 Sessional Papers is also very revealing of dominant conceptions of Chinese workers, in terms of both race and class:
the political elite echoed Macdonald’s vision of Canada as a white man's country, but argued that Railway construction, and the “temporary inconvenience” of Chinese workers, was the only way to achieve this goal.

Ironically, although the presence of Chinese and European immigrants was seen as mutually exclusive, the labor of Chinese in Canada was intrinsically tied to nation-building and Canadian national identity. Chinese workers made railroad construction possible because they could be paid less than white workers to perform the difficult and dangerous work of pushing the CPR through the mountains of British Columbia.³ In this sense, Chinese in Canada were viewed as a means to a greater racial end—part of a racial national project. In an 1887 debate of the House of Commons, Sir John A.

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³ As we have seen, in a November 1869 cartoon in Diogenes, “From Halifax to Vancouver”, (Fig. 2.2) stresses the importance of building a national railway in Canada. As Charles and Cynthia Hou point out, the United States had completed the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railways in May of that year, and intended to build another closer to the Canadian border, which stoked/further inflamed existing fears of American annexation. The cartoon presents the future possibility of a national railway as the key to saving Canada from the threat of American annexation. In the cartoon, Miss Canada points at the as yet nonexistent railway, explaining to Uncle Sam “This is what we want, cousin Jonathan. It will give us real independence, and stop the foolish talk about annexation”! Rubbing his beard in bemusement/consternation, Uncle Sam replies, “Wal, miss, I guess you’re right ther; but I’ll believe it when I see it”. This cartoon frames the railway as a test of Canadian mettle in the wake of American doubt. Moreover, it presents the CPR as a “consummation” of Confederation, which occurred two years prior (Francis, 1997: 17). Arguably, the railway was characterized as “heroic”, not only because it helped to prevent U.S. annexation, but also facilitated white immigration, and so saved the country from being peopled by non-whites, given that the presence of whites and non-whites has long been constructed as incompatible.
Macdonald advocated Chinese workers in Canada as a temporary inconvenience that had to be endured in order to reach the greater goal of building a “white Canada”:

It is rather inconvenient that this subject should be brought up without notice of any kind; and the hon. gentleman must be satisfied with a very brief and perhaps unsatisfactory answer. No complaints have reached the Government of serious interference with white labor in British Columbia, from the influx of Chinese labor. In fact, there is such a want of white labor in British Columbia, that if you wish to have the railway finished within any reasonable time, there must be no such step against Chinese labor. It is certain that British Columbia suffers very much from the want of steady flow into it of white immigration; and until the Pacific Railway is finished, I fancy that difficulty will always continue. It is of very great importance, in order to enable British Columbia to get the advantage of the flow of Immigration from Europe, that the railway should be finished as early as possible.4

The railroad was an important national symbol, and as Daniel Francis argues in National Myths (1992), the completion of the railway has been mythologized as a “heroic endeavour which united the disparate regions of the country in a single, bold dream of nationhood” (Francis: 16). Macdonald was determined to create a nation, at whatever cost necessary, and for this, he too has been memorialized. As Francis goes on to explain, “[i]n the pantheon of nation builders, Macdonald holds front rank, and the railway was his chosen instrument” (17).

4 Senate Debates, 1st Session, 6th Parliament, 1887:1477 This idea is corroborated by the testimony before the Royal Commission (1885) of Philip Dwyer, A.M. “(some time) Canon of Killaloe Cathedral, Ireland,” who argued that Canadians should be able to get adequate supply of white labor because of CPR construction, which need to finish “After this is over there will be no valid excuse for their unlimited invasion of the land” (362). He then goes on to say: “But should considerations of this kind be overlooked, what will the final result be? What else but a population of Mongolians, numerically predominant, who will remit their earnings out of the province, who will practice exclusive dealing, and never permanently attach themselves to British Columbia, or become identified with her laws. And then what stronger justification can be given of the current censure of inconsistency, contained in the taunt, that what was once ‘British’ was made ‘Chinese Columbia’...And further, an uncontrolled immigration of Mongolians, to any extent, must leave the colony subject to the additional and serious evils...” (Chapleau, Joseph-Adolphe, and John Hamilton Gray. Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration. Report and Evidence. Ottawa: Printed by order of the Commission, 1885. 362).
Despite Macdonald and other nation-builders’ claim to an elite national vision of the best way to ensure the state’s glorious future, the question of Chinese migration caused tense confrontations between labor leaders and politicians and economic elites. These confrontations unearthed pressing issues of class, regionalism, and national identity. The Canadian debate about admitting Chinese workers did not occur in a vacuum. Canadian racial nationalists took part in transnational conversations about how to protect the newly-acquired rights of white workers. For the most part, Canadian racial nationalists aligned themselves with their American counterparts in championing immigration restriction following the completion of the railroad. Agnes Laut explains, that she traveled to California, where spoke with American racial nationalists about Asian exclusion.\(^5\) Similarly, James S. Woodsworth was also an advocate of (white) working class rights, and argued that they could only be promoted by excluding undesirable immigrants.

The question of Chinese migration and anti-Asian sentiment was framed first and foremost as a threat to white workers, and their new-found opportunities for upward mobility. As white workers organized and demanded rights, articulating these demands as a corollary of an emerging sense of white entitlement to fair wages and freedom from exploitation. While the demands of white workers were anathema to state

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\(^5\) In fact, for all her espoused love of Canada, Laut eventually moved to the United States.
projects such as railway construction, which politicians hoped to build as cost-effectively as possible, they nonetheless dovetailed with racial nationalist visions of the imagined community, and reinforced the desire for racist immigration policies that conspired to keep Canada and other emerging states “white man’s countries”.

Responding to popular outcry, the Macdonald Conservative government created the Royal Commission to determine Canadian state policy towards Chinese migration. Canadian labor leaders banded together and aligned with their American neighbors, to argue for the rights of white workers. Ironically, workers rights’ advocates, like the politicians they criticized, viewed both immigration and labor as inherently incompatible. Popular racism both clashed with and collaborated with state racism. Workers’ rights advocates agreed that the presence of Asians in Canada and the United States was anathema to the “best classes” of white workers, and like the elite and capital interests they decried, reinforced the idea of immigration and labor as mutually exclusive. Similarly, white workers never seriously considered banding with their “brown brothers” to form interracial labor coalitions and thus lost an opportunity to secure more power for the working class. Instead, white workers in Canada and the United States identified Chinese workers as a threat, and banded together to curtail migration. In addition to being heavily class-based, opposition was also regionalized, and was particularly virulent in California and the Pacific Northwest, where most Asian newcomers migrated and worked.
Important tensions, contradictions, and debates about race, labor, and citizenship emerge through the hearings of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration created by the Canadian Parliament in 1884-1885 to advise it about how to legislate on Chinese immigration. Reading the racialist assumptions and national meanings generated through the Commission’s hearings and set out in its report alongside Canadian and American popular depictions of Chinese migrants provides a more nuanced understanding of the complex processes of transnational racial nationalism and individual instances of identity construction and in this era. For all that Canadian nationalists worked to create a discourse of national exceptionalism with distinct British imperial inflections of masculinity and civilization, they shared many of the fears of their counterparts in the United States and other “white men's countries.” Even in the context of labor shortages, white workingmen in Canada, as throughout the British Empire and North America, feared competition from Chinese workers who were willing to labor for lower wages.

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Throughout the white world, economic migration from Asia was framed in terms of racial dominance. Yet the historical context of colonial contest also pitted white men's countries against one another, in a contest for national dominance. The construction of Canada's Railway was a response to American railroad construction, and the related debates about Chinese labor and immigration were part of a transnational dialogue among Canada, the United States, and other white men's countries. At the 1885 Royal Commission, Canadians and Americans, politicians, labor leaders, and other “experts” came together to discuss larger questions of race and nation, and ultimately to determine the fate of Chinese workers in Canada.

Decades later, Canadian immigration restrictionists would reciprocate by speaking at the 1907 meeting of the Washington Federation of Labor, held in Tacoma, Washington. As Kornel Chang explains, labor leaders in Canada and the United States came together at the meeting and “asserted a transregional white working-class identity in explicit opposition to Asian 'coolie' labor” (678). That very same year, white mobs rioted through Chinese neighborhoods in Vancouver and San Francisco. But this outcome was far from inevitable, as were the exclusion laws the Commission’s hearing spawned. The 1885 Royal Commission represents a historical moment at which/when Canadian and American racial nationalists—as well as their anti-racist critics—presented competing conceptions of race, labor, and citizenship. These divergent definitions of Canadian and American whiteness, values, and identity were weighed at the highest level of
government, with profound consequences for national identity, and the laws that helped shape it.

That Chinese immigration was framed in terms of a competition for racial dominance becomes especially clear in the Commission Report. James P. Dameron, a lawyer resident in California since 1849, testified before the Commission about this interracial encounter “on the virgin soil of California”: “[t]hese hardy Mongolians, with their peculiar civilization, have met us at the Golden Gate, and have begun the contest for the ascendency. The large numbers here, and the constant increase arriving daily, and the nearness and accessibility of the hive they swarm from, have alarmed the whites of California and the Pacific coast, and well they may be alarmed” (351). Many white Canadians similarly perceived Chinese workers as racialized invaders of the “virgin soil” of their own vulnerable nation-state. The cries of these concerned Canadians for exclusion laws spawned the Commission, even as other critics in Canada and the U.S. argued for more humanistic and anti-racist definitions of national identity. When read alongside Canadian and American popular culture, the Parliament's Royal Commission provides insight into the processes of racial ideology and national identity formation in this era.

Most Canadian nationalists, despite articulating a superior British imperial masculinity and whiteness in regard to Native and African-descended peoples, perceived the
“Oriental problem” in exactly the same terms as their American neighbors. Deeming Americans authorities on Chinese in “white men's countries”, Canadians invited U.S. ‘experts’, such as Henry George, editor of the *Evening Post* (San Francisco) and Gas-Meters Inspector, to testify before the Commission about Chinese migration, and its presumed benefits and dangers. In his testimony, George contrasted Chinese migration to America to that of ethnic whites. He argued that Chinese migrants would reduce the immigration of white laborers: for instance in the industries of “fisheries and gardening, in which Italian immigrants are engaged; the cigar-trade, in which Germans are engaged; and washing, in which our women in the east are engaged—is to take away that inducement which these people had to come here” (238). What is more, George argued, “[t]he Italians assimilate with us and become a part and portion of our body politic; and so with the Irish and Germans; they become citizens and in time American. There is a difference in that respect between Chinese and other races” (238).

In this regard, there was indeed a difference “between Chinese and other races”. For Chinese were not *allowed* to become citizens. For, as James William St G. Walker explains in "Race", *Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada* (1997), “[i]n one of its first acts after Confederation, the BC legislature in 1872 disfranchised Chinese in the province, adding Japanese and East Indians in 1895 and 1907, respectively, as their numbers began to warrant similar attention. Saskatchewan followed BC's example and disfranchised Chinese residents in 1908” (25). Walker goes on to explain that “[s]ince
the federal franchise derived from provincial qualifications, persons barred by a province were automatically denied the federal vote. Many other rights and privileges depended upon being on the provincial voter’s list as well, including the right to public office, jury service, employment in the public service and the practice of law” (25).

Alongside “color-blind” legal racism—that is, legal racism which functions through the use of “race-neutral” language—tropes of Chinese inassimilability were constantly invoked within transnational conversations about race and nation, to further white worker’s perceived class interests. Any lack of social integration on the part of Chinese migrants was framed not as the result of white ostracism or legal racism but rather as further evidence of Chinese inferiority and racial unfitness for citizenship. Henry George also testified to the Commission that the Chinese “[a]s a race... would not make fit citizens; it is totally foreign to their ideas; and it would be utterly destructive to our civilization to incorporate them with us. They never attempt to become citizens” (238). What was more, he opined, "[c]ompared with the white race[,] I think they are deficient in intellect and incapable of understanding our institutions, our regard for personal

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liberty, dislike of arbitrary power, respect for law, and personal independence (238).\(^8\)

Another “expert”, John F. Swift, “a resident of San Francisco since 1852, and a traveler in Asiatic countries” echoed this sentiment, stating that “[t]he existence of Chinese in the state is utterly incompatible with anything like a government by the people” (339).

Ideas of Chinese inferiority were not uniquely American, but were shared by racial nationalists in Canada and in Britain and its Empire. Thus, in these racial constructions in their testimony, American experts drew upon transnational discourses about race and citizenship, vesting them with republican inflections, befitting the character of their own particular brand of national exceptionalism. By and large, Canadians shared these notions, and like Americans, saw Chinese as incompatible, not just with their imagined community, but also with “white civilization” in general. Canadian racial nationalists echoed George's view, even if the content of their national identity differed from their American counterparts', with more emphasis on imperial duty, and less on personal liberty and distrust for strong government.

\(^8\) Again linking the perceptions of blacks and Chinese, he goes on to say: “I have been told that Chinese students in our colleges are like the negroes. They learn very fast up to a certain point but beyond that point it is difficult for them to go, and they are incapable of attaining the state of civilization the Caucasian is capable of. I have the same objection to the introduction of the negro as to the importation of the Chinese. The number of negroes in the country is fixed, while the number of Chinese may be increased indefinitely” (1885: 238).
In 1886, a year after the Royal Commission, and the passage of the first exclusion laws, one appointed Representative, Hon. Mr. Nelson, argued in the Senate Debates: “[w]e do not want to create a second Chinese Empire on this continent; we have not built railways and opened up the North-West to fill it with a people of that character” (681, emphasis mine). So despite the fact that it was essentially Chinese workers who built the railways, the railways were not built for them. Immigration restriction was the solution to perpetuating the phenomenon of “white men’s countries”, and the accompanying gains of white workers. Although Chinese immigrants had been vigorously recruited for the dangerous, poorly-paid work of building the Canadian Pacific Railway, upon its completion in 1885, they were just as vigorously excluded.

Following the Royal Commission, the Canadian Parliament passed the *Chinese Immigration Act* (1885), which included a head tax provision designed to discourage Chinese migration to Canada. After the initial head tax of $50 failed to prevent migration, the amount was raised to $100 in 1901, then $500 in 1904. This was a significant financial burden for migrant workers. In 1904, $500 was approximately two years wages for Chinese laborers.\(^9\) This amounted to a form of indentured labor, since Chinese Canadians were required to use the bulk of their paltry earnings to reimburse

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ship captains for their passage. With the exception of the Chinese head tax, many aspects of Canada’s exclusion laws were virtually copied from the United States' Chinese Exclusion Act (1882).

In addition to perceived racial inferiority, the Chinese were deemed uninterested in citizenship and “Canadianization”. In 1886, a year after the Royal Commission, and the year of the passage of the first exclusion laws, one appointed Representative, the Hon. Mr. Nelson, argued in the Senate Debates that “the Chinese are not like ourselves, that they never can become part and parcel of the Canadian people” (Senate Debates, 4th Session, 5th Parliament, 1886: 681). Nelson went on to lay blame for the apparent inassimilability of Chinese migrants to integrate into Canadian society squarely on the migrants themselves, arguing: “[t]he Chinese do not want to become part of our people. they regard themselves as superior to any race on earth, and hold themselves aloof and will continue to hold themselves aloof from our population, and I submit that they are not a desirable population in our country” (681).

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10 When migration continued despite the increased head taxes on Chinese migrant workers, Canada banned all migration from China in the revised Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. The only exceptions permitted by the new Act were students and wealthy merchants (Knowles, 2007: 136). This policy continued until 1946, when it was finally repealed (Knowles136).

11 America’s exclusion law mandated: “Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be, and the same is hereby, suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or having so come after the expiration of said ninety days to remain within the United States.”

The notion that Chinese did not want to become citizens clashed with the fact that they were actively prevented from voting. In the Parliament Debate from 1900, the same year the head tax was raised to $100, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier explained that in 1884, the government of B.C. had “issued a commission”, following which: “[a]cting on the report, the government introduced a measure under which a poll tax of fifty dollars was imposed upon all Chinese immigrants” (7407). As a result of the legislation, “those who paid the poll tax seldom exceeded 200 a year”; Chinese migrants were effectively disfranchised, and certainly could not vote en masse for leaders who would represent their interests, as could white racial nationalists (7407). So why impose racist laws limiting citizenship rights if Chinese migrants were not capable or desirous of holding them anyway? The rhetorical gymnastics of racial nationalists knew no bounds; their exercise was much more about power than truth.

**Labor, Migration, and Anti-Chinese Racism in Popular Visual Culture**

Of course, power was not only about law and voting, but was also about ideology and culture. In popular visual culture, symbolism and meaning had long been harnessed by racial nationalists to perpetuate anti-Chinese racism. This popular visual culture and its racial ideology long-predated the Royal Commission, though we can see how many of the existing same themes and racial stereotypes emerged decades later. An 1879
political cartoon from the *Canadian Illustrated News* (Montreal), "The Heathen Chinee in British Columbia", presents ideas of race and citizenship similar to those that American experts would later introduce in the Commission Report. The image shows a well-dressed white man apprehending a diminutive, mustached, Chinese man by his braided hair (Fig. 3.1). The men are standing outside “Chee Lung” washing and ironing establishment, presumably the Chinese man’s business. The Chinese man exclaims in pidgin English "[w]hy you sendee me offee!", to which the tall, white man, identified as “Amor de Cosmos”, a B.C. Premier, whose chosen name translates as or “the Love of the World or the Lover of Mankind” replies: "[b]ecause you can't or won't 'assimilate with us". "What is dateel" remarks the Chinese man. Amor de Cosmos, responds: "You won't drink whiskey, and talk politics and vote like us."

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12 Amor de Cosmos [née William Alexander Smith, 1825-1897] served as the second Premier of British Columbia, and had also been a member of the Legislative Assembly of Vancouver Island, and later, a Liberal representative of Victoria in both the provincial legislature and the House of Commons. In addition to being a politician, de Cosmos was also a journalist and publisher, and editor of the *Colonist*. Cosmos’ parents were United Empire Loyalists who had fled the United States, following the American Revolution. Cosmos was a fervent nationalist who wanted to see British North America to become self-supporting, and who backed the entry of British Columbia into Confederation. In terms of his racial views, the Dictionary of Canadian Biography explains that de Cosmos’ "views on native Indians and Chinese immigrants always reflected settlers’ values and stereotypes. In the 1880s he spoke of both Indians and Chinese as ‘inferior’ peoples”. De Cosmos, “portrayed Indians as ‘irrational’ yet generally susceptible of ‘improvement’ and ‘redemption’ if removed from the worst influences of whites and trained in ‘civilized’ occupations, especially agriculture. Chinese immigrants, while less degraded, represented a more fundamental threat because they ‘did not assimilate.’” But the Dictionary also notes, on the contrary, that as an economic nationalist, “De Cosmos’s desire to promote economic growth and his recognition that minority groups could provide much-needed labour softened these negative stereotypes. Thus he praised the Indians’ contribution to the market economy through fishing and agriculture. The Chinese too, he noted on several occasions in the 1860s, would prove immensely helpful in unlocking the region’s vast storehouse of wealth. But racial animus in British Columbia intensified as the province’s settler population grew, and the ambiguity that had earlier marked De Cosmos’s opinions on minority questions lessened” and he became more explicitly anti-Chinese in his thinking and politics. From "De Cosmos, Amor" Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, <http://biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?id_nbr=6066>, viewed April 23, 2013. Amor de Cosmos’ name translated in: Hou, Charles, and Cynthia Hou. *Great Canadian Political Cartoons, 1915 to 1945*. Vancouver: Moody’s Lookout Press, 2002.
The Imagined Stakes of Chinese Immigration

Canadian racial nationalists, like Americans, also viewed immigration restriction and disfranchisement as a service to *humanity*, to ensure the future of western civilization and “progress”. They imagined human progress in a linear, teleological progression in which Anglo-Saxon civilization would triumph. Although discourses of racial otherness and exclusion had some distinct national inflections, Chinese immigration was framed by both Canadians and Americans not only as a national problem but as a threat to “white civilization” as a whole. Perhaps racial nationalists truly believed this mythology, or perhaps it simply represented an effort to legitimate discriminatory exclusion laws, using more humanistic language—especially in the wake of critiques of this practice as hypocritical and contrary to national values. As I will discuss later in this chapter, some critics condemned the glaring hypocrisy of exclusion laws, for both the United States and British Empire sent missionaries and merchants to China, and Britain had treaties with China. Yet racial nationalists dismissed such criticism with claims that the superiority of the “white race” was both self-evident and demonstrable.

North Americans presented themselves as inheritors of European greatness and defenders of this legacy; even Americans, who had revolted against Britain. Yet they were still white men who linked their plight with that of their European forebears whenever it best served their racial nationalist interest. As Californian, Frank M. Pixley,
for whom no “credentials” are given, stated before the Royal Commission that the Chinese "are separated from our [Pacific] coast by a narrow and a very mild sea... To throw open our continent and its broad area, all its mineral wealth, its agricultural resources, and its mechanical employments, to the importation of this people, is simply to invite upon us the barbaric scourge that once visited Europe” (256).\(^{13}\)

Despite invoking slightly different values and assumptions, Canadians' British imperial brand of racial nationalism ultimately had the same consequences, resulting in similar policies as Americans' Republican racial nationalism. As our racial nationalist US lawyer, James P. Dameron, testified before the Commission, the social sciences of ethnology and craniology, clearly proved white superiority.\(^{14}\) In this pseudo-scientific schema of thinking, cranial measurements and other physionomic taxonomies, were assumed to correspond with intelligence and suitability for citizenship. As Dameron testified: “[n]ot having the brain capacity, [Chinese] can never attain the high position of being free men and using the ballot wisely and honorably in the selection of the best and purest men to office [sic] to rule and govern them, but would look upon it as something put into their

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\(^{13}\) "Barbaric scourge" is probably a reference to Genghis Khan or "Attila the Hun".

\(^{14}\) For more on craniology, physiognomy, and other pseudosciences, see:

hands by which they might make a few dollars at the risk of liberty and human progress” (351, emphasis mine). Dameron went on to argue that “such a class of voters are [sic] dangerous to republics, and their immigration should be looked upon with disfavor by all true lovers of freedom and progress” (351).

Like their Canadian counterparts American racial nationalists also framed themselves as “lovers of mankind”, protecting both white racial purity and vaunted Anglo-Saxon civilization from the degrading effects of contact with, and contamination by, inferior races and cultures, such as the Chinese. As historian Peter Ward explains in White Canada Forever (1978), the racist archetypes of “the heathen Chinee”, “John Chinaman”, as well as the feminizing “almond-eyed son of the flowery kingdom,” were terms of derision common in the nineteenth century, though he asserts that they were not quite as disparaging as the twentieth century term, “Chink” (3).

These racial stereotypes were implicitly bound up with European imperialism and colonial domination. Ward goes on to argue, “[e]ver since Napoleon had warned of the sleeping giant of the East, the twin themes of race war and Asian inundation had recurred in European popular thought” (6, emphasis mine), and went on to circulate widely in North America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In fact, Dameron effortlessly invokes both these transnational themes, and links them to the need for national exclusion laws, prefacing his discussion of craniology by arguing: “[t]o
throw open the country to [Chinese] immigration, and foster and encourage it as we do
the European, would mean in a few years, to be overrun, so that the white man would
have to emigrate, or begin a war of races” (351).

Like J.S. Woodsworth, other Canadian racial nationalists, and their British imperial
brethren, Dameron invoked a transnational, Social Darwinistic taxonomy. This pseudo-
scientific classification scheme ranked all of humanity—divided into arbitrary “racial”
categories—according to their presumed attributes. So naturally, the corollary to
Chinese inferiority was white, “Anglo-Saxon” superiority. In their testimony to the Royal
Commission, American racial nationalists both cited and reinforced transnational beliefs
about racial progress and aptitude, which, of course, conveniently reinforced their own
political and economic agendas. These articulations of racial superiority harnessed
cultural and social as well as “scientific” claims to legitimate Chinese exclusion, and thus
appealed to white audiences' “commonsense” understanding of superiority. As
Dameron went on to argue:

The Caucasian differs from all other races; he is humane; he is civilized and progresses.
He conquers with the head as well as with the hand. It is intellect, after all, that
conquers, not the strength of a man's arm. The Caucasian has been often master of the
other races; never their slave. He has carried his religion to other races, but never takes
theirs. In history all religions are of Caucasian origin. All the great limited forms of
monarchies are Caucasian; republics are Caucasian. All the great sciences are of
Caucasian origin; all inventions are Caucasian; literature and romance come of the same
stock. All the great poets are of Caucasian origin. Moses, Luther, Jesus-Christ,
Zoroaster, Buddha, Pythagoras, were Caucasian. No race can bring up to memory such
celebrated names as the Caucasian race (350, referencing Theodore Parker).
In one fell swoop, Dameron invoked the transnational notion of white people as a “master race”, and the imperial ideology of the white man's burden, and went on to frame it in a way that fit the context of American exceptionalism and expansionism—presenting “republics” as synonymous with “freedom and progress”. Dameron seems to have been unaware that he was giving testimony to “Royal” Commissioners appointed by a constitutional monarchy. But like their British imperial forebears, Americans invoked notions of white superiority and progress in their own imperialist projects, in Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico,\textsuperscript{15} citing notions of white superiority to legitimate these decidedly non-republican incursions by a nation-state that stressed non-intervention of foreign powers and independence from imperial rule. Yet such ironies and hypocrisies seemed not to make an impression on racial nationalists, as their opponents saw, with frustration. These views didn't need to be coherent; they simply needed to function in ways that preserved embedded power relations to match vested self-interest.

In addition to their national and individual self-interest, by choosing to bring in 'experts' such a Dameron, many Canadians aligned themselves with white American and British imperial racial nationalists, purportedly to protect the future of western civilization. In

\textsuperscript{15} For further reading on American imperialism and exceptionalism, see:
reality, migration was essentially an economic issue and a question of labor. So what is also significant in Amor de Cosmos' encounter with “the Heathen Chinee” is the threatening presence of Chinese workers in particular industries, such as laundries. As James S. Woodsworth informed his readers in Strangers Within Our Gates, “[i]n the Eastern provinces the Chinaman is generally in the laundry business” (142).

The image of Chinese laundry workers appears repeatedly throughout the Parliamentary discussions of the “yellow peril”. While a number of broad themes—a complex blend of pseudo-scientific, cultural, and nationalist claims of white superiority—can be teased out of the 1879 “Heathen Chinee” cartoon, what is also notable about the image is the careful placement of a laundry business at the site of this epic encounter between civilizations and empires. For, as one Member of Parliament pithily put the issue of Chinese migration in 1886: “I think it is more a politico-economic question than a moral one” (Senate Debates, 4th Session, 5th Parliament, 1886: 4). In addition to intense Parliamentary debate, the question of Chinese migration and labor sparked an unprecedented storm of public visual culture about race and nation. Motifs of Chinese inassimilability circulated transnationally in visual culture, as they did in racial nationalist discourse.

Perception of Chinese Workers
The image of Chinese workers in laundry business and similar industries was repeated exhaustively in political cartoons. One of the most striking images depicting Chinese workers as an ostensible threat to white working classes is an 1882 image from the *Wasp* (California) (Fig. 3.2). The image shows a monstrous, leering Chinese worker with eleven arms, each performing a separate task—from shoe-making to rolling cigars, carpentry to sewing. Outside, young white men lounge idly, miserable and unemployed, owing to ostensible Chinese hyper-productivity. One young man, apparently driven to crime by idleness or desperation is hauled off by a police officer towards what appears to be San Quentin Prison, which we can see in the background behind an industrial school, rendered useless because of the vicious "Chinese trade monopoly". The image implicitly blames Chinese migrants for creating “vice” amongst whites.

Inside, one of the Chinese man's many busy hands mails a large sack of savings back to China, virtually plucking the food out of the mouths of white workers' hungry families, even as he drives the desperate men to vice and criminality, because they cannot earn money in an honest and virtuous way. Part of the discourse of Chinese exclusion focused on the presumed distinction between white men—supporting families, buying
homes, and eating meat: “the white man being a flesh eating animal”\textsuperscript{16}—and Chinese men who supposedly subsisted on an all-rice diet, and lived in crowded squalor, so that they could hoard their savings to send them out of the country. The very real issue of poverty amongst migrants—exacerbated by income inequality—did not factor into the dominant analysis. The issue was framed in as a racialized polarity, in which white people’s standard of living threatened to plummet to the subsistence level—the level at which Chinese migrant workers were forced to scrape by.

Even if Chinese men were also supporting families in China,\textsuperscript{17} this rarely entered into the discussion in a meaningful way, as Chinese workers were generally construed alternately as penny-pinching, or as squandering money on vices like gambling, opium, prostitution, or “heathen” religious rites. According to dominant racial discourse, white workers were naturally more entitled to jobs, and were also better workers who should earn higher salaries, because they did better quality work, and so represented a worthwhile investment the racial national community. As in Canada, when Chinese

\textsuperscript{16}Dameron had stated that Chinese workers “are willing to work more hours and live on less, live on what a white laborer would starve on, the white man being a flesh eating animal” (351). As Lake and Reynolds explain, the supposed distinction between “meat-eating men” and “rice-eating men” was a racialized concept used to bolster race-specific policies of immigration restriction.

\textsuperscript{17}And if there were not many Chinese women in North America, part of the reason was hostile immigration laws, which stressed the possibility that Chinese would “die out” without the “natural increase” of reproduction, if migration was limited, especially the migration of women—with their dangerous reproductive capacity. And as Backhouse explains, white women, by contrast to Chinese women, were considered the “guardians/keepers of the race”. Like domesticity and maintaining cleanliness and moral purity, it was women’s responsibility to breed more able-bodied and upstanding white citizens. For more, see: Backhouse, Constance. "The White Women’s Labor Laws: Anti-Chinese Racism in Early Twentieth-Century Canada." Law and History Review 14, no. 2 (1996): 315-68.
migrants attempted to be part of the national community by participating in cultural events and claiming citizenship rights they were rebuked, sometimes violently. In fact, as John F. Swift testified to the Royal Commission: “[t]his prejudice has grown. It is ten times as strong as it was ten years ago. In 1852 the Chinamen were allowed to turn out and celebrate the fourth of July and it was considered a happy thing; in 1862 they would have been mobbed; in 1872 they would have been burned at the stake... this doctrine is so much heard of, that it takes the bread out of the mouths of workingmen” (339).

In this vein, one farmer, John Mellon, argued before the Commission that white child labor was better for society than Chinese labor: “[m]oney earned by white boys and girls...stays right here and goes to the support of smaller brothers and sisters, and the support of their fathers and mothers. I think they should have the preference" (240). White workers also ostensibly represented an investment in high quality goods for American consumers. Frank Muther, a cigar-maker in San Francisco, testified before the Royal Commission that Chinese workers were unclean in factories and produced shoddy goods, and thus "Chinese cheap labor does not benefit the consumer...Such tobacco as white men throw away, the Chinamen pick up and work up, and they put it in the market", including remnants, such as "cigar-stumps" and "mouldy, [sic] rotten" tobacco that "a white shop throws away" (242).
John Mellon also echoed this notion of white dependability: "[w]e pay less to the Chinese, but I think white labor is cheaper in the end. We get more work out of white men, and can put more reliance in them", whereas he argued, "I cannot trust [Chinese workers] to do anything unless a white man is right there with them" (240). Mellon added, in preference for child labor, that "[o]ur boys and girls are really as good as they are, if not better...they being more intelligent, and can be obtained cheaper. I had a boy, from the city, about twelve or fourteen years old...I would not give that boy for any Chinaman" (240).

John F. Swift even testified that “[t]he influx of the Chinese had a worse effect upon the respectability and dignity of labor than slavery had in the south. There is a stronger feeling here against the Chinese than there is in the south against the negroes” (339). In fact, he added, “I would rather have negro slavery to-day, for at least the negroes are born in the country and at least take an interest in it” (339). Predictably, Henry George agreed, opining that “[t]he influx of Chinese has tended to degrade the dignity of labor, and its ultimate effect are precisely the same upon the [working classes of the] white race as slavery” (237). John Swift went on to acknowledge that “[i]n the absence of Chinese immigration our manufactures would undoubtedly be set back, because we base our community here upon Chinese labor, and the transition from that back to a sound basis of homogenous labor and a homogenous society would of course be difficult” (339). But he clearly saw this as a worthwhile sacrifice for the redemption of
white workers and the recuperation of the “respectability and dignity of labor”. The farmer, John Mellon, also agreed, stating that "white men dislike to work alongside of Chinamen; they think it degrading [to] their labor" (240).

So it was not the similarity between *Chinese indentureship* and slave labor that concerned racial nationalists, but rather, the supposed way in which the presence of Chinese workers debased *white labor*, and rendered it slave-like. The question of Chinese work and immigration was frequently framed in terms of preserving masculine honor, dignity, and moral standards, which went hand-in-hand with national pride. As Reverend Samuel V. Blackeslee, Orthodox Congregational minister, acting editor of *The Pacific*, and a resident in the state since 1849, testified before the Commission that: "[i]f the Chinese were restricted so that no more should come, and then allow those who are here to gradual go away, there would be more and more call for white labor, and white labor would be reputable" (349). Rev. Blackeslee also argued that “[t]heir presence here excludes a large white population, and is exceedingly demoralizing to the present white population. It renders labor contemptible. The work of Christianizing them does not begin to equal the power of demoralization and unchristianizing [sic] influences affecting our population” (348). And it was not just white men and boys, but also white women and girls that Chinese workers apparently drove to debasement, desperation, and vice. As John Mellon testified, “[t]here are instances where poverty has stricken a family which was once affluent, where the girls—after seeking employment in a factory,
or at a laundry, or dressmaking, or millinery, and been told 'I don't want you, I have got Chinamen,'—have become prostitutes and steal" (240).

**Race, Gender, and Sexuality**

The association between Chinese workers and particular industries, such as cigar-rolling, garment-making, and laundry was so prevalent that these images even bled into consumer culture and product advertising. A brightly colored U.S. advertisement from 1886, a year after Canada's *Chinese Immigration Act* and first head tax laws were passed, used the motif of Chinese exclusion to advertise "Magic Washer" laundry detergent (Fig. 3.3). In the image, a grinning, startlingly strawberry blond, Uncle Sam kicks a Chinese man over a cliff, as he holds aloft a proclamation reading, "to all whom it may concern[,] hereafter no family will be without Magic Washer[,] under penalty of being dirty". In his other hand, Sam holds a can of soap, which reads: "Magic Washer beats everything". Apparently Magic Washer also beat Chinese labor, and the scowling Chinese man joins his previously-kicked compatriots, who tumble and run from American soil, towards the Pacific Ocean—and the distant homeland where they ostensibly belonged. The text below Uncle Sam reads: "The Chinese must go", "We have no use for them since we got this wonderful Washer: What a blessing to tired mothers; It costs so little and doesn't injure the clothes". This corroborates the claim at
the top of the ad that, even with "constant use", the magical "Liquid Washing Compound" "will not injure the clothes nor turn them yellow."

Thus, the motif of Chinese exclusion outgrew its political roots to bleed into consumer culture, where it was exploited to sell goods. Offering a cost-effective reprieve to “tired mothers”, the ad harnessed conventional gender roles as well as racial stereotypes, exhorting America's white women to perform a national duty, as well as a domestic one. In the ad, a wash-bin and stream of water round out this dual depiction of "cleansing": at once domestic and ethnic. Ignoring the fact that washing clothes wouldn't make tired mothers any less tired, the presence of these other tools of cleansing hints at women's generally unpaid domestic labor, and the class divisions between women who could afford to pay others to wash their families' clothes and those who laundered the clothing of others for a living. Even more strikingly, all of these cleansing implements—combined with the text, “Don't use this if you want to be dirty”—implicitly rely upon the racial stereotype of Chinese people as dirty. Within Parliamentary discussions and popular visual culture, Chinatowns were frequently portrayed as places rife with squalor, filth, and disease.\(^\text{18}\) As Woodsworth argues of Chinese in Strangers Within Our Gates, “these people live in the most insanitary squalor,” yet he also believes they

managed to “escape many of the diseases with which those more scrupulous are smitten”.¹⁹

These constructions of Chinese uncleanliness had long been prominent racist stereotypes. An 1878 cartoon from *The Wasp*, "Uncle Sam’s Thanksgiving Dinner", shows a Chinese man about to devour a rat, as the white men next to him gag in disgust (Fig. 3.4). And a 1907 Canadian cartoon from the *B.C. Saturday Sunset* essentially likens Chinese people to rats, showing in one frame, a clean and orderly abode: the “typical home of [a] Vancouver white workingman”—contrasted with "a warren on Carrall Street infested by 2000 Chinese" (Fig. 3.5, emphasis mine). We see one Chinese man smoking opium, as another bunks above him, a suggestion of crowding and squalor. So the “Magic Washer” ad reinforces the notion of Chinese as metaphorically polluting the body politic, as well as physically dirty...and uses these racial stereotypes to sell laundry detergent. In addition to harnessing widespread anti-Chinese sentiment, the image also exploited a Victorian and Progressive era obsession with filth and contagion, in which cleanliness was believed to correlate with moral purity and virtue. In the context or overcrowding and urban poverty, cleanliness was also seen as a social, as well as a spiritual duty, because “dirt” was associated with disease and decay. Yet it was also

¹⁹ Woodsworth attributes this to tea-drinking, arguing that Chinese people “seldom drink raw water, and it is believed that this prevents the taking of those diseases which are communicated by the use of impure water” (147). His text betrays both a derision for and fascination with these Chinese.
racialized, for as Constance Backhouse explains, “[t]he very vocabulary of social
reformers, who incessantly equated 'whiteness' with 'cleanliness' and 'purity,'
contributed to racial prejudice against non-whites. The Chinese and blacks were singled
out as the two most widely feared groups of immigrants” in Canada (1996: 335).

Given dominant gender roles, cleaning was viewed as “women's work”—which, like the
work of Chinese migrants, was considered “cheap”—when it was considered “work” at
all. In this vein, workplaces such as laundries were seen as dangerous sites of interracial
contact between white women and Chinese men. The labor of washing other people's
clothing was considered to be beneath healthy, able bodied, white men, not to mention
that it was poorly-paid. However, this labor was deemed suitable for “the weaker sex”
and “inferior races”. But as a result, the thought of Chinese men employing white
women, or working side by side with them, sent shivers of moral panic throughout the
ranks of Anglo-North America. And as with Asian migration, this horrifying specter of
interracial contact required the passage of laws to curtail it.

As legal historian Constance Backhouse explains in her article, “The White Women's
Labor Laws: Anti-Chinese Racism in Early Twentieth-Century Canada” (1996), in 1912,
the province of Saskatchewan passed a statute to limit limited workplace interactions
between Chinese men and white women. The statute, with the "innocuous, racially
neutral title" of "An Act to Prevent the Employment of Female Labour in Certain
Capacities” read, “in ponderous prose”: “[n]o person shall employ in any capacity any white woman or girl or permit any white woman or girl to reside or lodge in or to work in or, save as a bona fide customer in a public apartment thereof only, to frequent any restaurant, laundry or other place of business or amusement owned, kept or managed by any Japanese, Chinaman or other Oriental person” (326-7).20

And at the national level women, and questions of gender, figured prominently in discussions of Chinese migration, both symbolically and pragmatically. In dominant representations, Chinese men were presented as opium-peddling sexual deviants, who would stealthily prey on unsuspecting white women. So ironically, a laundry, a social and work space dedicated to cleaning, was imagined to be a place of possible contagion and soiling. For in addition to the fears that they would undercut “white labor”21, Chinese men might morally, as well as physically, soil the imagined community and its vulnerable white women. Peter Ward's first chapter “John Chinaman” provides an excellent discussion of the origins and nature of Anti-Asian stereotypes in the Pacific Northwest. Among stereotypical conceptions of Chinese immigrants was not only the belief that they were dirty, smelly, and disease-ridden, but also immoral—at once

20 Backhouse suggests that “other Oriental person” likely refers to people from the Indian subcontinent. I agree with her assessment, given that Canada also passed immigration restriction policies targeting migrants from India, and that migrants from India, Japan, and China were frequently conflated under the rubric of the “Asian menace” or “Oriental problem”.

21 And of course, they were also seen as economically threatening because they would work for less than whites, and also threatening to Canada's appeal for white immigrants, who a Chinese presence would ostensibly deter from migrating (4-11).
opium fiends and peddlers—and also corrupt gamblers, criminals, devious, and dishonest (4-11). While black men were also presented as sexual threats to white women, the exact character of this threat was also subject to prevailing racial stereotype—black men were presumed to be savages, lacking in judgment and self-control, who simply acted on their primal animal urge to ravage white women. Conversely, Chinese men were seen as sneaky, stealthy, and seductive, lowering white women’s defenses in deft and calculated fashion until the unsuspecting women found themselves trapped in a lascivious interracial embrace.

Racial stereotypes of Chinese were also themselves gendered. Ward notes that it was a common assumption during the 1870s and 1880s that all Chinese women were prostitutes (8). David C. Woods, Superintendent of the Industrial School (presumably in California) argued before the Commission: “[t]he Chinese are a curse to this community, both morally and physically. Physically they introduce venereal disease among the boys...[who] have invariably got [sic] the disease from Chinese prostitutes" (354). Rev. Blackeslee explained that “[o]ur boys, to a great extent, like to wander through the streets where the Chinese are”, and goes on to claim not only that “Chinese women

22 Constance Backhouse corroborates the character of these stereotypes, writing: "[r]acist stereotypes prevailing in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada depicted Chinese men as addicts of opium and inveterate gamblers, subject to ‘loathsome diseases and ‘demoralizing habits.’ The Moose Jaw Evening Times described the Chinese as a ‘stagnant race’ and a ‘sterile and barren’ people, warning readers of the ‘moral and intellectual decadence’ posed by ‘the Yellow Peril.’” (Backhouse, 1996: 333).
entice boys...into their houses”, but that “[t]he police of Sacramento frequently find boys eight years old in bed with Chinese prostitutes” (349). And as Superintendent Woods went on to explain, “[t]he boys being inoculated with the disease, it extends to the white girls, also” (354). Similarly, fears abounded that all Chinese men sought to “enslave a white woman with the poppy and then defile her with his own embraces or prostitute her to his countrymen” (Backhouse, 1996: 9). Existing public hysteria was compounded by sensationalist images of white women with Chinese men in opium dens, which circulated in popular culture.

**Gender, Class, and Women’s Groups’ Debates about Chinese Migration**

White women were not only symbolically invoked as the innocent victims of Chinese predations, or as a metaphor for national vulnerability. Rather, as Constance Backhouse explains, women and women’s groups were politically active in debates about the so-called “Oriental problem”, and at times called for immigration restriction themselves. White women participated in debates about race and nation, and like white men, invoked myriad arguments in favor of their positions. Some women’s groups called for state intervention to curtail migration from the darker-skinned world, and to regulate social contact. Not only were Chinese migrants framed as a threat to Canada’s vulnerable white women from exploitation, but stories abounded about the mistreatment of women and girls in China.
The specter of overpopulation was a constant theme in discourses about immigration, and Chinese migrants were often shown as animals attacking North America—as swarms of stinging bees, menacing sea monsters, or hungry pigs ravaging crops. The migrants were also sometimes presented as a dangerous force of nature, such as a tidal wave or flood. These dehumanizing visual metaphors heightened a sense of racial difference and reinforced popular fears that white Anglo-Americans might be “overrun” or rendered “extinct.” Frank Pixley rhetorically asked the Commission "why do we treasure our girls, and why do they murder theirs? Because they have so many they cannot feed them. Why do our parents die for their children, while they sell theirs for whores? I think it is the necessity and poverty of the lower class that compels the woman to sell her child" (256).

As Constance Backhouse explains in “The White Women’s Labor Laws” (1996), foot-binding and child brides were also frequently cited as evidence of Chinese barbarity, and “[t]he National Council of Women of Canada demanded at the turn of the century that 'conscientious citizens should...drive out foreign importations like white slavery and oriental concubinage which, by their example, seduced Canadians away from higher Anglo-Saxon standard'” (333-334). Similarly, later “[i]n 1912, the National Council of Women of Canada called for the revision of Canadian immigration policy 'to exclude all members of the 'yellow race’” (141). Even those who supported the Chinese Canadians
insisted upon their cultural assimilation” (335). For instance, “M. M. C. Lavell, a woman who wrote in 1908 about the work of the Methodist Women's Missionary Society in the 'Oriental' missions in British Columbia, cautioned: ‘While the tide of immigration sweeps over the land, it must be met with earnest effort, its course directed, the impurities and wreckage of centuries of superstition and error removed, lest at flood it cover the land with loathsome infection and impregnate the soil with the poison of evil custom and degraded habit’” (333-335).

Yet debates about the issue of immigration restriction and the head tax issue were not simply a straightforward question of racial exclusion, but rather were also a contested ground of competing class and economic interests. For while “[o]rganizations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, local Councils of Women, and the Women's Canadian Clubs fretted over the immigrant 'menace' (334-5)”, other white women saw the same phenomenon as a viable “solution to the 'servant problem'” resulting from a shortage of workers willing to do domestic labor for low wages (Backhouse, 1996: 334). As Backhouse explains, some affluent white women argued to reduce the head tax. Interestingly, like working class critics of Chinese migration, wealthy women also cited the importance and preservation of family values and domesticity to argue for their converse position. The [Imperial Order of] Daughters of the Empire circulated a petition favoring a reduced head-tax for Chinese immigrants who became domestic servants (334, citing: Roy). Similarly, “‘Gwen’, the Vancouver author of a weekly column for
women, took up the same campaign in 1905: 'Why should we women be forced to give up our homes, why should we be forced to neglect our children, our sewing and our requisite rest and recreation because we cannot afford the high wages demanded by Chinese since the imposition of the $500 tax?" (334)

These wealthy white women defended Chinese migrants not from an anti-racist or humanistic perspective, but from the self-interest associated with their class position. And their critics responded in these terms as well, arguing based on the perceived interests of Canada's white working class against the elite position of those who could afford to hire servants. As Backhouse explains, “[t]he response of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council was quick and scathing: 'It is, we think, absurd that the working class of Canada should run the risk of having its standard of living degraded to the level of a Chinese coolie merely to gratify the whim of an aristocratic lady for a Chinese servant'" (334, citing Creese).

But of course, immigration restriction laws—or a "degraded" standard living, and the sort of brutal economic exploitation endured by indentured Chinese migrants, struggling to pay off the hefty head tax—were not the only options for white workers in Anglo-North America. In an unrealized third possibility, white workers could have chosen to band with their “brown brothers”, to form interracial working class solidarities, and demand a set minimum wages and workplace standards for all workers, regardless of
race. Yet rather than creating interracial unions, white workers, preferred to position themselves within a constructed legacy of whiteness, and to conceive of their situation as fundamentally different from that facing their darker-skinned fellow workers.

Appealing to the strength of popular racism, and its ability to cleave the working class, was a brilliant strategy on the part of “Magic Washer” laundry soap and other goods vying for the dollars of working-class whites: to offer individual, private, consumerist solutions as an antidote to structural problems of social stratification and uneven distribution of resources. Through presenting cleanliness and domesticity as a national, even a racial duty, the advertisement subtly elides the irony of exhorting workers to buy this product. Reifying the division of the working class on the basis of the arbitrary distinction of skin color, the ad presents Chinese workers as alien competitors, and anything other than potential allies. As in other dominant discourse, subversive alternate readings are drowned out by the ad’s viciously anti-Chinese imagery, which dovetailed perfectly with popular anti-Chinese stereotypes and white workers' perceived self-interest. What is more, elite corporate stakeholders cleverly fanned the flames of popular anti-Chinese sentiment by hiring Chinese workers as strike-breakers successfully ensuring that the working class remained divided on the basis of race, rather than unified on the basis of class interests.
Because of the strength of anti-Chinese sentiment and stereotype, the absurdity of positing a capitalistic, product-based solution to a social and economic issue of labor—and union workers' real, if misdirected, fears of losing their tenuous gains—gets utterly lost, buried under the weight of racial ideology. But of course, anti-Chinese racism was not imposed from the top economic strata downwards—white workers themselves actively created and perpetuated these racial stereotypes, and championed exclusion laws. It was primarily the demands of white workers that gave rise to the Royal Commission, and later to the exclusion laws that followed. While many critiques of anti-Chinese racism and exclusion laws also emerged through the Commission hearings, no critic framed a counter-argument in terms of a working class racial utopia. The thought of interracial unions, organized more on the basis of shared economic circumstances than shared skin color, must have seemed unthinkable.

**Anti-Racism and Critical Readings of Chinese Exclusion**

But not all white men and women in Anglo-North American saw Chinese immigration in the same terms. In fact, critical and anti-racist perspectives also emerged in the Commission, Parliamentary debates, and popular culture. For instance, an 1882 political cartoon from *Puck* (New York), which ran the same year as the image of the multi-armed Chinese man, presented a very different perspective on questions of immigration and labor (Fig. 3.6). Titled "The Anti-Chinese Wall", the image depicts America’s working
classes building a wall to keep out prevent Chinese migration. Across the water, we can see Chinese men destroying a wall and sailing over to America, as Americans in turn erect their own anti-immigration wall. The assortment of mostly ethnic whites, led by an Irishman and one black man, heft large blocks bearing words and phrase, such as "law against race", "fear", "competition", and "jealousy." The wall-builders themselves are all drawn in somewhat unflattering racial and ethnic caricatures—perhaps a suggestion of their own supposed undesirability or recent and tenuous conclusion. Accordingly, other blocks have already been built into the high wall: including one reading “un-American”, and have been cemented in place with “Congressional Mortar.” For 1882 was the year when the United States Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned migration from China for ten years, and mandated in legal “mortar” that: “hereafter no State court or court of the United States shall admit Chinese to citizenship; and all laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed” (Section 14).

Thus the 1882 image derides the passage of this law as hypocritical, un-American, and based upon fear and prejudice. The image also draws a parallel between the prejudice faced by ethnic white immigrants and darker-skinned peoples in the United States, and that suffered by Chinese migrants. Another 1882 political cartoon from Harper's Weekly makes this connection more explicit (Fig. 3.7). This cartoon, "Which Color is to be Tabooed Next?", features an imagined conversation between "Pat" (Irish) and "Fritz" (German). As the two men sit, smoking and drinking, Fritz asks Pat: "[i]f the Yankee
Congress can keep the yellow man out, what is to hinder them from calling us green and keeping us out too?" Above the men, the text "The NEW Declaration of 'In Dependence'" is followed by explicit textual references to the Exclusion Act. This cartoon is deeply critical of the Congressional Act, and links the plight of Chinese migrants with that previously faced by ethnic white migrants, especially “green” Irish. Through positing a new Declaration of “In Dependence”, the image comments upon the vulnerability of all workers to potentially having their Constitutional rights arbitrarily revoked, at the whim of Congress and popular prejudice. The image condemns laws that render “rights” virtually meaningless. Civil rights were not something universal and irrevocable, but rather contingent and transient, dependent on various factors—as we have seen with the treatment of racialized or ethnicized people in North America and the British Empire.

So in the United States, as in Canada, the occasion of a government action to formalize Chinese exclusion through law also gave rise to competing conceptions of whiteness, masculinity, and Christianity, which put divergent definitions of national values and meaning in center stage, to be weighed by elected officials and the public. Unlike the Canadian law, the American law made no exceptions and drew no distinction between “skilled” and “unskilled” Chinese laborers. As “expert” Frank M. Pixley advised the Royal Commission: “[t]here are Chinese merchants, but no bankers that I know of. I think it would be good policy on the part of the government to discourage them, not restrict
them” (1885:256). And Canadians did exactly that, taxing migrants who chose to come to Canada at great profit to the state—which also benefited from workers’ virtually indentured labor on the national railroad.

But the 1885 Royal Commission, like America's 1882 law, also revealed deep fractures and tensions in Anglo-North American society around the intersections of class and ethnicity, as various groups espoused competing national visions in both imagined communities. As I argue in chapter One, exclusionary immigration laws help consolidate a sense of whiteness and belonging, by highlighting outsiders’ otherness, which somewhat ameliorated the divisions between white people on the basis of class and ethnicity. But social cleavages stubbornly remained—and debates about Chinese exclusion provided an opportunity for Anglo-North Americans to articulate competing national values and class interests.

While the Commission provided a pulpit for vocal racists, it also provided the opportunity for progressive white critics of exclusion laws and anti-Chinese racism to defend Chinese migrants, including religious leaders, many of whom denounced exclusion as un-Christian, even as their bigoted compatriots decried Chinese
“heathenism”. 23 For instance, one Methodist minister argued against claims of Chinese inassimilability, stating: “[i]t is objected that the Chinese do not learn our language, and do not attend our schools. The fact is they are taxed to support our schools, but are peremptorily refused admission to their privileges on account of race prejudice” (264). Similarly, Reverend Otis Gibson, “in charge of the missions of the Methodist Church, here for eight years, and formerly a resident of China for ten years” argued, counter to the conception of Chinese women as “lewd”—that many women were the victims of exploitation or manipulation—brought against their will, for the purposes of prostitution, or forced into sex work once in North America by the need to pay off their costly passage and entry fees. 24 He also astutely added that “[t]he charge that Chinese prostitutes are demoralizing our boys, if true to any extent[,] is a sad comment upon our boasted superiority” (265).

23 And some religious leaders had an even more complicated position, defending unrestricted migration from China even as they simultaneously decried Chinese heathenism. For instance, The Hon. Mr. Wark argued in an 1886 Senate Debate that restriction laws were unnecessary and that more Chinese migrants were leaving than entering, but it was “too bad” that “they are both coming and going as heathens” as it would be much better to convert them to Christianity, especially since “[w]e send missionaries all the way to China for this purpose, but when the Chinese come to our shores, we treat them as dogs” (748). He argued that while the Chinese treated North Americans in China fairly well, “[n]ow when those people come to our country we subject them to treatment that ought not be extended to any human creature” (749). Similarly, the Hon. Mr. O’Donohoe argued in the Debate that “We know as a fact that from Europe and America[,] armies of missionaries are sent out to the east to convert these people, and yet when the Chinese attempt to come under the genial influence of Christianity and civilization, they are told ‘You cannot come here; we will spend our money, we will send you missionaries to convert you, but we will not let you come under the British flag and the influence of the gospel in our land; we will keep you out’. The policy, in my opinion, is a wrong one on principle. It is one that would not be tolerated in any part of Europe” (Senate Debates, 4th Session, 5th Parliament, 1886: 685).

24 Moreover, as Giles H. Gray, Surveyor of the Port, explained, most of the Chinese women who had come since the passage of new regulations were “respectable women” (260). Gray also testified before the Commission that: “[t]he authorities at Hong Kong are exercising diligence now in preventing prostitutes from coming” and also that “[h]e always had the sympathy of the Chinese merchants in stopping the immigration of prostitutes. They did all they could to help us” (261).
What is more, in his testimony, Gibson drew critical connections between immigration from China and Europe, stating: “I am not in favor of a large and rapid influx of immigration from any foreign country whatever. At times it has been too rapid for the best interests of the country. I believe that a large portion of the European immigration so rapidly admitted to citizenship and all the right of suffrage is more dangerous to the institutions and prosperity of this country than is the smaller and better regulated immigration from Asia” (263). He also added "[m]any of the Chinese are learning part of our language" (264), and that "[i]t may be safely said that we have no other foreign immigration that, with so little encouragement, makes equal efforts to learn our language, laws and customs" (264).

The Commission Report was an important historical and political text, the findings of which mattered—even if they were surely interpreted selectively, based on commentators’ existing political position. Of course, the Macdonald government decided to pass exclusion laws, so arguments in favor of the migrants were not compelling enough to trump dominant political and economic interests. Nonetheless, the white views of Chinese migrants presented in the Report were rich and pluralistic, and this document continued to be relevant after the hearings were concluded.

A year following the hearings, the Hon. Mr. O’Donohoe referred to the report in a Senate Debate over additional exclusion measures, noting: "[t]here we find the opinions
of the persons best qualified to judge—men of position, men of the legislature of San Francisco, having a knowledge of this question, of all others the best and most ample—what do we hear them say? 'We say that these are thrifty, honest, industrious people'. That is what they say of the Chinese” (Sessional Papers, vol. 11, 3rd Session of the 5th Parliament, 1885:685). He goes on to ask whether these laudable traits are “characteristic of a people that are not desirable in a country like ours? It seems to me not...They are industrious and thrifty. Very often they are disturbed and molested, their houses are broken into and robbed, and a hundred other offences [sic] committed against them—none by them against those who commit those offences. We should hesitate before passing [further exclusion] measure[s]” (685).

As Lily Cho argues in her article, “Rereading Chinese Head Tax Racism: Redress, Stereotype, and Antiracist Critical Practice” (2002), “little attention has been paid to the way in which the 1885 report constructed the Chinese immigrant as not only a hardworking 'living machine' but also an idealized subject of ancient Oriental traditions. The report went out of its way to portray the Chinese immigrant as cultured” (lxix). And it is true that many of the expert witnesses mentioned Confucius and Chinese philosophy, history, and culture, even as others derided Chinese traditions and claimed that only Europe and its spawn had something of value to offer humanity. But it becomes clear through reading the report that class and ethnicity played a large role in ascertaining witnesses’ positions on the subject of Chinese immigration. As Cho goes on
to argue, “[t]hroughout the report and the presentation of the evidence to the House of Commons, the commissioners consistently made an appeal to enlightened liberal humanism and identified anti-Chinese sentiment with the lower and working classes” (66).

Cho also argues that “[c]onnecting the Canadian national project with that of a larger one of British imperialism, the report produced a binary in which being anti-Chinese meant being unenlightened and cowardly” (66). Although in many ways the white-Chinese binary prevailed, we can still glimpse how complex and layered ideas of race and nation actually were. Interestingly, the Commissioners called into question their white witnesses’ manliness and prowess after hearing their testimony—even as they themselves reinforced dominant race and gender hierarchies. Cho explains that “[f]ollowing the liberal humanist rhetoric of inclusion and equality, the commissioners wrote that 'It is something strange to hear the strong broad-shouldered superior race, superior physically and mentally, sprung from the highest types of the old and the new world, expressing a fear of competition with a small, inferior and comparatively speaking, feminine race.’” (Cho: 66). It is debatable how “humanistic” this discourse ultimately proved to be, but this shaming could also have been a rhetorical strategy to promote Chinese immigration by undermining detractors. So many vested personal and political issues surrounded the question, that it is hard to know whether to interpret such statements at face value.
Pro-Chinese Arguments for Open Immigration

In any case, Cho is undoubtedly correct in identifying the importance of class in the Commission Report. For even in their opposition to anti-Chinese xenophobes, some white men articulated a superior version of white masculinity and civilization, framing themselves as the possessors of elite knowledge of Chinese behavior and comportment: knowledge which their working class and ethnic white compatriots could not possibly understand, consumed as they were by fear and insecurity. As an elite American, Solomon Heydenfeldt, argued: “I find Chinamen employed everywhere where I have been on this coast. As domestic servants, I have heard nothing to their disadvantage. As far as concerns their industry, and frugality, and fidelity, and general intelligence, and their cleanliness, I think those who have been in the habit of employing them and know something about them place them above the corresponding class of other people” (285, emphasis mine).

Heydenfeldt, “a California resident for twenty-seven years, and at one time Associate Justice of the Supreme Court”, went on to argue that “California owes its prosperity very much indeed to the industry of the Chinese who have come to this country. Their advent here has conduced [sic] to bring white people, giving them homes and employment. The Southern Pacific Railway would not have been built but for the
Chinese. I think they are the best laboring classes we have among us” (285). Heydenfeldt added that, in addition to railway construction, Chinese workers had reclaimed extensive tracts of swampland, "a hazardous thing to undertake", which "[c]apital was rather diffident in taking hold of" (285). He added, "I do not think there is any surplus labor in the state; there is employment enough for everybody" (285), and that, while "[u]nrestricted immigration of any sort is not desirable. Unlimited immigration of the Chinese would not, I think, have any bad effect upon the morals of the people. The Chinese, who are an imitative and progressive race and learn very rapidly, would conform themselves to our habits, our views, and our ideas. They would adopt our civilization instead of dragging us into a semi-barbarous civilization” (286, emphasis mine).

But Heydenfelt’s defense of Chinese migrants, and his dismissal of their detractors, failed to meaningfully challenge prevailing racial stereotypes. Heydenfeldt’s critique is less one of radical anti-racism or enlightened humanism than of elite privilege, and the reflection of very different economic and political interests from those of the working class. He invoked his position as a member of the elite who could afford to employ Chinese workers, and thus, who could see the truth from a secure position, unlike the white working class, evidently blinded by fear and self-interest. What is more, Heydenfeldt went on to blame politicians and ethnic white immigrants for the prevalence of anti-Chinese sentiment, stating: “[i]n my opinion, there is no prejudice
against the Chinese on the part of native-born Americans, unless it is politicians—probably office seekers. I believe the great prejudice against them originates among the foreign-born citizens. I think it is confined to a class" (286, emphasis mine). In fact, he added of the Chinese, "I think their general intelligence is greater than that of Americans in the same corresponding class" (286).

Heydenfeldt went on to explain that he had opposed the abolition of slavery (286), making it clear that he was not a crusader for racial equality. Yet he also argued that "European families are not a particle better than the people who come from China. The Chinese are equal in all respects, in civilization and morals, to the negroes and European immigrants" (286). Similarly, Heydenfelt did “not see why the franchise should not be given to the Chinese. I think they would make very valuable citizens, and if they had a chance they would very soon acquire our language and become identified with us” (286). And similarly, “[i]f the Chinese were allowed to vote, a great many whites, probably, would coalesce with Chinese who now avoid them” (286). He even added, subversively, that Chinese migrants “understand substantially the first element of our institutions, that all men are equal before the law” (286). In a further argument for social equality, Heydenfeldt stated that he did “not see why the Chinese should not intermarry. I think Chinamen would make better husbands than usually fall to the lot of our poor girls” (286). Secure in his position of elite, white, masculinity, Heydenfeldt no doubt enraged both working class and/or ethnic white exclusion advocates by espousing
a position many found threatening to their tenuous gains in wages and social status, as they had only recently been granted access to the coveted mantle of whiteness.

Other elite American advocates of Chinese migration called to testify before the Commission also defended the Chinese on the basis of their valuable labor, and contributions to the wealth of California and the nation—as well as on the basis of their morality, and good behavior. Alfred Wheeler, an attorney-at-law, and also a California resident for 27 years, stated that he has "been engaged in farming and mining" and owns "several thousand acres of land". Like Heydenfeldt, he too argued that the presence of Chinese migrants was a boon to working class Americans, stating: “I think that the immigration of the Chinese has been vastly beneficial to the growth of California, and it is greatly beneficial to every white man, woman and child in the state” (287).

Wheeler elaborates on the contributions of Chinese workers, testifying that “[t]he white laborer is able to get everything he buys cheaper to-day because the Chinese are here; and every many who lives in the state would have to pay twice as much for living if we had no Chinese...In fact the white laborer of California has got the most blessed spot in the Union in which to live, and live well and cheaply” (288). He also spoke highly of the comportment of Chinese migrants, stating: “[a]s to their general morality and behavior I have found them a pacif[ist]ic, mild, and gentle people. Those who have been in my
employ as domestic servants I have always found extremely subordinate and respectful, quiet, attentive, and rather avoiding difficulties than seeking them.” Though unlike Heydenfeldt, he appears to oppose intermarriage and cultural assimilation, arguing that while the “homogeneity of the two races” is not possible, the Chinese are nevertheless an “industrious, hard-working people...expert, ingenious, and capable men in all the branches of business in which they are placed” and thus, Chinese immigration is beneficial to the “industries, prosperity and wealth of the country” (288).

Like Wheeler, William F. Babcock, a California merchant, saw Chinese migrants as fundamentally distinct from whites, yet as an economic boon. Babcock testified that he did not think that Chinese migrants should vote, but that “[i]n a new country cheap labor is absolutely necessary” and that “[o]n the advancement of California, the effect of Chinese labor has been beneficial and has added materially to our wealth” (13). Arguing against the stereotype that Chinese migrants only horde or export their earnings, Babcock argued that “[t]he Chinese spend on an average twenty-five cents a day, perhaps nine hundred thousand or a million of dollars a month among us” (13). What was more, Babcock did not see employment opportunities as limited, arguing instead that “[l]abor begets labor”, and that Chinese migrants “have [not] been a bar to white

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25 Wheeler goes on to add that Chinese migrants “are conscious of the prejudice existing against them. The children of the community are disposed to pelt them with stones, and they avoid the opportunity. I never saw them provoke anyone” (288).

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immigration from the East. The stirring feeling against them arises from politicians, office-holders and foreigners. There is no real competition or conflict between Chinese and white labor” (13). On the contrary, Babcock argued that “[t]he building of railways down in the valleys of California has opened the country, settled it and drawn a white immigration to the coast” (13). He argued that giving Chinese the vote was unnecessary because “[t]he Chinese do not want to meddle with our politics; they are the most quiet, industrious and best people I ever saw” (14). Even while arguing against the franchise, he made a gesture towards future anti-racism and historical hindsight, arguing that “[a] hundred years hence, when our descendants are living in California they will, marking what Chinese labor has done for this country, smile in derision at their ancestors' views on this question” (14).

Yet another elite, twenty-seven year resident of California, Joseph A. Coolidge, Secretary of Merchants Exchange, also spoke highly of the comportment of Chinese immigrants, arguing that they were "industrious and frugal, and unassuming in their demeanor" (283). His emphasis on the deference of Chinese migrants echoed the statements of other elite white witnesses—many of whom complained of the noisiness, unruliness, and drunkenness, of some members of the white working class. This included ethnic whites, whose debauchery, “ruffianly” behavior, and “hoodlumism” elite witnesses contrasted with the ostensible calm, sobriety, and quiet obedience exhibited by Chinese migrants. Thus, in the testimony of elite white Americans, the defense of civil rights and
freedom of movement for Chinese workers was often accompanied by the corresponding disparagement of white working classes. As Coolidge goes on to argue, conceptions of Chinese as criminal were largely the result of racial discrimination than any real testament to their behavior: “[t]hrough the prejudice that exists against them many are arrested for crimes which, if committed by what is called a white man, would pass unnoticed; and our court records show a larger proportion of Chinese arrests than if the laws were impartially executed” (283-4, emphasis mine).

Of course, Coolidge is correct to point out the unequal, and unfair exercise of the law, but what is perhaps most interesting is his use of the phrase “what is called a white man.” The meaning of this phrase is ambiguous, and it is unclear whether Coolidge is critical of the idea of “race”, in general, or simply the idea that badly-behaved ethnic and working class men could be aptly termed “white” without debasing the term, as many elites clearly believed. In his defense of Chinese migration, it is highly probably that Coolidge is suggesting that his cowardly anti-Chinese opponents did not truly deserve to be described as “white men.” For Coolidge also testified, I have known people of other nationalities who have really not been citizens” (284), and even stated: “I think the hoodlums of this city are of no particular class or nationality—except that they are not Chinese” (285). Rev. Otis Gibson’s testimony also reveals the fact that he saw the category “white” as stratified. Gibson stated that the Chinese were “industrious” and that “[t]here are fewer fights among them than among the lower
Thus, the occasion of the Royal Commission allowed elite whites to articulate a competing, and ostensibly superior vision of white masculinity—revealing significant social cleavages within the ranks of Anglo-North America. And much like the *Harper's Weekly* political cartoon from 1882, Coolidge pointed out the striking parallels between the plight of Chinese migrants, and that previously endured by Irish immigrants before them, arguing “*the same prejudice existed at one time against Irish immigration*, the results of which are before the country” (284, emphasis mine).

In fact, a fascinating 1905 image from *Puck*: "How John may dodge the exclusion act" shows "John Chinaman" disguised in the stereotypical costumes and roles of ethnic white migrants (Fig. 3.8)—to avoid Uncle Sam's swift kick. Identifying the ethnic stereotypes, the U.S. Library of Congress summary of the image states: “Caricature of immigration with 6 scenes of different ways of Chinese trying to enter the U.S.: as anarchist, Irishman, Sicilian, English wife-hunter, or yacht racer”. A kicking boot—often that of Uncle Sam—is a common motif for exclusion laws, as we already saw in the Magic Washer ad. It is unclear whether this image is anti-Chinese or anti-racist. On the one hand, the image hints at the inclusion of ethnic whites, and highlights the presumed impossibility of Chinese assimilation, or, in this case, imitation. On the other hand, it highlights the inclusion of European ethnicities—some groups only relatively recently—and might be pointing out the absurdity of accepting diverse European immigrants (surely European anarchists were not deemed desirable) while singling out Chinese
migrants as threatening and inassimilable. Even the moniker “John Chinaman” reinforced notions of Chinese racial and cultural distance—mocking the idea that a Chinese man could attempt to better integrate in North America simply by adopting an Anglophone Christian name like “John.”

As with their American counterparts, who sided with the editorial position of Harper’s Weekly (and sometimes Puck) cartoons, with their damning critiques of popular racism and Congressional infringements on the Constitutional rights and values enshrined in The Declaration of Independence—some vocal Canadian critics also condemned Chinese exclusion as hypocritical and antithetical to national values. The Canadian Commissioners charged with creating the report also espoused some sentiments similar to those of the elite American experts whose testimony they heard—espousing similarly elite and complicated conceptions of whiteness, masculinity, and civilization. Commissioners acknowledged that “[i]t is a serious step to take, to exclude law-abiding workers from your country”, even as they argued that Chinese migrants do not hold “the commonest sentiments of manliness, not to speak of chivalry” (xii). Like Heydenfeldt, Wheeler, and Coolidge, they also framed working class anti-Chinese sentiment as irrational and shortsighted, identifying a "panic-like state of mind" and "sentiment which had the complexion of terror" (xiii). The Commissioners similarly articulated their critiques in terms of the bigotry of an unenlightened working class,
framing their arguments in terms of superior enlightened liberalism and white masculinity.

In fact, the Commissioners argued that the strength of anti-Chinese hostility could actually serve to create public sympathy for the maligned migrants and ultimately bolster support for Chinese immigration. The Commissioners argued in their opening statements that “[t]he very violence with which the Chinese are assailed creates in many minds a prejudice in their favor and in any case is unworthy of civilized men. To say of men who are marvels of frugality and industry, and—save for the use of opium—temperance, that they are all thieves and scoundrels defeats itself” (xiv). The Commissioners went on to articulate a deeply critical, anti-racist position, arguing: “[t]he truth is that the Chinese are judged by an ideal standard. They do not get the benefit of the doctrine of averages. They are not measured by that charitable rule which justice no less than humanity leads us to apply to all other men. If one Chinaman steals, it is concluded that all are thieves” (xiv). The Commissioners then took this anti-racism even further, suggesting that aggressive xenophobes must themselves be uncivilized; they astutely observed that in the racial nationalist narrative: "not merely are [the Chinese] judged by an unfair standard and painted blacker than they are, [but rather] things innocent in themselves, because different from what we are used to, are in the true spirit of barbarism, treated as badges of degradation" (xiv).
Anti-racism, “National Honor”, and Polarizing Regionalism in Canada

As in the American case, white Canadian Commissioners at times cited a position of elite liberal humanism, which clashed with the defensive racial nationalism of many of their working class contemporaries. In addition to questions of class difference, these competing articulations of whiteness, masculinity, and civilization were also the result of regional tensions. Debates among white men over the question of Chinese migration became even more heated in the Canadian Senate the following year (Senate Debates, 4th Session, 5th Parliament, 1886). In the 1886 Debate, complex regional tensions emerged in discussions about whether to pass further regulations about Chinese migration to Canada. One Senator, Mr. Alexander, admitted: "I do not feel, as a citizen of one of the Eastern Provinces, that I am competent to pronounce an opinion upon this Bill...If my memory is correct, there has been much excitement over the question of Chinese immigration on the Pacific Coast" (686). This was a massive understatement.

In keeping with the animosity of the Pacific Coast, many politicians representing western Canada accused their eastern compatriots of insensitivity to the plight of workers in the west. Eastern political leaders, they argued, could afford to maintain a position of enlightened liberal humanism: they did not have to deal with presence of so many 'inassimilable' Chinese migrants in their midst, and with the corresponding ire of white working class constituents. Thus, displaying appropriate ‘empathy’, Mr.
Alexander went on to state: “[t]he Chinese have nothing in common with us; they do not inter-marry with our people; they work and receive their money, and that money is amassed to be sent back to their own country. Is that a desirable population to have?” (686). He clearly thought not, for he expressed his solidarity with west-coasters, siding with them against other easterners who judged them: “I cannot understand any member of this House for not having a proper regard for the feelings of those who have cast their lot in British Columbia” (686).26

But many other eastern politicians failed to display such “proper regard of feeling”, instead defending Chinese migrants, and condemning the actions of British Colombians as shameful bullying, antithetical to national values. For instance, The Honorable Mr. Donahue spoke highly of the Chinese, arguing that they even measured up to white, British subjects: “[e]ven in sobriety they excel us. We cannot in any country, under the British flag to-day, make such a statement on behalf of the people as has been put forward for the Chinese. There are no drunkards among them...there are no more orderly people in Toronto. You never see them in Police Court; you never see them drunk or disorderly. They are industrious and thrifty” (685).

26 J. S. Woodsworth shared Mr. Alexander’s view of eastern Canadians as unsympathetic to Canadians in the west. He wrote: “When it is considered that the population of British Columbia is only 250,000—not even the population of Toronto—it is not to be wondered at that the people of that province, especially white labor, took alarm at the hordes pouring in by the steamer load. If this were to continue, the millions of the far East would soon swamp the country west of the mountains. If the cities of Montreal and Toronto were to see a thousand Japanese a week landing on their docks, they would probably have more sympathy with the people of the far Canadian West” (142).
Donahue's like-minded colleague, the Honorable Mr. Scott, spoke out even more passionately against the “tyranny” of immigration restriction, condemning regionalism and economic self-interest, in a heated debate with staunchly pro-exclusion Mr. Nelson. Scott argued, embroiled in a bitter and heated debate with Nelson, that “the hon. gentleman had better keep his temper. The little tail that wags over in British Columbia on the Pacific Coast is not going to control the whole Dominion” (747). Scott went on to insist that “a fragment of the population not the size of the city of Ottawa...is not going to dictate to the 4,000,000 of this Dominion...on a subject that touches us in a tender part, our national honor as citizens of a free country” (747).

In Senate Debates, some anti-racist critics took their analysis a step further than had those critics quoted in the Commission Report. Like Du Bois – and Ida B. Wells in her radical anti-racism – they condemned immigration restriction as contrary not only to of national exceptionalist discourses, but also to British imperial ideologies as well. Citing the threat to “national honor” and Canadian values, Mr. Scott was one of the most strident critics, who spoke out passionately against the hypocrisy and shortsightedness of immigration restriction. In the Senate Debate, Mr. Scott became incensed, insisting that Chinese exclusion laws were nothing short of an “outrage on civilization! A most humiliating position in which to place this country” (746). He argued with Mr. Nelson that when Chinese migrants “come to our shores we allow them to be brutally treated
on our western coast, and have subjected them to every indignity, and we are now tolerating legislation that is a disgrace to our boasted civilization" (747). Nelson responded just as passionately to Scott’s critique: "I say that the people of British Columbia do not treat the Chinese badly! It is a slander on the people to say so!!" (747)

Like Ida B. Wells before him, Scott harnessed discourses of Canadian exceptionalism in his condemnation of systemic racism. He argued that “[w]e know very well that for years past we have been representing ourselves as holding most broad, most liberal and most generous views with regard to foreigners who come amongst us; that we do not discriminate as to color or race, and here because a few laborers in British Columbia dictate to their representatives in Parliament about the competition of Chinese labor, the whole Dominion is to be subjected to the indignity and injustice of adopting this legislation” (746). Scott further harnessed Canadian exceptionalist founding myths, and narratives of British imperial benevolence and abolitionism, when he added, “[a] little tyranny may be practiced over in British Columbia on the poor Chinamen ; but I hope the Chinaman, like the negro, will have some friends to speak for him”. He also

27 (Senate Debates, 4th Session, 5th Parliament, 1886:747) It is interesting to note how Nelson harnesses the myth of tolerance in his anti-racist opposition to Chinese exclusion, just as racial nationalists cited southern racial strife as an evidence of the inassimilability of non-whites, and need for immigration restriction. Of course, we should be critical of the ways in which such comments reproduce the myth of tolerance of benevolent Anglo-Canadian treatment of blacks and First Nations. However, it is unclear whether the Mr. Nelson believes these myths or whether he is using them strategically, to shame other white politicians into calling off the anti-Asian witch-hunt. As we have seen in Chapter Two, high profile public shaming has been used successfully to fight for social justice causes, for instance by Ida B. Wells in her anti-lynching campaigns.
decried the hypocrisy of restriction policies, framing his critique not only in terms of national identity but also British imperial values and British masculinity: “I protest against it as a Canadian! I protest against it in the name of the Dominion! I protest against it as a member of the British Empire! Is there a member in the British House of Commons who would dare to propose a measure like this?...No gentleman could be found to stand up there and advocate a measure which is such a gross violation of the law of nations...which we ourselves have been endeavoring to hold forth [to China] as being the true principle on which the nations of the world should trade” (746).

Hon. Mr. Vidal echoed Scott’s critique, stating that the idea of further exclusion laws was “an outrage upon humanity and a sad blemish upon Christianity, a bill calculated to lower us in the eyes of all civilized nations of the world” (687). Even as he uncritically reinforced the dichotomy between “civilized” and “uncivilized”, he then went on to articulate a deeply anti-racist critique, asking: “[w]hy does not China shut her doors against us western people in the same way that we propose to shut out doors against her countrymen? Have Englishmen any more right to go into China and take possession of their ports or their trade than Chinamen have to land in Canada?” (687) He took this further, questioning the validity of European imperialism—and thus the very existence of Canada—asking: “[b]y what royal right have we and our fathers crossed the ocean and taken possession of this western continent? What right had we to come here and
dispossess the Indians, native proprietors of this country, and take possession of their lands?” (687)

The Hon. Mr. O’Donohoe similarly tried highlighted the injustice of British imperialism in China, coupled with exclusion laws in Britain’s white settler colonies, asking: “[s]upposing the British people who are to-day in Hong Kong or other parts of Asia or the east were told, 'You must leave here; your color does not suit us; your pilfering, your robbing, your mode of carrying on commerce doesn't suit us; you must leave here’. What answer could we make to them? Could they not say to us, "That is the way you are treating us on British soil in America’. We could make no reply” (685). Scott too invoked the complexity of British imperial politics and the sticky situation exclusionists were causing for the Empire: “[d]elicate questions are arising between the foreign office and China and we all know, by public report, that the British Minister at Washington feels that we are stepping on very tender ground, that it is embarrassing to the British Government, our dealing in the manner we are doing with this Chinese question (747).

Like Canadians, some Americans also criticized the disjuncture between America’s espoused “civilizing” and “Christianizing” missions in Asia, and the treatment of Chinese migrants in the United States. Anti-racist white Americans also condemned the treatment of Chinese as un-Christian, and antithetical to American national identity and values. And as in Canada, Anti-Chinese sentiment was condemned as being in
contravention with the stated aim of American imperialist expansion, articulated in terms of republican exceptionalism. This was also true for popular culture and political cartoons. For instance, in December 1900, the cover of *Puck* magazine featured a critical image, titled "The Ultimate Cause", which showed a white American missionary in China, speaking to a Chinese man, and his two, chubby-cheeked, rosy-faced children, who gaze imploringly and innocently out at the viewer. The cartoon reads "'But why is it,' asked the thoughtful Chinese, 'that I may go to your heaven, while I may not go to your country?'". In response to which, with a somber expression, "The American missionary shrugged his shoulders. 'There is no Labor vote in heaven!' said he" (Fig. 3.9).

As did critiques of national hypocrisy, religion featured prominently in many of the anti-racist arguments in support of Chinese migration. To add to the complexity of these debates, even pro-Chinese arguments were layered, nuanced, and at times inconsistent. The Hon. Mr. Vidal, who had espoused some of the most radical critiques of restrictionism, and who passionately questioned the very legitimacy of imperialism and nation-building, invoked ideas about European superiority in his plea for open immigration. Vidal argued that racist exclusion laws were “utterly inconsistent with our professions as Christians and with the vaunted freedom we profess to cherish as a British people. The idea of saying that we of the Caucasian race who have carried civilization to all parts of the world are not able to hold our own against a Mongolian
race? Where can such a fear originate?” (687) He went on to ask “[w]hat has been the experience of the Anglo-Saxon race in every part of the world where we have gone? Have we not carried all before us?” (687) He upheld the idea of the “white man’s burden”, elaborating: “[h]ave we not taken possession wherever we wished to go, not because we had any special right to do so, but because we believed that where our civilization and entitlement have been introduced we have carried with us the blessings of Christianity”? (687)

Despite Vidal’s plea for continued Chinese immigration, framed in racial nationalist and British imperialist terms, many of his colleagues remained unmoved. Racial nationalists such as Mr. Nelson responded by articulating a very different idea of Canada and its duty to the Empire. He opposed the position that “England forced the Chinese to open their ports and admit our people into their country, and that we should therefore let them come to ours. It is true that Great Britain did so, but I do not think the sins of the father should be visited on the children in this matter. Canada had no share in the opening of the Chinese ports, and I do not see why we should be compelled to receive an undesirable population in our country because of the past policy of the Imperial Government” (681).

Similarly, Henry George had testified before the Royal Commission that “[a]s to abrogating our treaty relations with China I do not think it is necessary, but I would take
out the clause which permitted the migration of Chinese to this country, and I do not think there would be any objection on the part of the Chinese government to that, or to abrogating the whole” (237). Solomon Heydenfeldt had more accurately testified in the Commission Report: "I do not see how a limit could be fixed on this immigration. If it should be attempted by legislation I think it would be an infraction of the treaty, and the Chinese would regard it as a breach of faith" (285). But Henry George maintained that it was perfectly fair for North Americans to continue to trade with China, while still restricting migration; in his mind, diplomacy was just a question of blatant self-interest: “[t]he more trade we have with China the better for us; the only mistake is in opening the doors to the Chinese population.”

Conclusion

What an analysis of the Report of the Royal Commission and other discussions of Chinese migration and labor reveals is the complexity of ideas of race, nation, and identity in this era. For we see both contestation of, and complicity with, dominant notions of race and rights. Even some of the most progressive anti-racists and critics of exclusion laws invoked ideas about racial and cultural superiority. Of course, we must also bear in mind the context of a Senate Debate among politicians, each promoting

28 (237) And as Lake and Reynolds explain, the United States was also violating the terms of its treaty with China by restricting the movement of Chinese nationals to the United States (2008: 30).
specific political agendas. Given the setting, it is difficult to know how to interpret such statements. Was Vidal using a rhetorical strategy to gain political support? Or does he believe in European superiority, yet still support Chinese migration? In reading Vidal’s remarks, it is unclear whether or not this was a polemic calculated to present Chinese exclusion as unmanly, uncivilized, and un-Christian—in short, as un-Canadian. Or perhaps he deeply believed in the British imperial mission, including Canada’s duty not to disrupt trade relations with China.

In any case, Britain did ultimately abrogate its treaty with China, as a result of the intense opposition to Chinese migration from its white Dominions. China’s subjugated position in Asia, and world politics in general, diminished its clout, and despite objections from Chinese leaders, the strength of anti-Chinese racism in the Dominions ultimately trumped the importance of British trade with China. By 1907, when the Washington Federation of Labor held its meeting in Tacoma, WA, the writing was on the wall. Anti-Asian sentiment on the Pacific Coast of the United States and Canada had reached a boiling point, and shortly after the meeting, white Canadians rioted through Chinese and Japanese neighborhoods. It was little wonder that the days of Chinese migration were numbered, and that a complete ban on Chinese migration, such as already existed in the USA, soon followed in Canada.
The Royal Commission Report is an important document, even if the actual Commission hearings that had spawned the first immigration restrictions were in some ways a charade: Canadian racial nationalists already knew how they felt about Chinese people and didn’t need Americans to tell them. Ideas about Chinese inferiority were not spawned by the Commission, but had long predated it. The Commission itself was largely a political response to the existence of longstanding racism. The Royal Commission represented a significant move on the part of the state to codify popular racism into law. The Commission Report, however, generated a much more interesting set of discussions than did conventional racial nationalist fare. And while the government’s Commission helped give rise to new racist laws—and generate state income from head tax revenues—the Report of the Commission outlived these laws, to provide a lasting historical record of these debates about race and nation. For the Report presents us not only with a muddled stew of anti-Chinese stereotype and racial nationalist thought, but also compelling anti-racist critiques of those bigoted attitudes: including alternative articulations of national identity. The Report and the subsequent Senate Debates survive as records of the competing definitions of national exceptionalism, manliness, and civilization that were vigorously debated in this era.

As with the 1885 Royal Commission, the 1907 Washington Federation of Labor meeting represented another instance when white men from the two North American nation-states came together to discuss race and nation. At the meeting, Canadian racial
nationalists declared their solidarity with their white fellow workers, as American racial nationalists had done in 1884 in San Francisco when they testified before Canada’s Royal Commission. At the 1907 labor convention in Tacoma, Canadian delegate M. A. Beach, who represented the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, argued: “[w]e have succeeded...in getting the ears of a capitalistic government to listen to our cries when we got the head tax on the Chinese increased from $50 to $500, but we shall not rest until we get total prohibition of the yellow evil” (Chang: 678). Beach continued to expound on the “Oriental Problem,” arguing that these issues were “just as important to you as they are to us on the other side of the border,’ and in this struggle ‘there is a bond of friendship, a fraternity, existing between us that no imaginary [border] line can sever’” (Chang: 679).

As we have seen, white Canadians had made vigorous efforts to construct a divergent national identity from their American neighbors—crafting self-congratulatory myths about their allegedly benevolent treatment of Native and African-descended peoples and about their superior British imperial masculinity. Yet we have also seen how Canadian racial nationalists were quick to align themselves with their “violent”, “unruly”, and “treasonous” American neighbors, when confronted with the more threatening specter of migration and labor competition from Chinese workers. At the same time, we have seen that Canadians with similar class, gender, political interests
share much more in common with their cross-border “cousins” than with their compatriots.

A close reading of the Commission Report, Senate Debates, and wealth of rich visual culture of this era allows us to see the complexity and vibrancy of ideas of race and nation. For what emerges is not only the articulation of a transnational white solidarity—but also a vigorous political culture of debate and dissent within nation-states. Despite concerted efforts to create notions of racial homogeneity and national whiteness, here we can see myriad social cleavages between “white men,” as competing class, gender, regional, and political interests battled for dominance. Both British imperial and American republican definitions of whiteness, masculinity, and civilization were mobilized to argue for and against Chinese immigration. The ideas of national exceptionalism we have seen be carefully constructed were then harnessed to articulate competing visions of race and nation in both North American states, over the controversial question of Chinese migration. Analyzing the popular culture and political debates generated around this issue allows us to better understand the richness and complexity of competing notions of whiteness, masculinity, and civilization created in this decisive moment of migration and nation-building.
Figures for Chapter 3

Figure 3.1

April 26, 1879. *Canadian Illustrated News*. 

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Figure 3.2

January - June 1882, *The Wasp*
Figure 3.3

1886 “Magic Washer” Ad, U.S. Library of Congress (LC-DIG-pga-02758 or USZC4-2045)
Figure 3.4

August 1877 – July 1878, The Wasp, Volume 2 – “Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Dinner”
Figure 3.5

August 10, 1907, B.C. Saturday Sunset
Figure 3.6

WHICH COLOR IS TO BE TABOODED NEXT?

Fritz (to Put). "If the Yankee Congress can keep the yellow man out, what is to hinder them from calling us green and keeping us out too?"

Figure 3.7

March 25, 1882, Harper’s Weekly
July 12, 1905, *Puck*, “How John may dodge the Exclusion Act” (3b48936, LC-USZC2-1036)
Figure 3.9

December 19, 1900, *Puck*, U.S. Library of Congress, (LC-DIG-ppmsca-25482 or LC-USZC2-1030)
CHAPTER 4 “Shoulder to Shoulder”? Migration from Japan and India, and Ambivalent Imperial Alliances

This chapter considers how the complexity of imperial politics affected Canada's ability to make unproblematic claims about itself as a “white man’s country.” Global imperial politics brought tensions between imperial unity and national self-determination into sharp relief. This clash between imperial and national interests highlighted the tenuousness of national identity construction. It also unearthed glaring contradictions in the logic of who was or was not entitled to mobility and citizenship rights within Canada—and within the British Empire more broadly. Imperial and national interests came head-to-head over the questions of migration from Japan, an important British ally, and an emergent Empire in its own right, and India, the “jewel in the crown” of the British Empire.

During its heyday, it was said that “the sun never set on the British Empire.” Britain’s colonial reach spanned the world, as we can see in an 1886 map of the British Empire (Fig. 4.1).1 This richly-illustrated map was created well before the Anglo-Japanese Alliance began in 1902. However, the map perfectly captures the mythologized depictions of the British imperial imaginary. British holdings, shown in red, dot the globe. This geographic spectacle is flanked by lavish illustrations of Britain and the

supporting cast of empire. Mythologized Britannia lounges atop the world, holding a trident—surely a nod to British naval might. She is propped up by Atlas and surrounded by varied and “exotic” subjects from the corners of the earth. The scene unfolds under banners that read: “Freedom”, “Fraternity”, and “Federation.” These banners were clearly inspired by the values of the French Revolution and Third Republic—“liberty”, “equality”, and “fraternity.” Only in this British iteration, “equality” is replaced by “federation.” Also, the word-order of the motto is rearranged, and the idea of “fraternity” or “brotherhood” becomes central, through its placement on the middle banner. In keeping with the spirit of imperial “brotherhood,” India occupies a prominent place in the scene, right beside Britannia herself. An Indian man rides an elephant, surrounded by a tiger and peacocks, and accompanied by a British colonial soldier, and another Indian man doubled-over under his heavy load.

In recognition of the men’s exertions, Atlas bears a sash across his chest that reads “human labour.” While the 1886 map had long been interpreted as a depiction of British imperial domination, as Pippa Biltcliffe explains in a 2005 article, the map was surely created by Walter Crane (1845-1915), a socialist. Felix Driver elaborates in his 2010 article, “In Search of The Imperial Map: Walter Crane and the Image of Empire,” that, in addition to other clues Biltcliffe observed when she discovered the map’s authorship, Atlas’ sash provides a “none-too-subtle pointer to Crane’s brand of socialism” (154). Biltcliffe explains that the map “has not been listed within the corpus of his works”, but that “[q]uite apart from stylistic consistencies” with his other pieces,
“the map actually bears Crane's distinctive rebus, so often used to mark his art: a crane, accompanied by his initials” (164). Driver speculates that Crane may not have openly acknowledged having created the map “perhaps because it may have become an embarrassment to him” (154).

For Crane’s particular “brand of socialism” was associated with the Fabians, who “advocated imperialism as the medium through which the empire could be effectively organized into a cooperative working community led by Britain” (65). Returning to the map itself, between the muse-borne banners bearing the map's motto, we can see doves holding olive branches—Biblical symbols of peace. What we see represented here is the Pax Britannica (1815-1914). The Pax Britannica was a period of relative peace, when British hegemony, for the most part, went unchallenged. Furthermore, through the map's symbolism, the Pax Britannica takes the form of a utopian vision of British imperialism – global peace and unity under benevolent British rule. As Biltcliffe elaborates, “[t]he late-Victorian period saw a complex interplay between imperialism and aspirations for general social reform. The notion of ‘colonization’ was frequently deployed by reformers and was integral to the many civilizing initiatives that sought to improve the labour conditions of the working class both at home and abroad” (67).
Crane later disassociated himself from the Fabians after they failed to take an anti-imperialist position on the Boer War of 1900 (Biltcliffe: 65). If, as Driver suspects, Crane felt some embarrassment about his idealization of imperialism in the 1886 map, perhaps his disappointment with the Boer War in general, and the Fabians’ stance in particular, was part of the reason why. In any case, as both Driver and Biltcliffe point out, the discovery of the artist’s identity complicates an overly simplistic interpretation of the map. Driver argues that this revelation “poses a number of challenges to imperial historians, as well as to historians of cartography and to Crane scholars. How is it that a map long regarded as quintessentially imperial was produced by a socialist designer”? (152) Driver asks us to consider how “such a complex image can still be widely regarded as a paradigm of empire?” (152) Biltcliffe argues that “[a]t the very least,” the map’s authorship “suggests that the imagery of empire was susceptible to different interpretations, even at the height of imperialism” (65).

This is the purpose of this chapter – to explore the ambivalence of imperialism – and the contradictions between competing aims and interests within the British “imperial family”—and especially within “white men’s countries” and between these Dominions and the Empire. The 1886 map illustrates Britain’s reach, but the map is not only illustrative. Rather, the complexity of Crane’s image is indexical to the complexity of

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2 Biltcliffe elaborates, “[a]lthough Crane resigned from the Fabians when the group failed to take an anti-imperialist stance over the Boer War in 1900, his critique of imperialism as a commercial system needs to be distinguished from his use of empire to advance social reform. In some contexts, the empire was seen as a vehicle through which the socialist ideal of international commonwealth could be achieved” (65). Biltcliffe, Pippa. (February 01, 2005). “Walter Crane and the Imperial Federation Map Showing the Extent of the British Empire (1886)”. *Imago Mundi*, 57, 1, 63-69.
imperialism in general. And if Crane himself was conflicted about Britain’s imperial project, it is almost impossible to imagine the ambivalence that existed within the Empire itself—where opposing interests competed, as was the case in the conundrum of migration from Japan and India to Dominions around the Empire. Would the British Empire’s diplomatic commitments and ideals of fraternity triumph? Or would colony-metropole tensions and imperial hierarchies—which demarcated ruler from ruled and citizen from subject—tear the Empire asunder?

Britain’s imperial grandeur relied on its alliances with other great powers, as well as on India’s place in the Empire. Yet, ultimately, the arrogance and vicious race prejudice of “white men’s countries” undermined British imperial mythologies of brotherhood and universal citizenship. Despite Crane’s socialism, we can certainly see a strong sense of racial difference on the map, as well as ideas of center and periphery. This was all the more pronounced within the Dominions: remote and removed from the seat of power, they protected the privilege they had. The reluctance of racial nationalists to share the Empire with darker skinned subjects and allies fanned the flames of anti-imperialism already flickering at the Empire’s heels. Thus, in biting irony, these “race patriots” helped usher in what they feared most: the decline of the British Empire and European imperialism more broadly.

_Nations and Empires_
British identity was an essential part of Canadian identity. Canada’s very existence required British support. Canadian nationalists were *de facto* British imperialists. Yet national and imperial interests were frequently at odds. In the early twentieth century nation-building and imperialism occurred simultaneously and often reinforced each other. But in another sense, the logic that under-girded these parallel projects was precisely the opposite. While both nationalist and imperialist impulses relied on and reinforced mythologies of white superiority, imperialism was by definition expansionist, and perhaps, in some highly problematic sense, even *inclusive*.

In the stratified imperial system, not anyone could rule, but anyone could be a *subject*. The boundaries of empire were continuously being pushed outwards, in a tireless drive to acquire new territories, subjects, commodities, and markets. An 1898 political cartoon explicitly illustrates this voracious European expansionism (Fig. 4.2). The image shows the other monarchs of Europe carving up China—accompanied by the lone Asian empire—Japan.³ In the cartoon, “in China...the Cake of Kings...and of Emperors” (“En Chine Le gâteau des Rois et... des Empereurs”), the helpless Chinese ruler throws up his hands in dismay—as he watches Britain, Prussia (Germany), Russia, France, and Japan prepare to hungrily devour his empire. The image of New Imperialism could just as easily have featured the simultaneous “Scramble for Africa” (1870–1914).

This relentless acquisitiveness and endless expansion meshed perfectly with the hierarchical structure of imperial governance. Subjection didn’t discriminate. Rulers were pleased to have more subjects to rule, especially since they didn’t usually have to give them much in return. Modern western nation-states, by contrast, were avowedly built on a foundation of equality and citizenship rights. So membership in the imagined community of the nation-state, unlike subordinate membership in imperial ones, was by definition exclusionary and restrictive. Of course, we should rightly be critical of the claims of any state that perfect equality has ever existed among its citizens—not to mention between citizens and non-citizens. Inequality has been built into the structure of nation-states since their inception. To take touted claims to egalitarianism at face value is to buy into mythogenesis and national identity construction.

But the fact remains that empires and nations operated according to different logics. Membership in nation-states was necessarily exclusive in a way that imperial subjection was not. And in fact, could not be, by definition. Because, at its core, national identity is based on notions of citizenship and civil rights—however fraught or elusive in practice—the physical and ideological boundaries of the nation-state had to be vigilantly policed. Immigration from Japan and India in the early twentieth century highlighted the tensions between concurrent nationalist and imperialist ventures, and the competing loyalties these parallel yet divergent projects sometimes engendered.
Was the Anglo-colonial world privy to some enlightened, humanistic vision of belonging, which, as some anti-racists argued, could be inclusive and expansive regardless of skin color? Or was it—as racial nationalists contended—the whiteness of the vast majority of citizens (and maleness of all voters) that rendered them capable of citizenship in the first place? And in keeping with this circular logic which resonated through the era, the same exclusive exercise of citizenship allowed white men to participate in public debates about darker-skinned peoples’ capacity for citizenship, or presumed lack thereof.

So in a clash of national and political values, belief in white superiority reinforced the imagined gulf between racial nationalists and the “inassimilable” racialized migrants who ‘assailed’ the shores of “white men's countries”—migrants whose very epidermal “otherness” vested the “whiteness” of newly-privileged citizens and workers with meaning. The circularity of discourses about race, rights, and national belonging reveals the complexity of historical processes of racial and national identity construction in this era. We can also glimpse the stark divisions among white men, on the basis of clashing class and political investments, which gave rise to competing nationalist visions and notions of race and citizenship.

For, as I argued in my chapter on Native and African-descended peoples, Canadians and their British imperial brethren articulated a specific version of white masculinity, which emphasized benevolence towards the poor dark peoples of the world—even as these
same discourses of tolerance and white civility\(^4\) simultaneously supported and elided the racial violence of nation-building. These same national exceptionalist discourses were harnessed to argue that the best way to maintain British values was by marginalizing and barring non-whites. But exceptionalism could also be invoked to support anti-racist agendas, such as abolishing racial restrictions on immigration. As I elaborate on my chapter on Chinese migration, white men’s mobilization of these exceptionalist discourses towards antithetical political ends sparked heated debates about the meaning of race and nation, and unearthed deep divisions within the category of “whiteness”.

As Canadian Senator, Mr. Scott, had argued indignantly in an 1886 Debate about Chinese exclusion, white men had a duty to protect darker skinned people from tyranny and exploitation. As we have seen, Scott hoped that Chinese, like African Canadians, would find some allies among white politicians. But if the question of Chinese migration spurred vigorous discussions over competing visions of race and citizenship in the 1880s, issues of migration from Japan and India pushed these questions to the forefront of

\(^4\) As Homi Bhabha argues in *The Location of Culture*, “the ethic of work...provides a sense of right conduct and honour achievable only through the acceptance of those ‘customary, norms which are the signs of culturally cohesive ‘civil communities’” (152). “White civility” was not just a Canadian national project, but also a British imperial and American one too. The project of white civility taken up in distinct instances of nation-building, and a Bhabha argues, the “aims of the civilizing mission, endorsed in the ‘idea’ of British imperialism and enacted on the red sections of the map, speak with a peculiarly English authority derived from the customary practice on which both English common law and the English national language rely for their effectivity and appeal” (152).


For a discussion of white women and the notion of civility in colonial America, see:


And for a late twentieth century discussion of white civility in the American context, see:

public debates about the future of nation and empire after 1900. For Japan was an imperial power in its own right, as well as a valuable British ally and trading partner. And of course, India was even more important to the Empire: India swelled the Empire's wealth, size, and prestige immeasurably. Thus, when it came to questions of immigration, these complex imperial relationships and conflicting interests posed a conundrum for Canadian nationalists as de facto British imperialists.

The jarring non-whiteness of Japanese and Indian migrants clashed squarely with the racial nationalist goal of a building a homogenous white Canada. However, this was a delicate situation, for Canadians feared incurring Britain’s wrath and jeopardizing the future of their nation-state entirely. In the middle decades of the 19th century some in Britain had advocated reducing Canada’s dependence on the mother country—much to Canadians’ chagrin. Aware of that dependence, how could Canadian racial nationalists maintain the whiteness of their nation in the face of migration from Asia and South Asia without angering Britain? It was, however, in the Empire’s interest to maintain a base of power in North America. Britain wanted to keep Canadians happy, but ruling an empire also meant forming military and trade alliances with other powerful global players, like Japan. Ruling also required maintaining peace in the most important colony, India. Racial nationalists wanted a “white Canada”, but if they provoked imperial unrest, they risked causing far greater damage to their fragile state than the effects of allowing a few more “brown brothers” to migrate there.
Therein lay the conundrum. Japan and India posed a complicated challenge to the “global color bar” in emerging British imperial nation-states, such as Canada. Could the Dominions maintain notions of racial homogeneity and policies of immigration restriction in the face of potent threats to worldwide white supremacy? The historical construction of whiteness was taking place in a moment when the global status quo of racial privilege and European dominance was threatened. In Asia, a modernizing Japan was becoming just as formidable as European powers—and more so than some—and anti-imperialist grumblings were emerging from “extraction” colonies like India, where some inhabitants demanded the right to self-determination. The emerging sense of transnational whiteness was borne largely by fears of its imminent decline, the result of two disturbing trends racial nationalists observed: the rise of an eastern power, and a vigorous push against imperialism from darker-skinned peoples of the world.

Racial nationalists across the Anglo-colonial world were well aware of these dual threats, which dovetailed to undermine their hard-won battle for national and personal whiteness. The audacious demand by Japan for a role in global affairs and increasing insistence by colonized nations that they would no longer accept European domination and subordination—threatened to render whiteness meaningless. For white working classes and ethnic whites, the meanings and privileges associated with whiteness were under siege, just as this category had at last expanded to include them. After so much
jockeying for inclusion, imagine their dismay to find that Japan was itself becoming an imperial power, and India and other “exploitation” colonies were demanding autonomy and independence from imperial authority—thus making frightening incursions onto rights reserved for white men, and appropriating these powerful political discourses as their own.

**The Rise of the Japanese Empire**

Japan constituted a major threat to white supremacy, articulated in the very parlance of European imperialism. Japan had both defeated a European empire, Russia[^5], and begun to engage in imperial ventures of its own. The Meiji Restoration, which restored imperial rule in 1868, saw Japan’s successful industrialization and transition from feudalism to a market economy and modern state. This era was marked by massive investment in modernizing Japan’s military, and saw Japanese efforts to secure imperial control in Asia. Japan had already bested a former great imperial power—China—in the First Sino-Japanese War (August 1894-April 1895). As an outcome, victorious Japan gained control over Taiwan and eventually Korea. This major shift in Asian history and politics startled western observers, and became a cause for celebration in Japan.

[^5]: Losing the unpopular war dealt a brutal blow to the Tsarist regime and helped bring about the downfall of the Russian Empire. Civil unrest was met with violence by the Russian Empire, and the events of “Bloody Sunday”, in which Cossacks opened fire on a crowd of protestors in Saint Petersburg in January 1905 catalyzed widespread opposition and sparked the Russian Revolution of 1905. This mass dissent of 1905 saw some reforms but ultimately acted as a precursor for the Russian Revolution of 1917.
The historical significance of Japanese victory was presented on September 1894 in The Japan Punch, a satire magazine modeled on Britain's own humorous Punch magazine. The image shows a tiny Japanese warrior perched atop the massive Chinese soldier he has toppled (Fig. 4.3). The fallen combatant flails ineffectually against the diminutive Japanese man's might. The Chinese warrior’s sword and shield lie uselessly on the ground around him, as he gapes in shock and horror at the miniscule, but heavily-armored man, aggressively brandishing his sword. Some even cited Japan’s small size as advantageous, allowing it to nimbly modernize, while ponderous, cumbersome China lagged behind. By portraying China as a huge but powerless giant, and Japan as a petite powerhouse, this image clearly represents the unprecedented power shift that took place following Japan’s victory over China.

In the conflict between Qing Dynasty China⁶ and Meiji Japan, the surrender of Chinese forces in the First Sino-Japanese War was largely the result of China’s failure to modernize its military, which could not rival Japan’s powerful, post-Restoration forces. Regional dominance in Asia shifted from China to Japan, and "[a] new balance of power had emerged. China’s millennia-long unquestioned dominance ha[d] abruptly ended" (Paine, 2003: 4). Following the war, "[t]he perception of Chinese weakness led to far more aggressive intrusions by the foreign powers in China" (Paine, 2003: 4). This

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⁶ The Qing Dynasty was the last of China’s imperial dynasties. It lasted from 1644 to 1912, and included a short-lived effort to restore the Qing Dynasty to power in the Manchu Restoration of July 1917.
historic shift not only affected China, or Asia and its subcontinents, but also the world politics. As Hilary A. Herbert, U.S. secretary of the Navy stated in 1895, "Japan has leaped, almost at one bound, to a place among the great nations of the earth. Her recent exploits with China have focused all eyes on her, and the world now comprehends the fact that this small island kingdom, so little taken account of heretofore...has within a few decades stridden over ground traversed by other nations only within centuries" (Paine, 2003: 3).

Prior to the war, the *North-China Herald* had still proclaimed China the "only great Asiatic State that really commands the respect of the Great Powers of the World" (Paine, 2003: 15). Yet, this perception was completely reversed by war’s end. China had remained recalcitrant and isolationist—staunchly resisting Western influence. Meanwhile, in the 1870s and 1880s, Japanese reformers had reshaped their state, in accordance with Western modernity. This move drew accolades from the West, and Japan was praised by observers as having made "genuine progress...in all that pertains to modern civilization"; lauded as “[t]he only nation in the Orient which has shown itself possessed of the true instinct of civilised progress"; and even heralded by one British commentator as "our rapidly developing protégé" (Paine, 2003: 15). Americans also initially supported Japan. In 1904, Theodore Roosevelt secretly backed the equivalent of a Japanese Monroe Doctrine for Asia, believing such an arrangement would advance U.S. policy interests.
In the early years of the twentieth century, Japan further entrenched its position of regional dominance, as the world marveled at its success. Ten years after Japanese imperial victory against China, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (February 1904 – September 1905). Japan’s victory thwarted Russian interest in Korea, Manchuria, and China. Japan officially annexed strategically-important Korea, and emerged from the conflict as a respected military power. Unlike China and Russia, which had been weakened and dispossessed following combat, “the perception of Japanese strength led to the inclusion of Japan in the ranks of the imperial powers. Japan had transformed itself from the object of imperialism into one of its perpetrators” (Paine, 2003: 4). As an expansionist empire, employing European imperial modes of territorial control, and invoking similar “civilizing” narratives, Japan’s proponents argued for its inclusion, and the expansion of the category of whiteness to include Japan. In the view of many Japanese nationals, theirs was an influential, modern state that should be recognized as “white.”

The Japan Times reported that many Japanese resented the fact that their state was not treated as “a first class nation of the world.” What is more, Japan had its own notions of racial and cultural superiority bound up with its imperial identity and expansionist agenda, so “the lack of distinction drawn between non-white races also angered Japan,

7 Japan Times, 1913, cited in L&R: 169. The Japan Times was an English-language newspaper, first published on March 22, 1897. By 1918, it had also absorbed the Japan Mail which was “published by an Englishman; published under joint management as The Japan Times and Mail”. Much later, in 1940, it also absorbed "The Japan Advertiser (Tokyo) and The Japan Chronicle(Kobe); published under joint management as The Japan Times & Advertiser, effective as of January 1, 1941". <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/info/history.html> viewed Sept. 12, 2012.
which as a sovereign, civilized, imperial state, considered it the worst insult to be placed in the same category of stateless peoples such as Kanakas and Negroes” (Lake & Reynolds: 146). Because it invoked a “civilizing mission” as a rationale for its imperialist ventures, Japan set itself in apart in a separate category from other, less “civilized” “eastern peoples”.

What is more, Japanese imperialists claimed that differences in pigmentation existed between themselves and “inferior” peoples, which meant that the classification of Japanese people as non-whites “is hardly warranted by the fact of the shade of the national complexion” (Lake & Reynolds: 147). Rather than arguing that the category of whiteness itself was problematic, some Japanese nationalists argued that the only real problem was the failure to grant Japanese membership in the white men’s clubs of imperialism and global governance. Thus, in the view of many Japanese imperialists, the best way to gain proper respect amongst “white men’s countries” was to play their game, and to excel at it. That way, even if they were not granted the coveted mantle of whiteness, they should at very least be recognized as equals to white men’s countries in national and imperial prowess.

**India and British Imperialism**

India represented a very different challenge to white supremacy—while some pro-imperialists sought India’s further integration within the British system, perhaps as a
Dominion, India's more radical defenders argued that white did not make right. While Japan was an empire unto itself, Indians debated whether to remain part of the British Empire, or demand independence. Indian anti-imperialists did not seek imperial advancement, but rather fundamentally rejected the notion that power should be connected to race. Skin color did not give anyone the right to dominate anyone else, they observed, so imperialism and racial hierarchies should be dismantled immediately and permanently.

Despite differing ideologies in Japan and India about how best to counter European imperialism, some racial nationalists in the Anglo-colonial world saw Japan's and India's divergent strategies as fundamentally linked. One member of the Department of Indian Criminal Intelligence—the principal intelligence-gathering organization of the British Raj that controlled India—argued that “[t]he Russo-Japanese war undoubtedly did much to inflate the innate vanity of the Japanese” (Lake & Reynolds: 261). He went on to say that Japan's military victory over Russia would “lead them to regard themselves as the first Power in the East” (Lake & Reynolds: 262) and create a "decidedly unsettling" phenomenon of "Indians who have hailed Japan as the defender and champion of Asia—a position which her success and arrogance had already led her to assign herself." 8

8 Lake and Reynolds: 262, citing Petrie, 'The Pan-Asiatic Movement'. And certainly, there was some strategic geo-political maneuvering on Japan’s part to jockey for imperial power and maintain its position of dominance within Asia. In this sense, there was some basis to white men’s fears of a Pan-Asian alliance, especially given the ways in which discrimination—and racial exclusion from some aspects of global governance—mandated it. There has long been a history of close relations between Japan and India, mostly collaborative, though occasionally conflicted. In 1903, the Japan-India Association was founded, to broker cooperation between the two states. And later, in 1939, the association was recognized as an official foundation. This organization also supported the Indian
Racial nationalists created “whiteness” as a transnational phenomenon that linked disparate regions in common cause against the “ascendancy”—or even basic mobility—of people of color. So naturally, “white” racial nationalists assumed that the opposite must also be true: that racialized people would band together against Europeans. What Du Bois called a "new religion of whiteness" not only led to the creation of policies of immigration restriction; it also "had provoked counter formations of Black and Pan-Asian political identities in hostile movements of resistance" (Lake & Reynolds: 261).

Racial nationalists had to be all the more vigilant when guarding their gates. But how could Canadians keep their “white man’s country” white when Japan and India had important relationships with the British Empire? Unlike with migration from China, a country which had been weakened by a series of conflicts—including the Opium Wars with Britain, and later, the Sino-Japanese war—Canadians could not bully migrants from Japan and India so easily. These states were far more central to British imperial politics. And that is to say nothing of Japan’s military might. But this did not mean that these

[Independence movement during WWII, and Japan harbored independence advocates who fled British rule. Conversely, many Indians supported Britain in its WWII conflict against Japan, and volunteered to fight against Japan. However, in 1943, the Greater East Asia Conference, also known as the Tokyo Conference, brought together the various member bodies of the Greater East Asia Co-Prospereity Sphere—namely, the Japanese Empire. Hosted by Japan, the international summit highlighted Japanese commitment to Pan-Asian collaboration. What is more, Japan supported the creation of the Indian National Army (INA), and backed the INA and Indian Independence League in their fight to abolish British rule in India. Though let us not forget the “colonial contest”. As with “white men’s countries” and empires, Japan’s goal was primarily consolidating power. Japan aligned itself with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the WWII Axis alliance. Like the British Empire and other “white” empires, Japan used rhetoric and maneuvering to advance its strategic interests—as through the idea of Pan-Asian unity. But as with other empires, the goal was less racial equality or ideological alliances than Realpolitik dominance.}
populations were deemed any less threatening to white Canadian identity or the global racial status quo.

Canadian racial nationalists deeply felt this concern. In *The Canadian Commonwealth* (1915), Agnes Laut condemned Japanese demands to stand “shoulder to shoulder” with white men. Laut indignantly explained: “Japan launched vast trans-Pacific colonization schemes”, asking “why not? Does not England colonize; does not Germany colonize; does not France colonize? We are taking our place at the world board of trade” (135). It was not for nothing that Lothrop Stoddard titled his polemical anti-immigrant text *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*. Racial nationalists wanted imperialism to be reserved as a special right for Europeans.

Many white Canadians feared this “rising tide.” They did not want their cherished country to become a Japanese colony, whether through conquest or migration. Nor did they want it to become India: a colony less of citizens than of subjects, not ruling but ruled, and valued less as an active partner in British imperialism than as a source of commodities, soldiers, and labor. Both the stakes of migration and the state of global politics were framed in grandiose terms as a battle for racial dominance. Racial nationalists’ impulse was to harden the color line further still, to disbar Japanese and Indians, whose movements had not been restricted by earlier laws. Yet imperial Britain welcomed neither Dominion Canada’s interference with Japanese and Indian migration nor the implicit insults to Japan and India that came with it. It was in this fraught
historical context that Canadian racial nationalists had to navigate the conundrum of Japanese and Indian migration.

**Japan: Challenging the Contours of “Mongolian Conquest”**

In the late 1880s, popular and elite political constructions of the “Oriental invasion” had focused predominantly on Chinese migrants, including in popular visual culture. In the 1885 Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, a U.S. port surveyor, Giles H. Gray, had testified that, unlike Chinese migrants, Japanese migrants assimilate and “adopt our habits when they come here, and there is scarcely any prejudice against them.” However, in the early twentieth century, the notion of a “yellow peril” was expanded to include other “others”: migrants from Japan and India. To revisit the 1908 cartoon discussed in Chapter One, “Looking Ahead: What it may come to if the Oriental invasion is not stopped” (Fig. 1.3), we can see that the “Oriental invasion” now also pictured Japanese and Indian migrants in addition to Chinese.

In this image, we can see emerging physical taxonomies and the creation of racialized conventions of representation. To some degree, however, these visual racial tropes bear out claims of Japanese assimilation. While Chinese migrants are always portrayed

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9 (261) By contrast, while he was generally in favor of Chinese migration, and adamantly spoke out against racism and bigotry, Gray also argued that “[t]he Chinese ought to be compelled by law to separate and to take space to live in the same as white people” (261), which would presumably force them to assimilate as successfully as he thought the Japanese did. Of course, the vehemence of many Pacific Coast whites’ racism would undoubtedly render any such mandated integration impossible.
wearing a long braid, and Indian men are always shown in turbans, Japanese men are almost universally depicted in Western-style dress: namely suits and top hats. However, despite some adoption of Western styles of dress, Japanese migrants are unmistakably seen as part of the “invasion” that threatens to make “whiteness” all but extinct. Thus, these racialized stereotypes serve mainly just to demarcate and to differentiate “otherness”. Racial nationalists saw to it that Japanese men could not be mistaken for “white”, no matter how “Western” their style of dress or their rhetoric of imperial expansion.

Japan's military prowess and emergence as a powerful empire threatened European dominance, even as it won grudging respect from “white men's countries”. The respect with which Japan was treated far surpassed that accorded the Chinese. Japan's stunning military success in the Russo-Japanese War galvanized anti-Japanese sentiment. Because Japanese migration to Canada began two decades after Chinese migration, and involved fewer migrants, it had been largely ignored, as Chinese migration took center stage. But white men's perception of Japanese people changed along with Japan's imperial fortunes. Among white men, “[i]n the early stages of the Russo-Japanese War, there had been some support for the Asian underdog, but opinion changed dramatically as the news of Japanese victories spread” (Lake & Reynolds: 169).

Racial nationalists feared that a triumphant Japan might galvanize people of color across the world to overturn the global racial status quo. Fears of declining dominance
prompted “white men’s countries” to harden the global color line. As historian Akira Iriye has argued, Japanese military success led to increased anti-Asian sentiment in the United States, where "[a]ttempts to arouse mass emotion by talk of a Japanese yellow peril had not been successful before the war” (Lake & Reynolds: 170). With Japan's rise as an imperial power in Asia, the island nation and its inhabitants came to be seen as a threat to the established world order. Anti-Japanese sentiment now found firmer footing throughout the Anglo-colonial world.

Following the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, anti-Japanese feeling was strong throughout North America and the British Dominions. Notions of the “yellow peril” had now been irrevocably expanded to include Japanese migrants. Japanese migrants were now subjected to much of the same poor treatment that had long plagued Chinese migrants, including racial violence. As a 1907 cartoon published in both Jou and AMRR illustrates, this year saw anti-Japanese race riots in San Francisco and Vancouver (Fig. 4.4). The cartoon, “a tale of two cities”, shows a two-headed John Bull perusing newspaper reports about the two “Jap Riots” and which feature similar accounts of both incidents, such as "Japs assaulted" and "maltreated". He is delighted that the U.S. riots might undermine America-Japan relations, but perturbed that the Canadian riot might disrupt Britain’s alliance with Japan.

In 1907, a serious economic recession and dire housing shortage exacerbated existing racial tensions on Canada's Pacific coast (Kelley and Trebilcock: 145). In British
Columbia, people of Chinese ancestry had been prohibited from the provincial franchise in 1875, which automatically disqualified them from voting in federal elections as well (Kelley & Trebilcock: 44). Twenty years later, people of Japanese origin were also barred from the franchise, which as for Chinese, also disqualified them from sitting on juries and practicing professions like law, pharmacy, and teaching (Kelley & Trebilcock: 144). As a result of this legal discrimination and social ostracism, many Chinese and Japanese migrants opened their own businesses, as Asians’ “exclusion from private clubs and other Anglo-dominated institutions...encouraged support of their own social, religious, and economic affiliations” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 144).

**Labor, Class, and Self-Interest**

As with Chinese workers, Japanese workers were often characterized in racialized terms as “cheap” or “coolie” labor that threatened “white men’s jobs”. While most Chinese migrants worked in the laundry and gardening industries, Japanese newcomers gravitated towards fishing and farming.\(^\text{10}\) Despite their relatively low numbers in Canada in the last decade of the nineteenth century – fewer than 10,000 in 1901 – increasing numbers of Japanese fishermen held fishing licenses after 1892 (Kelley & Trebilcock: 143). This and other perceived encroachments in areas of employment

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\(^{10}\) Peter Ward explains that many Japanese migrants were successful business operators, including in the fishing industry. For more, see: Ward, William Peter. *White Canada Forever*. Montreal: McGill-Queens Univ. Pr., 1978.
previously reserved for white men incensed white workers and their trade unions, who
demanded an end to licenses for Japanese fishermen, and accused Japanese workers of
breaking strikes and undercutting the market-value of fish and other commodities
(Kelley & Trebilcock: 144). Popular culture supported and reinforced the idea of
Japanese workers as threatening competitors for whites.

One political cartoon from this era even implied that the presence of Japanese workers
undermined Canada’s ability to negotiate labor and trade issues with the United States.
A 1907 political cartoon from the *B.C. Saturday Sunset* portrays a dockside encounter
between Uncle Sam and British Columbia—depicted as a white workingman (Fig. 4.5).
Uncle Sam holds a fishing net, his left foot perched possessively atop a wooden crate of
"B.C. Salmon". Young Mr. British Columbia explains to him, white man to white man:
"Now, Uncle Samuel, I propose to take over these fisheries and give Canadian boats and
men the benefit of them. Yours will have to go". Uncle Sam responds: "And how about
our brown friend? Will he have to go too?" In the background, we can see two
diminutive Japanese men unpacking the day's catch. Thus, the cartoon suggests that
Canadians cannot negotiate with Americans over pressing national issues of trade and
labor, as long as they continue to permit Japanese laborers to work in the fishing
industry. After all, how could they tell fellow white men that they could not fish in
Canada, if they allowed such “alien races” to do so?
As with anti-Chinese racism during this era, hostility against Asians was often justified on the basis of workers’ rights. But as a government investigation following the September, 7, 1907 Vancouver Riot determined, the violence had “serious racial overtones” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 145-6). So, coupled with increasing migration, the economic downturn, and rumors of tens of thousands more Japanese migrants to come (Kelley & Trebilcock), white men formed the Asiatic Exclusion League and held a public rally in Vancouver in 1907, attended by nearly 10,000 (Walker, 1997: 68). Following the rally, a mob of angry protesters rioted through the Chinese and Japanese neighborhoods of Vancouver. This was the largest race riot in Canadian history, and saw injuries and property damage, though fortunately no deaths (Walker, 1997: 68). While damages were awarded to the Chinese and Japanese communities that suffered mob violence, state officials, notably federal Deputy Minister of Labour Mackenzie King determined that “in the interests of labour harmony and racial homogeneity, measures should be taken to prohibit the importation of contract labour from Japan” (Kelley and Trebilcock: 145).

As a result of the race riots, carefully crafted claims to enlightened civilization and moral superiority of the “white race” were revealed to be empty signifiers. Other socially-constructed categories, such as class distinctions, were also tested. White working class men no doubt blamed elites for not protecting the interests of workingmen, while elites denigrated the working classes for the barbarity and savagery of this shameful display. The riots challenged the exceptionalist notion that Canada was a land of peace,
governed by order and the rule of law. In the end, it was racism—equally mobbish and violent in its Canadian British imperial iteration—that created a “need” for discriminatory immigration laws targeting Japanese nationals. While “the passions that such immigration movements aroused were out of proportion to their size” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 143), existing fears were continually exacerbated by press reports, which presented Japanese migrants not only as inassimilable, but also as numerous and fecund. And as with Chinese immigration, Canadians again looked to Americans' exclusionary agendas in order to craft and to justify their own.

The United States and Japan negotiated a “Gentleman’s Agreement” to limit migration from Japan (1907). In 1908, Canadians quickly followed suit. The same year that Canada negotiated its own Gentleman’s Agreement, a January 11, 1908 article in the *Montreal Daily Star* boasted the dramatic headline: “Japan Must Have Emigration to Live: Mongolian Conquest of Philippines and Australia Only Alternative to Immigration to U.S.”. The article reported that Deputy Nitti, "a prominent politician and sociologist", spoke about Japan-U.S. relations and their implications for the British Empire. The article explained that “with a dense population—surpassing that of Italy—and with an annual birth-rate of half a million over the death rate” Japan relied on emigration. The article went on to argue that “if the United States refuses to permit Japanese immigration...Japan must follow the fatal road towards the Philippines as the first step towards Australia and New Zealand and sooner or later toward Mongolian conquest.” Canada was not specifically mentioned in the article, but the prominent placement of
the article in the country’s largest-circulation English-language newspaper made it clear that this “Mongolian conquest” would not spare Canada.

Clearly, Canadians feared that if British settler colonies in the Pacific, like Australia and New Zealand, succumbed to excessive Japanese migration, Canada would surely be next. Like America, Canada was also part of the Pacific World. Canadian racial nationalists zealously argued that if Americans refused to accept Japanese migrants, those whom the USA rejected would all wind up in Canada. Canada had thus to quickly erect its own exclusion laws to combat the inevitable “influx”. Like the Chinese, Japanese people were considered inferior, unassailable, and undesirable. But unlike China, Britain had entered into an important military, political, and economic alliance with Japan that meant that Britain had no legal grounds on which to control Japanese migration within the Empire.

Britain’s accession to the 1894 Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation meant that “Canada could not bar the entry of Japanese nationals into its territory without abrogating the treaty and risking the loss of a lucrative trading partner” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 146). Any British misstep would jeopardize access to a market of fifty million Japanese consumers for goods from the Empire. The very same racialized population that racial nationalists saw as “invaders” of their white settler colonies, Britain recognized as an important economic partner. The same densely populated island that spouted forth “endless” labor competition for white workers peopled Japan’s
powerful military, which made it a valued ally to protect British interests. Again, important class distinctions came into play, for the upper echelon of Dominion leaders had to appease mother Britannia, and so shared their elite, ruling interests, over workers’ concerns.

Rethinking the Notion of the “Yellow Peril”

The idea of the “yellow peril” homogenized Asian migrants; it was a flimsy catch-all that ignored important distinctions among the migrant groups themselves, and oversimplified U.S. and Canadian political realities. Canadians were acutely aware that they could not treat Japanese migrants as they did Chinese, as popular visual culture makes abundantly clear. A 1903 political cartoon from The Moon (Toronto) illustrates this point (Fig. 4.6). In the image, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier pulls a Chinese man’s braided hair—an act that reflects actual racial violence, both symbolic and physical, endured by Asian migrants on the Pacific coast. Laurier holds a stick labeled: "Chinese tax $500", which depicts the wielding of state power to deter Chinese migrants. A Japanese man in a top hat stands to one side. Both men are portrayed as phenotypically similar—short and darkly shaded. Yet while Chinese man winces in pain from Laurier’s

11 Wilfrid Laurier is an interesting figure. While he was French Canadian, one of his proudest accomplishments was being knighted by Queen Victoria. In terms of relationships within Canada, and between Canada and the Empire, figures like Laurier are complex. Clearly, he was in some ways in collaboration and acceptance with the idea of British imperial supremacy, as were some other French Canadian elites. What is more, while many French Canadians felt marginalized within Canada, on the basis of their ethnicity—namely their French language and Catholicism, which many Anglo-Protestants looked down upon—French Canadians themselves could sometimes be just as unsympathetic as their English Canadians compatriots to the plight of other marginalized populations in Canada.
assault, the Japanese man smiles nonchalantly. During the Meiji era, many Japanese men adopted Western-style attire and military regalia over traditional Japanese dress. The cartoon portrayal might have been an attempt to depict this fashion. However, given the context, it might also have meant to mock the Japanese man's fruitless attempt at "westernization," much as the "John Chinaman" label did with the Chinese.

The most important difference? The Japanese man not only has a sword but a large club of his own labeled “Military Power.” Unlike Prime Minister Laurier, the diminutive Japanese man does not actively brandish this club. Instead, he rests it casually on the ground, though still in plain view—confident of his might, without having to make a show of it. This motif of a small, bold, powerful Japanese man is reminiscent of the 1894 image we saw from The Japan Punch (Fig. 4.3). The cartoon is titled "A Fine Distinction." Fittingly, Laurier exclaims with faux deference: "[t]reat you the same way, Mr. Jap? By no means! I haven't the remotest intention—not while you have that club!" As in many other images about race and nation from this era, we again see Chinese laundries in the background. A white man, labeled "B.C." dances a cheerful jig, in front of the three Chinese businesses: the "Ging Bang", "Fing Wing", and "Ah Lee" laundries.

Visual Vocabularies and Imperial Obligations
Like the ubiquitous laundry, the image of a white man pulling’s a Chinese man’s braid is another recurrent trope of the era. We have already seen hair-pulling in the 1879 cartoon, the “Heathen Chinee in British Columbia” (Fig. 3.1). In North American popular culture during this time, Chinese men’s “pigtails” visually codified their presumed racial otherness. This hairstyle sometimes even figured in real-life violence and harassment. The seemingly cartoonish act of violence was actually practiced in interracial interactions on the Pacific Coast, as a Japanese naval cadet observed. The man noted that he felt “irrepressible anger as an Oriental” when, in San Francisco, he saw “‘white urchins’ harassing Chinese residents, calling them monkeys and pulling their pigtails” (Lake & Reynolds: 169, citing Saeki, 1975).

In portraying the state's complicated stance towards Japan, the 1903 cartoon’s use of the moniker “Mr. Jap” is very significant. Its bizarre combination of respect (“Mr.”) and derision (“Jap”) mirrors how Japanese people were actually viewed and treated in the Anglophone colonial world. For instance, Akira Iriye relates the complaint of American diplomat and war correspondent, Willard Straight, who wrote in a letter that he hated the Japanese and that, although he could not pinpoint exactly why, he believed that it was due to “the constant strain of having to be polite and seek favours from a yellow

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12 This anecdote is also interesting because it illuminates the difference between empires and the individuals who comprise them. Although Japan claimed exceptionalism within Asia to justify its imperial endeavors, and argued that it should be considered “white”, unlike other Asian states—clearly, this Japanese man felt an affinity to other Asians who experienced racism in “white men’s countries”. And in terms of the political cartoon itself, the recurrent trope of hair-pulling across multiple images, decades apart, provides evidence of how visual metaphors of racial difference circulated in popular culture promoting immigration restriction, as well as how racial violence was an inherent part of nationalist discourse—in both its republican and British imperial iterations.
people” (cited in Lake and Reynolds: 170). As with the American diplomat, we see a similarly disingenuous cordiality in the title “Mr. Jap”—and in Laurier's assurance that Canada would accord Japanese migrants at least minimal respect—so long as Japan remained powerful militarily.

In Parliamentary debates from 1900, Laurier had referred to migration from China and Japan as a “double problem”, and conceded: "[t]hat something should be done...the government is prepared to admit." However, he also stated that, due to imperial interconnections between Britain and Japan, “we are not prepared to extend the same treatment to Japanese immigrants as to Chinese immigrants” (Debates, 5th Session, 5th Parliament, 1900: 7408). So to a degree, the very notion of a “Gentleman's Agreement” itself reflects a similar ambivalence to the title “Mr. Jap”. For, as with Chinese, dominant racial stereotypes of Japanese people were that they were “dishonest, unclean, and immoral” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 143). In fact, Laurier suggested that a government commission akin to the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration ought to be conducted on the subject of Japanese migration. Through such an inquiry, Laurier explained: "the views of the people of British Columbia may be placed before the Imperial authorities," and it could be determined “whether or not the Japanese are of the same objectionable character of the Chinese” (Debates, 5th Session, 5th Parliament, 1900: 7408).
But Laurier made it abundantly clear that “Japanese immigration is to be treated differently from Chinese immigration.” Canadians were not in a position to pass the same sort of heavy-handed measures they had clubbed Chinese migrants with: such blanket restrictions were illegal in the case of Japan, since Anglo-Japanese treaties from 1894 and 1905 “provided that ‘subjects of the two High Contracting Parties shall have full liberty to enter, travel, or reside in any part of the dominions and possessions of the other Contracting Party’” (Walker, 1997: 69). What is more, the Japanese were already angry about Canadians’ treatment of their citizens, and would only be further infuriated by any agreement that revoked their treaty rights to enter and live in Canada (Lake & Reynolds: 146). Thus the eventual compromise that the Canadian state artfully negotiated in 1908 balanced the tension between popular white antipathy to Japanese migrants and the legalities of Canada’s position as a British Dominion.

**Regional Tensions**

These imperial tensions were also mirrored in regional tensions within the Canadian nation-state. Canadian debates were a microcosm of larger debates about Japanese migration within the British Empire, which were also shaped by regional interests. As

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13 Notions of racial inferiority, along with the basic desire to bar Japanese migrants, were deeply offensive, even as the mechanisms of restriction were framed in “respectful” terms. While this “respect” was largely spurious, superficial, and purely symbolic, it nonetheless exceeded that granted to many people of color (at this time). First and foremost, having a “gentlemen’s agreement” required recognizing Japanese men as “gentlemen” in the first place. “Gentleman” was far from a racially-neutral term, since it generally only applied to white men, and specifically white men of means. Though China had previously declined to enter a similar agreement to the one negotiated with Japan (Walker, 1997: 69), this terminology is still significant, since it relied upon the idea that Japanese men were honorable and could be trusted to uphold the agreement. In fact, some critics of the policy felt that it was a mistake to rely only upon “the good faith of Japan as an assurance that the limit would be respected” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 146).
with Chinese migration, Japanese migration was largely a regional issue, in which whites in western Canada felt especially threatened by the newcomers. In British Columbia in 1895, there were fewer than 1,000 Japanese people of Japanese ancestry (Kelley and Trebilcock: 144), but by the turn of the century, there were nearly 5,000 (Kelley and Trebilcock: 143). Between the years 1900 and 1915, 16,000 Japanese migrants in total arrived in Canada, more than 83 percent of them residing in British Columbia (Kelley and Trebilcock: 143). This was a minuscule percentage of the total immigration to Canada—with Japanese comprising well under two percent of migrants—fewer than half of whom remained in Canada: most returned home or moved to the United States (Kelley and Trebilcock: 143). However, Japanese migration was still construed as a threat to white workers on the Pacific Coast, especially in certain industries, such as fishing (Kelley and Trebilcock: 143). Fishermen’s unions strongly opposed migration from Japan.

The Member of Parliament who raised the issue of Asian migration in the 1900 Debate, E.G. Prior of Victoria, B.C., claimed: “I cannot find words properly to express the intense feeling that there is on this subject, especially among the working classes of British Columbia.” After asking to “claim the indulgence of the House for a few moments”—and thus beginning a debate that raged on for the equivalent of hundreds of pages of print transcription, Prior explained: “[i]t is a disagreeable duty for me to perform to have to get up every year...and bring this matter [up].” But, he complained, he had good reason, as “the immigration of Chinese and Japanese into this country” was one of “the most important matters before the Canadian House of Commons to-day” (Report
Debates, 5th Session, 5th Parliament, 1900: 7052), and yet some members of Parliament inappropriately failed to recognize it as such.

Prior went on to complain: “last session when I was speaking on the subject I was constantly interrupted by hon. gentleman on the other side of the House, and I believe by one or two on this side, asking me to stop, as they were tired of hearing of it. Well, Mr. Speaker, if they are tired of hearing about it now, they would be still more tired if they had the same influx of Chinese and Japanese as we have in British Columbia today” (7052). Prior insisted, “it is on the Pacific coast that all these undesirable immigrants land, and it is the working classes of British Colombia who are brought into competition with them in the various lines of industry they undertake” (7052). He went on to chastise Members of Parliament from other regions for not caring enough about the plight of Western Canada: “I may say that the people of British Columbia have a right to expect that the government should take some stand in the matter and stop the influx of these men”.¹⁴

As the editor at the Anti-Asian British Columbia Saturday Sunset complained in 1907, “[t]he attitude of the Eastern press on the Asiatic immigration question in this Province

¹⁴ The importance of regionalism was acknowledged at the highest level of government. Some residents of western Canada felt let down by the federal government. Prior makes this clear, citing an 1896 letter from Laurier as a past promise that some action should have already been taken by 1900. Prior read out a question for the Prime Minister from J.C. McLagan, Editor of Vancouver World, asking: “Do you favour restriction of Chinese immigration and reserving Canada for Canadians, and not the Mongolian race?” Prior then indignantly read out Laurier’s response before Parliament: “Chinese immigration restriction is not a question in the east. Views of the Liberals in the west will prevail with me” (7052).
betrays the usual apathy and indifference to the matters pertaining to British Columbia.” He goes on to condemn most eastern Canadian newspapers for their unsympathetic position,\textsuperscript{15} including: “[t]he London Free Press [(Ontario) which] thinks that a serious condition may arise some time in British Columbia as a result of the influx of Orientals, but advises the [B.C.] Provincial Government not to forget its duty to Great Britain in this, its great and trying hour when Japanese friendship is so essential to the welfare of the British Empire, or words to that effect” (\textit{B.C. Saturday Sunset}, August 10, 1907).

\textbf{Warring White Men and the 1907 Vancouver Race Riot}

As we know, a “serious condition” did indeed arise, and the \textit{B.C. Saturday Sunset} helped to catalyze it. For in the very same issue in which it railed against “apathetic” eastern newspapers, the\textit{ Sunset} reported that “[t]he Asiatic Exclusion League...was formed in this city this week [and] offers an opportunity to all who are opposed to the settlement of this Province by Asiatic coolies to enroll themselves.” The article quotes the league's official mandate “to work for the exclusion from Canada, its territories and possessions of [sic] all Asiatics by the enforcement of an act similar to the Natal Act, and for this purpose invite in this city and Province all people who believe in this principle”. Despite being vocally critical of the political positions of many Eastern Canada newspapers, he

\textsuperscript{15} With the exception of the Toronto Globe which he says is “[d]oing more for a white British Columbia than all the rest of the Eastern press together and with the Conservative press of Vancouver on top for good measure” (\textit{B.C. Saturday Sunset}, August 10, 1907).
explained that membership in the Exclusion League is open to “all men who hold that British Columbia should be a white man's country, [even] irrespective of what their opinions on any other political subject may be”. Regardless of divergent politics on any number of issues, white men were urged to band together in popular solidarity to work for a single goal: Asian exclusion. And they did, for the 1907 Vancouver race riot occurred less than a month later, on September 7.\(^{16}\)

The riot was in part a result of regional tensions and local frustration over perceived federal inattention to their plight. For as James W. St. G. Walker explains in his legal history of racism in Canada, “[t]he Vancouver riot of 1907 was the culmination of a 'constitutional tango' between Ottawa and Victoria[, British Columbia] on the issue of Asian immigration” (Walker, 1997: 69). This tango within the nation-state/between provinces mirrors transnational and trans-imperial tension and ambivalence. Canada's federal government, as with imperial leadership in London, England, and Tokyo, Japan, interpreted the Anglo-Japanese treaties as “preclud[ing] specific restrictions against Japanese” (69).

In the end, the riot raised sufficient government fear of future unrest on the Pacific coast to prompt Prime Minister Laurier to dispatch cabinet minister Rodolphe Lemieux

\(^{16}\) The B.C. Saturday Sunset played an important role by announcing and promoting the League and its meetings, so its anti-Asian political discourse and racist political cartoons went hand in hand with organizing protests.
to Tokyo, to work out an arrangement with Japan. In the resulting Hayashi-Lemieux Gentlemen's Agreement (1908) (also known as the “Lemieux Agreement”), Japan agreed to limit the “number of emigration passports issued to its subjects en route to Canada to 400 a year, providing that the agreement was portrayed as a voluntary restraint and that the number would remain secret” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 46). Migration was limited to 400 male immigrants and domestic servants per year, as well as returning migrants and their immediate families.17 Later, in 1928, the number was further restricted, permitting only 150 Japanese nationals to migrate to Canada each year.

The Gentlemen’s Agreement satisfied neither party, but it allowed both states to save face—particularly Japan, which could posture as though this arrangement was far more consensual than it actually was. True to his word, Lemieux refused to reveal the agreed-upon number, even in the wake of press speculation and public exaggeration of the mysterious number. Japan’s government also honored the agreement, with the caveat that they could only apply it to Japanese nationals who embarked for Canada directly from Japan. Japanese officials arguably had a greater impetus to keep the number secret, likely embarrassed by how relatively low it was—especially for a state with a population of tens of millions—and given that migration to Canada from England and

17 Japanese women were not encouraged to come to Canada, but this agreement also saw the rise of “Picture brides” as a common phenomenon in Japanese communities in Canada and the United States. This was a system in which women migrated from Japan to marry men they had never met. This widespread practice represented an effort to rectify gender imbalances on the Pacific coast, by taking advantage of a loophole in the Gentleman’s Agreements, which allowed the immediate families of Japanese immigrants to join them. In 1921, Japan stopped issuing passports to “picture brides” at U.S. insistence, and same year, California wrote laws that allowed for racially segregated schools.
other “white” countries remained high. But like Canada and England, Japan was also in a bind. Japanese leaders wanted to prove themselves to be honorable and worthy to sit at the table of global politics alongside white men, but they had conceded a great deal. Like Britain, Japan wanted to preserve the benefits of its alliance. Indeed, what emerging power would not want the most powerful empire in the world as its ally?

Ultimately, the issue of Japanese migration spawned not only a “constitutional tango”, but also an “imperial tango.” In this dance, racial nationalists wanted to lead, not follow. But of course, Canada’s racial nationalists could not lead the British Empire, and had no choice but to allow themselves to be led. So they did what was within their power: urge others to join their cause, and criticize what they saw as Britain’s misguided priorities. Popular culture also expressed some Canadians’ frustration. The period around 1907 saw widespread anti-Japanese sentiment and depictions of exclusionary ideas of race, nation, and empire. Political cartoons about Japanese migration sometimes captured the tension and complexity of relationships within the nation-state, the British Empire, and between Empires, as we saw in the “Mr. Jap” image. However, political cartoons sometimes took a far simpler tack—distilling down complex and
contradictory agendas to simple wish fulfillment, albeit with an embedded critique of Britain.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{Political Cartoons as Wish-Fulfillment Fantasy}

A 1907 \textit{B.C. Saturday Sunset} cartoon shows a winsome, young Miss British Columbia approaching paternal John Bull as he aloofly considers "international treaties". Miss B.C. entreats, "Now, Mr. Bull, have you really any objections to my keeping these Japs out of my province to make room for your sons and daughters?" (Fig. 4.7). Looking distracted, John Bull replies "Certainly not, my dear, I have no interest in the matter. Do as you please". The image suggests that Britain should have larger concerns and leave it up to Canadians to determine their own racial destiny, treaty provisions notwithstanding. This wish-fulfilling image imagines a non-existent degree of Canadian autonomy, and conveniently ignores the fact that the alliance with Japan was a pressing international issue for Britain. Beneath the cartoon’s wistful mask is an embedded racial nationalist critique: that Britain should want to reserve Canada for its white “sons and daughters”—and should also give Canadians the power to choose their compatriots. And as if to further highlight ideas of racial \textit{difference} and \textit{distance}, both Miss B.C. and John Bull are elevated in the foreground—their attire emblazoned with gigantic Union

\textsuperscript{18} We already saw one such image in chapter A, in the 1907 political cartoon of John Bull berating a Japanese imperialist: “Jappy, I didn’t agree to let you dab your bloomin’ yellow over my red spots when I allied with you” (Fig. 1.4). The cartoon’s title? "What it Should be". Unsurprisingly, this cartoon ran in the \textit{B.C. Saturday Sunset}.  

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Jacks, to highlight their Britishness and whiteness—as “alien” Japanese workers chop and carry lumber on the docks behind and below.

Fantasies of self-determination and racial homogeneity are taken further still in another 1907 political cartoon, this one from The Globe. In the image, we see “Imperial Poet,” Rudyard Kipling, who visited Canada that year, mediates an encounter between young Jack Canuck and stuffy John Bull (Fig. 4.8). In the image, titled, "Happy Thought! (Rudyard to the Rescue)", Kipling explains: "I have it! Listen, now. Cram the country full of your own kinspeople, and there simply won't be room for the Asiatics!" Of course, racial nationalists had already long promoted this approach to immigration, but Kipling's international acclaim and writings on imperialism lent an air of credibility to his stroke of inspiration. As in many other images from this time, this encounter takes place in front of Asian-owned businesses. These include "O’Yama", and "Jiu Jitsu Japanese goods", the building topped with the Japanese imperial “rising sun” flag. This allusion to Japan as a “rising sun” in the game of imperialism suggests a cautionary warning to curtail Japanese migration, while it was still possible—lest the sun set on the British Empire in Western Canada, and shine on Japan instead.

In keeping with the established visual vocabulary that spanned decades of portrayals of race and nation, we again see the ubiquitous Chinese laundries. But in this image, the

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19 Kipling was described as the "Imperial Poet" in the Leader Post (Regina, Saskatchewan) in a May 18, 1914 article.
businesses are not dubbed in the usual pseudo-Chinese gibberish. Instead, intelligible names were carefully chosen to highlight an anti-Asian political agenda: "Wee Cum Yet" and "Ah Yu Git Go Chinese." As if these names left any ambiguity, a large group of white men carries placards and marches in protest, hoisting signs reading: "The Asiatics must go"; "Canada for white men"; and "No cheap labor." This is one of the most remarkable portrayals of Japanese migration. While most political cartoons portrayed interracial encounters on the Pacific Coast, this image erased raced bodies from the nation-state entirely. Asian-owned businesses and white antipathy are the only signs of Japanese and Chinese presence in Western Canada.

In addition to Japanese and Chinese migrants, another racialized population is notably absent from the image—Indians: British imperial subjects just like Kipling, John Bull, Jack Canuck, and the demonstrators pictured here. We saw how, with the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, white Canadians invited American “experts” to testify about the “Chinese question”—to and share their arguments in favor of immigration restriction or inclusion. But to solve the quandary of Indian immigration, Canadian racial nationalists could only turn to fellow British imperial white men, who could understand the complexity of their conundrum. At least in the forum of the political cartoon, Kipling’s visit was opportune; it allowed racial nationalists to cast him perfectly, as an “expert” on both imperialism and on India.

*Rudyard Kipling: Whiteness, Imperialism, and Masculinity*
Rather than interracial encounters, as featured in most political cartoons, what we see in “Rudyard to the Rescue” is an exceptional encounter among three white men. Jack Canuck, John Bull, and Rudyard Kipling represent different faces and facets of British imperial whiteness and masculinity: Canadian colonial, British metropolitan, and intra-imperial. This image is provocative on many levels, especially in its use of white male bodies and erasure of brown bodies. As we see from protesters’ signs, this cartoon takes the idea of a “Canada for white men” seriously, in the realm of wish-fulfillment.

The notion of “serious wish-fulfillment” may sound like an oxymoron. However, the cartoon foments fantasies of whiteness and racial homogeneity even as it serves a polemical function calculated to turn this fantasy into reality. The image promotes public protest, alongside Kipling’s exhortation to people the plains with white “kinspeople.” Racial nationalists resented the complex constraints that imperial politics placed upon Canada’s imagined community. So in this fantastical image, the pesky “yellow peril” is simply wished away, and viewers are ushered into a vision of what Canada could be—if Asians could simply be crowded out by British “kinspeople” who were “crammed” into Western Canada, and if Britain and Eastern Canadian elites would allow white Canadians to chart their own racial destiny.

Given the vastness of western Canada, the ‘crowding’ strategy seems implausible. Yet Kipling is made a mouthpiece for existing racial nationalist views—his ‘inspired’ idea was in fact a time-worn trope dating back four decades. What did it mean to take Kipling as
an authority? What does it mean that a real person—albeit a larger-than-life literary figure—stands between the two archetypes of the Canadian nation-state and the British Empire, mediating discussions of migration? To answer this question, we must first consider what Kipling symbolized for the British Empire. Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was a poet, novelist, and short-story writer, whose work was extremely popular in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth century English-speaking world. Born in Bombay to Anglo-Indian parents, Kipling was taken to England at the age of six, and later returned to India at the age of seventeen. There he traveled extensively as a journalist. Later, as a writer, he set many of his fictional works in India. Kipling received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907, at an the award ceremony in which the presenter claimed that Kipling’s writings “abundantly reflected” a “firm grasp of the true inwardness of all things Indian” and “have brought India nearer home to the English nation than has the construction of the Suez Canal.”

Exactly what was meant by “inwardness” is unclear. But what is clear is that Kipling inhabited an important place in imperial imaginings of India and Indian-ness.

20 "Anglo-Indian" was a common nineteenth century term people of British origin living in India. In "Distant Possessions—the Parting of the Ways" (1898), Andrew Carnegie gives a better sense of the idea of Anglo-Indians, writing that "[t]he child of English-speaking parents must be removed and reared in Britain. The British Indian official must have long respite in his native land" (240). Colonial endeavors were fraught with fears of white colonists "losing" their "civilization", i.e. "going native" and reverting to a state of primitiveness, savagery, or barbarity.

21 This quote is worth reproducing in full: “This firm grasp of the true inwardness of all things Indian is abundantly reflected in Kipling’s writings, so much so that it has even been said that they have brought India nearer home to the English nation than has the construction of the Suez Canal” Award Ceremony Speech: “Presentation Speech by C.D. af Wirsén, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy”, on December 10, 1907.  

Kipling has generally been seen as an avowed imperialist, though others argue that his views were actually more nuanced and inconsistent. Benita Parry argues that “[m]ore than any other single author, Kipling articulated the pride which a segment of the British people took in seeing themselves as a nation of law-givers, for it was he who gave a spurious grandeur to their posturing, and endowed the discomforts of the job of imperial ruler with the glory of suffering and sacrifice” (2004: 190) By contrast, others have argued for Kipling’s hybridity and ambivalence, since he himself was “both a product of the colonial power...and a product of the colonized, having lived in India.”

Some scholars have cited textual evidence of imperial ambivalence in his fictional writings as proof of a more complex position. However, his 1899 poem “White Man’s Burden”, which I will discuss shortly, seems to unabashedly celebrate the duty and sacrifice attributed to the imperial “mission”. Perhaps his opinions varied over his lifetime, or perhaps he found ambivalence tolerable in fiction, if not in reality. In any case, Kipling was an important figure for both England and the Empire.

As the first English-language writer to receive the Nobel Prize, and the youngest Literature Laureate to-date, Kipling was an important figure, and a source of pride to the Empire. Through his innovative narrative forms and fictional characters, often children or English colonial soldiers stationed in India, Kipling represented India for the European

and Anglo-colonial imagination. Perhaps because of his own association with imperialism, or perhaps simply because of his identity as an Anglo-Indian, Kipling’s personal literary renown was bound up with admiration for the British Empire itself. The closing line of the award speech for Kipling, held in December 1907, stated that “[t]he Swedish Academy, in awarding the Nobel Prize in Literature this year to Rudyard Kipling, desires to pay a tribute of homage to the literature of England, so rich in manifold glories, and to the greatest genius in the realm of narrative that that country has produced in our times.” The “glory” and “genius” of England was personified in the figure of Kipling.

Kipling was not only a prolific writer; he was also an exemplar of white British imperial masculinity. The Nobel Prize was officially awarded "in consideration of the power of observation, originality of imagination, virility of ideas and remarkable talent for

23 “Facts on the Nobel Prize in Literature” nobelprize.org
24 Award Ceremony Speech Presentation Speech by C.D. af Wirsén, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy, on December 10, 1907
narration which characterize the creations of this world-famous author." So "glory", "genius", "talent", "fame", and "virility" were virtues publically attributed to Kipling. These traits were inextricably linked to notions of whiteness and masculinity in this era. So the choice to feature Kipling in the 1907 political cartoon played on his status as a famous figure; his role as an exemplar of British imperial masculinity; and his simultaneous insider and outsider status—at once a product of England and India. Kipling was presumably privy to "insider" experiences, which—in the imperial imaginary—vested him with special authority to comment on questions of race, nation, and empire.

In “Rudyard to the Rescue”, Kipling is literally pictured between nation and Empire—this one man granted the same symbolic status as Jack Canuck’s Canada and John Bull’s Britain. In fact, it is Kipling who is vested with the knowledge and expertise to choreograph the intricate “imperial tango.” The image implies that Kipling’s subjective status grants him a god-like vantage point, so he can mediate the debate. The “imperial poet” represents Englishness and the Empire, but promotes the perspective of Canadian racial nationalists. In this cartoon conversation between three white men, the use of Kipling—a real-life figure of white masculinity, while the others are archetypes of nation and empire—helps reconcile complexity. The image at once erases and invokes the


Empire and its role in complex and competing claims on Canadian immigration policy. Using an important literary figure, the cartoon counts on Kipling’s credibility and also vests him with superhuman status, while having him advocate the very same views that racial nationalists had already been promoting for years.

This image is not only remarkable because of its complicated use of Kipling and imagining of wish-fulfilling racial homogeneity and Canadian autonomy. It is also significant due to of its historical context as a piece of material culture. Not only was 1907 the year that Kipling received the Nobel Prize and visited Canada; it was also the year of the anti-Asian race riot in Vancouver. In fact, given that the cartoon ran in October 1907, following the September riot, it is entirely possible that this cartoon is actually representing the riot itself. It is significant that this cartoon ran in the wake of a race riot, yet nonetheless presents a peaceful protest of civil white men, rather than a violent interracial clash. Unlike Vancouver’s Chinese community, the Japanese community was armed and ready to defend themselves, so some white rioters were also injured as a result (Walker, 1997: 68), though all the property damage was sustained by immigrant business in “Japantown” that the white mob targeted.

26 The cartoon ran in The Globe, published in Toronto, so this was not a case of Pacific Coast whites representing themselves. Rather, it was a national newspaper, published in eastern Canada, representing Vancouver’s white men for the nation. Given regional tensions, it is unclear whether the cartoon is critical or supportive of the anti-Asian agenda presented in the cartoon. There is certain ambivalence in the image, and it is not entirely clear whether or not readers are supposed to identify with the protestors, or even whether this image is intended primarily as a form of reporting.
By erasing this confrontation, and even the migrants, the cartoon is a comment upon white masculinity in general, not just Kipling’s in particular, though by extension his positive traits certainly grace the other white men in the image. As with non-whites, women are also notably absent. Supposedly, their place was not in the public sphere. In fact, many women were politically active, especially on issues of suffrage and women’s rights—as well as on immigration issues—as we saw with Agnes Laut in Chapter One. But this political cartoon is first and foremost about white men. In the image, they take to public places to protect their power and privilege. Thus, the image is crafted in a way that reinforces notions of cultural superiority, albeit presented in a very Canadian way: as peaceful, orderly, civil, and law-abiding: presented, in short, as very different from the actual riots. So in addition to fantasies of racial (and even gender) homogeneity, the image also perpetuates fantasies of British-Canadian white male civility.

*The White Man’s Burden and Myths of Civility and White Supremacy*

Despite the manifest incivility of colonialism, fantasies of white male civility were not at odds with imperialism, but rather were used to support these expansionist endeavors. Kipling had written “The White Man’s Burden” (1899) to the United States, to urge Americans to “take up the White Man’s Burden” in the Philippine Islands. It was published in the February issue of *McClure’s Magazine*, an American monthly periodical. The poem promotes the idea of imperialism as a heavy, thankless duty to ‘civilize’, owed
by white men to their inferiors, as well as to their “race”. Kipling exhorts white men to do their part, to shoulder the burden of empire, as Britain had done and “[s]end forth the best ye breed”, “[t]o serve your captives' need”. In return for sending their “sons to exile”, Americans would “reap” the white man’s “old reward: /The blame of those ye better/The hate of those ye guard”. By citing the colonized peoples, Kipling presents imperialism as a tiresome responsibility, to be forborne as a racial duty, since non-white people were not capable of governing themselves.

In Kipling’s account, these “new-caught, sullen peoples” were “[h]alf devil and half child”, and so needed to be ruled accordingly, with or without their consent. But resentment aside, shouldering this “white man’s burden” and accepting Britain’s “lightly proffered laurel” would yield other rewards. Americans could be “done with childish days”, prove their “manhood” and earn “[t]he easy, ungrudged praise” of their “peers”. The poem “White Man’s Burden,” not only suggests that the world was watching to see whether Americans would accept the challenge, but it also legitimates Britain’s own imperial project. While the poem was written to encourage American imperialism in the Philippines, it clearly has far broader relevance for European colonialism and ideas of race and citizenship more generally. In the imperial imaginary, whiteness, civilization, and Christianity, were seen as the basis on which “manhood” was constructed; this also

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27 In From Slavery to a Bishopric (1891), Celestine Edwards makes a reference to some of the views that Kipling would later express in “White Man’s Burden” (1899). Edwards wrote that “the nations who glory in the knowledge of their being members of the Aryan family, or some other real or imaginary race, take a pride in perpetually reminding the Negro of the inferiority of his kind: that he is a savage, or at least a child, who does not improve in intelligence, though he develops in body” (xv).
required the invention of the opposite category—“sullen” devil-children who needed to be governed.

This said, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent Kipling saw masculinity, civilization, and imperial prowess directly as a function of race, and to what extent it was something far more nuanced. To complicate an already complicated figure even more, let us briefly turn to a 1905 image that ran in *Punch* two years before the publication of “Rudyard to the Rescue”. The political cartoon celebrates the forging of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (Fig. 4.9). The image shows a burly John Bull shaking hands with a Japanese soldier in similar Western-style military attire. John Bull holds his Union Jack flag, while Japan's rising sun billows in the background, highlighting both states’ imperialism. Below the cartoon’s caption, "Allies," lies a short poem by Rudyard Kipling, dated October 4, 1905. “Allies” expresses what seems like a very different sentiment from that in “White Men’s Burden.” Or perhaps Kipling simply welcomes Japan into the club, encouraging Japanese imperialism in Asia and military alliance with Britain. The poem reads "Oh, East is East, and West is West.../But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,/When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth".

This poem seems to define masculinity primarily in terms of domination and power, rather than as a result of race, *per se*. Here, the meeting of “two strong men” defies “border”, “breed”, and “birth”, and allows them to “stand face to face” in mutual
respect and esteem. However, the poem also reinforces the separation of East and West. East and West are not the same. But strength and conquering manhood can apparently overcome some of the barriers that exist between these two men. Unlike in “Rudyard to the Rescue”, here Kipling promotes the strategic interests of the British Empire over the parochial self-interest of racial nationalists. Yet the fact remains that both the Empire and its Dominions were founded on racial inequality. If the Empire can make occasional exceptions when doing so ensures its continued dominance, this is hardly evidence of a disposition towards radical equality. In fact, all empires rely on inequality, racial and otherwise.

**India: Imperialism, Immigration, Independence**

Regardless of the respect selectively granted some non-white peoples, as with imperial Japan, conceptions of white civility, Christianity, and civilization formed the ideological basis on which Britain meted out unequal rights and different entitlements to its subjects throughout the Empire. In the imperial model, not all states could become semi-autonomous dominions. Most colonies throughout the “non-white world”—in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America—were viewed by European colonizers as fonts of labor and raw resources that could be extracted to enrich the metropoles. And enrich the metropoles they did.²⁸ So Britain and other European powers rushed to

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²⁸For more about the economic consequences of colonialism for both colonies and colonizers, see:
carve up the globe, to their benefit. In return, these colonized “subject peoples” would, not receive citizenship or suffrage in return for their role in the Empire, unlike those in dominions, but instead the ‘gifts’ of Christianity and “civilization”.

In “Distant Possessions—the Parting of the Ways” (1898), published in the North American Review, Andrew Carnegie argued “that Britain has done a great deal of work as the mother of nations is becoming more and more appreciated.... No nation that ever existed has done so much for the progress of the world as the little islands in the North Sea” (240). But even as he praised Britain for its efforts to westernize the world, Carnegie stridently opposed imperialism as antithetical to American national values, asking: “[i]s the Republic, the apostle of Triumphant Democracy, of the rule of the people, to abandon her political creed and endeavor to establish in other lands the rule of foreigner over the people, Triumphant Despotism?” (239) Carnegie’s article came out the year before Kipling published “The White Man’s Burden”, and Kipling’s seemingly pro-imperialist poem might have even been a response to Carnegie’s effort to discourage American annexation of the Philippines.29

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29 It is also possible that Kipling wrote this poem intending for it to be taken as ironic or tongue-in-cheek, though the dominant interpretation of the poem is as a literal exhortation to participate in foreign imperialism.
Indian Migration and Challenging Colonialism

Carnegie takes issue with imperialism in the “non-white world” in particular. In “Distant possessions”, Carnegie lays out the distinction between self-governing colonies and “possessions”, explaining that the difference was first and foremost one of race. In dominions: "we establish and reproduce our own race. Thus Britain has peopled Canada and Australia with English-speaking people, who have naturally adopted our ideas of self-government. That the world has benefited thereby goes without saying.” By contrast: “[t]he characteristic feature of a 'dependency' is that the acquiring power cannot reproduce its own race there” (240). Carnegie mentions India specifically, writing that “[t]he most grievous burden which Britain has upon her shoulders is that of India, for there it is impossible for our race to grow...India means death to our race” (240, emphasis mine).

As an Anglo-Indian who had chosen to spend much of his life in India, Rudyard Kipling would likely have begged to differ. If Kipling had read Carnegie’s anti-imperialist essay of the previous year, perhaps he set out to counter Carnegie’s critique, by reframing the imperial “burden” as a noble responsibility white men owed to the world—an undertaking that paved the way to manhood, maturity, and glory. Britain certainly

30 "Distant Possessions—the Parting of the Ways". *The North American Review*. issue CLXVII. 240. Carnegie actually uses the term “colonies” rather than “dominions.” However, it is clear that he defines “colony” as semi-autonomous, which not all British colonies were, so I have substituted the term “dominion”, since it better captures the intended meaning.
viewed its imperial prowess as a testament to its greatness, as did Anglo-Canadians and other settler colonies of the British Empire. These settler Dominions were both the products of imperialist ventures, and agents of imperialism themselves.

But it was a little trickier to convince Indians and other “subject peoples” that membership benefitted them—particularly when they were told that they were not welcome in “white men’s countries” of the very Empire to which they were alleged to belong. What then was the point of imperial membership in the first place? Indians could obviously see how differently the imperial government treated these “brown brothers” than their white counterparts. If the Anglo-Japanese alliance complicated Canada’s exclusion efforts, because of the intricacies of British imperial politics, then migration from India complicated them all the more so.

A 1908 cartoon from the Montreal Daily Star is strikingly critical of imperial hypocrisy. The image shows an Indian man being pelted with stones and debris in British Columbia. The “Hindoo British Subject” muses in dismay "Alas! I must be mistaken! I thought the word 'British' meant Freedom and Liberty!" (Fig. 4.10) This picture perfectly captures the tensions of race, nation, and empire manifest in the issue of migration from India. On the one hand, Indians were British subjects, part of the Empire. On the other hand, they were not “white” and, like other people of color, were portrayed as an anathema to European migration and national greatness. These “brown brothers” who were at once “British” and “others” posed the most complicated conundrum Canadian racial
nationalists faced. The complexity of the imperial relationship between Britain and India raised competing conceptions of both nation and Empire.

For what was at stake was not only freedom of mobility in the context of the global color bar, but also the imperial ideal itself. Just as questions of Chinese migration raised queries about the veracity of national exceptionalism, the quandary over Indian migration dealt a blow to mythologies of imperial exceptionalism. Was this great Empire to be embarrassed before its darker-skinned subjects by failing to control Canadian contrarians? And not just imperial pride was at stake, but also the massive economic, political, and military benefits Britain derived from colonized India. So the imperial tango continued, its intricacy increasing.

**Historical Background on Indian Migration to Western Canada**

The first South Asians had begun to arrive in Canada between 1903 and 1906. Virtually all of them were Punjabi, and 95 percent were Sikhs, despite the Sikhs comprising a minority in India’s province of Punjab. Indian immigration was initially unregulated, and the first Punjabis who arrived on the west coast of Canada went almost unnoticed, obscured by the attention concentrated on the perceived threat of Japanese and

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Chinese migrants. Initially, there was no “agitation” against this population, and “[t]hey generally enjoyed all of the rights and privileges of British subjects in Canada” (Buchignani, et al: 17). While some of the first migrants, many of whom had served in the British Indian army, possessed knowledge of English and of European customs (Buchignani, et al: 17), this same Britishness later became a liability. “Local hysteria mounted when it was realized that as British subjects South Asians were eligible to vote”, and “[l]urid stories in the local press warned of the danger to ‘white women’ posed by South Asians” (Buchignani, et al: 19). When 125 migrants arrived in October 1907 aboard the Empress of Japan, federal officials allowed the ship to dock, but local Vancouver city police intervened, and the city government unsuccessfully tried to force them to return to Hong Kong (19).

Canadian racial nationalists deemed Indian migrants to be part of the “yellow peril”, despite their status as subjects of the British Empire. J.S. Woodsworth wrote in Strangers Within our Gates (1909) that Indians, like Asians in general, “constitute an entirely distinct class or caste. They have their own (154) virtues and vices; their own 

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32 Buchignani, et al: 18

Hugh Johnston explains that Indians were initially “encouraged by the Hong Kong agents of the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.), who were seeking to replace steerage traffic lost after the Canadian government had raised the head tax on Chinese immigrants” (Johnston: 2). At the time, the only direct steamship service from India to Canada was offered by the CPR, but the Canadian government pressured them to end the service. Although the company initially fought against these policies in court, the government soon moved to make it unprofitable, thereby ending any profit-driven motive for racial inclusion. Although railway and lumber companies wanted Indian workers to migrate, “local politicians, dancing to the tune of Trades and Labour Councils, were hostile, and the press supported a vicious and uninformed campaign” (Johnston: 3). As Johnston explains, politicians and labor leaders had opposed immigration from Asia since it began in the 1870s and 1880s, when the CPR recruited workers from China. In 1907, in the midst of economic downturn and increased Asian immigration, the Trades and Labour Council “spawned” the Asiatic Exclusion League, which was aligned with anti-Asian groups in California (Johnston: 4).

moral standards and religious beliefs. The Orientals cannot be assimilated (155). He also added in his section on “The Hindu” that “[c]ertain objections hold true with regard to all of these Eastern peoples. It is true that they may be able to do much of the rough work for which it is difficult to secure sufficient white labor; but when they enter, the whites are out, and out permanently” (154).

Woodsworth’s fellow racial nationalist, Agnes Laut, echoed his sentiments about Indian undesirability, and the ostensible repellent and threatening quality they represented to whites. Laut explains that “[a] few years ago British Columbia was at her wit’s ends for laborers—men for the mills, the mines, the railroads. India was at her wit's ends because of surplus of labor... Her people were literally starving for the right to live” (141). But asylum myths aside, many Canadians felt they did not owe their fellow imperial brethren a right to live, especially if the interests of their “brown brothers” apparently conflicted with their own racial nationalist ones.

Despite her imagining western Canada as a land of promise where hard work would be rewarded, Laut’s sympathies did not lie with Indian migrants trying to improve their circumstances. Rather, Laut saw upward mobility, like geographic mobility, as something that should be reserved for “whites only.” Laut went on to argue that “[t]he Hindus came tumbling in at the rate of six thousand in a single year, when, suddenly, British Columbia, inert at first, awakened and threatened to secede or throw the newcomers into the sea” (142). As they did with Japan, Canadian racial nationalists
sought to eliminate migration from India, regardless of stated imperial values and the problems that such a move might cause the imperial government.

In contrast to popular sentiment, the Canadian federal government was concerned about upsetting Britain and jeopardizing its already-troubled relationship with India — where some anti-imperialists demanded increased autonomy and self-governance. Yet that same government also had to respond to its Canadian constituents, some of whom outspokenly opposed migration from India. Although efforts had long existed to curtail Chinese migration, Prime Minister Laurier was reluctant to limit the movement of British subjects. But in the wake of the 1907 race riot by the Asiatic Exclusion League, which affected Indian communities as well as Japanese and Chinese, Laurier decided to act. His Liberal government had already passed laws to disenfranchise Indian migrants, but now sought means to ban their entry into Canada altogether. This was a delicate matter since Canadian officials hoped to avoid exacerbating anti-British colonial sentiments in India (Buchignani, et al: 23). After all, “[w]hat kind of an Empire was it that did not allow free movement of its subject people?” (Johnston: 4).

**Literacy Tests and the Natal Act**

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33 Many white Canadians were invested in perpetuating white supremacy in Canada, and as their numbers grew, Sikhs became the targets of systematic employment and housing discrimination (Buchignani et al: 18). By 1906 and 1907, government and popular attitudes towards Sikhs also began to harden, especially once it was realized that as British citizens, Sikhs could vote, and groups like the Asiatic Exclusion League were formed (Buchignani et al: 22). Official measures were quickly enacted to disfranchise Sikhs, and in March 1907, they were barred from voting in municipal elections, and by default in federal elections as well (Buchignani et al: 19).
These national tensions were mirrored at the imperial level. The 1908 political cartoon perfectly captured the inherent tensions of this historical moment of migration. Imperial leaders forbade an outright ban on Indian immigration, and also opposed a head tax of the sort imposed on Chinese migrants. “The British India government had been worried for some time that a direct Canadian ban on immigration would be seized upon by Indian ‘seditionists’ and revolutionaries, who were on the rise in 1907” (Buchignani: 23). Britain, hoping to appease both their Indian critics and Canadian racial nationalists, urged Canadians not to rock the boat, and to find some way of limiting migration without blatantly violating the principles of imperial unity that Britain actively preached in India. “Colonial Secretaries insisted that the Empire was free of racial distinctions, at the same time urging Canadian governments to disguise their discriminatory restrictions behind tactical euphemisms such as literacy tests in a European language” (Walker, 1997: 24).

As Laurier explained in the House of Commons: [i]It has been suggested that we ought to apply the Natal Act.” What the Canadian Prime Minister termed the “Natal Act” was officially the South African Immigration Restriction Act of 1897, first enacted in the British colony of Natal, one the four self-governing colonies that federated in 1910 as the Union of South Africa, the fourth British overseas Dominion. Laurier explained to the Canadian Parliament how such legislation would work: “The Natal Act applies to all Asiatics, and is absolutely prohibitive...It would be a bar to all Asiatic immigration" (Report Debates, 5th Session, 5th Parliament, 1900: 7408). As he went on to explain,
"[t]he gist of the Natal Act is, that no immigrant of Asiatic origin shall be permitted to settle in the country unless he can read and write one of the languages of Europe" (7408). Like the U.S. “literacy test” that inspired it, the Natal Act was an outwardly “race-neutral” way to limit the rights of non-whites. Just as the “grandfather clause” had been designed to circumvent American constitutional amendments that guaranteed the franchise to African American males, by enacting voting restrictions that applied only to those whose ancestors had been unable to vote before the Civil War, the Natal Act circumvented the mobility rights legally accorded all British subjects within the Empire, regardless of race. In this transnational circulation of law and civil rights, a racist strategy of systematic voter disfranchisement practiced in some states of the American South was borrowed and expanded by South African racial nationalists—mapped onto migration to create officially race-neutral restriction policies used against non-Europeans.

Just as the “grandfather clause” exempted poor or illiterate whites from literacy tests that would have restricted their right to vote, the Natal Act provided that, for non-English speaking European immigrants deemed “desirable”, language laws could be relaxed or ignored, even as they were strictly enforced against darker-skinned migrants.

34 The “grandfather clause was a “statutory or constitutional device enacted by seven Southern states between 1895 and 1910 to deny suffrage to American blacks; it provided that those who had enjoyed the right to vote prior to 1866 or 1867, or their lineal descendants, would be exempt from educational, property, or tax requirements for voting. Because the former slaves had not been granted the franchise until the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, these clauses worked effectively to exclude blacks from the vote but assured the franchise to many impoverished and illiterate whites. In 1915 the Supreme Court declared the grandfather clause unconstitutional because it violated equal voting rights guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment”.

Just as the motives of the grandfather clause were transparent to African Americans, clearly the intention of the Natal Act was not lost on Indians—who were vocally critical of imperial hypocrisy, which race-neutral wording did little to disguise. Upon reading a speech by Joseph Chamberlain, colonial secretary, in which he commended the Natal Act for its avoidance of overt language of race and color, Mahatma Gandhi felt deeply affronted and betrayed. Gandhi wrote: "Mr. Chamberlain cannot be unaware of the fact that the Natal Act was passed with the deliberate intention of applying it almost exclusively to the Indians" (Lake & Reynolds: 132). No one was fooled by the Act’s evasive language. Rather, “[t]he colonial secretary had made it clear that an Indian, as soon as he left his homeland, ceased to be a British subject” (Lake & Reynolds: 132). This was the sort of obvious imperial hypocrisy that would cause Gandhi to later become an outspoken critic of British imperialism and leader of the movement for an independent India (Lake & Reynolds: 133).

By contrast, racial nationalists such as Agnes Laut applauded such policies, although they found them less satisfactory than the complete ban on Indian migration that they sought. Just as racial nationalists had drawn upon American literacy tests with “grandfather clause” exemptions as inspiration for how to limit migration to South Africa, Australian racial nationalists modeled their own restrictive immigration laws
Australians passed the Immigration Restriction Bill, which came into law on December 23, 1901, when it was granted Royal Assent, an event that ushered in the “White Australia” policy that remained in place until 1949. Canadian racial nationalists also proclaimed theirs a “White Canada”, and felt very much the same as white South Africans and Australians. However, while the Natal Act was brought up frequently in government discussions of Indian migration, Canadian political leaders hesitated to pass the same sort of measure as their British colonial counterparts. In his Parliamentary address, Laurier explained that “[w]e have not thought it advisable to adopt the provisions of the Natal Act, because there are questions of Imperial policy...which the Canadian people are not prepared to ignore" (Report Debates, 5th Session, 5th Parliament, 1900: 7408).

35 In Australia: “The Bill allowed for the exclusion of ‘undesirables’ by means of an English language dictation test. It was modeled on the South African Immigration Restriction Act of 1897 (The Natal Act). This meant that potential migrants who were ‘undesirable’ by virtue of their nationality or race were not directly ousted on the grounds of their race; officially, it was only because of their language skills that they were not allowed.”

“Many politicians objected to this: they wanted a complete racial ban. The debate was fierce and heartfelt. Although the debate itself - extraordinarily long, with many twists and turns - seems to turn on arcane points of law, it is worth pausing on just what was being debated. It was the method of exclusion that was at question, not whether or not people should be excluded on the basis of colour. There were a few voices arguing the moral position, but they were so rare as hardly to have been engaged with”.


Agnes Laut also commented on the Natal Act, writing that “at the time the first five or six thousand were dumped on the Pacific Coast, twenty thousand more were waiting to take passage; and one hundred thousand more were waiting to take passage after them, clamoring for the right of admission, the right to vote, the right to colonize. Canada welcomes all other colonists. Why not these? The minute you ask, you are told to ‘hush.’ South Africa and Australia ‘hushed’ so very hard and were so very careful that after a very extensive experience—150,000 Hindus settled in one colony—both colonies legislated to shut them out altogether. At least South Africa’s educational test amounted to that, and South Africa and Australia are quite as imperial as Canada. Why did they do it? The labor unions were no more behind the exclusion in those countries than in British Columbia. The labor unions chuckled with glee over the embarrassment of the whole question”.

For despite granting Royal Assent to Australia’s bill and not directly opposing such laws, the British colonial government was nonetheless displeased by the obviously discriminatory intent of such regulations. These obliquely-worded laws were preferable to anything that explicitly identified Indians, but their purpose was still evident, and Canadian politicians sought to avoid incurring imperial ire. As racial nationalist Agnes Laut complained, Canadians hesitated to implement the same measures that their South African counterparts had enacted and were instead “being asked to be very lily-handed and ladylike and dainty about it all. You must not explore facts that are not—‘nice.’ You must not ask what the Westerner means when he says that "the Asiatic will not affiliate with our civilization." Is it more than white teeth and pigments of the skin? Is it more than skin deep? ....Has it all anything to do with the centuries' cesspools of unbridled vice?” (139)

By citing the distinction between vice and skin color, and by positing Indian undesirability as “more than skin deep”, Laut attempts to create rhetorical distance between her analysis and a crassly racialist stance. In so doing, Laut connects Indian migrants to “the low whites”, who should also be disbarred, likening race-based notions of inferiority with class-based ones. She acknowledges that “[t]he Hindus are British subjects,” but goes on to counter-argue that “Canada does not admit British subjects unless she wants them” (150). Laut also justifies the exclusion of Hindu women and children, arguing that admission to Canada is not a right, but a privilege, regardless of race or origin (150). Of course, that privilege was systematically denied to some, and
granted to others. But Laut supported this asymmetry, and defended the notion that Canadians had the right to compose their imagined community they wanted. It is clear that it is non-whites whom Laut primarily sees as irredeemably debased and fundamentally repellant.

Laut explicitly invoked British Dominions and the United States world in her imaginary discussion with Indians: “[w]e know that you as a people need room for colonization; but if we admit you as colonists, will your presence drive out other colonists, as it has done in Australia and South Africa; as the presence of colored people prevents the coming of other colonists to the southern states?” (148). By contrast to the apparent dearth of white migrants, repulsed by the presence of non-whites in the Anglo-colonial world, Laut cited argued that “[t]he Hindu and his advocates go from one end of Canada to the other clamoring at the tops of their voices, not for the privilege, but for the right, of admission to Canada, the right to vote, the right to colonize” (140). Unlike “[t]he Hindu and his advocates”—namely white anti-racists—Laut imagined that, like “Negroes”, Indian migrants were biologically unsuited to life in Canada.

As with African-descended peoples, this supposed unsuitability of Indian migrants owed both to an inherent tendency towards vice and a lack of adaptability to Canada’s climate. Laut persistently framed her analysis in terms of an imagined project of Indian colonial expansion, and indignantly demanded to know why racial nationalists should have to abandon their views about Indian undesirability asking: “why did the former
Minister of Labor in Canada say that ‘a minimum of publicity is desired upon this subject’? What did he mean when he declared ‘that the native of India is not a person suited to this country’? If the native Hindu is ‘not a person suited to Canada’—climate, soil, moisture, what not?—why isn't that fact sufficient to exclude the Oriental without any legislation?’ (140)

Like her racial nationalist contemporaries, Laut thought Canadians should immediately and unapologetically bar Indian migrants. In this historical context, the fact that Laut conflated Hindus and Sikhs, and knew little of the cold climate of the Punjab, did not undermine her credibility—what mattered was the migrants’ brown skin and the racial stereotypes this conjured up in racial nationalists’ minds. By contrast, those Canadians who opposed immigration restriction did so on the basis of imperial solidarity, and on the inherent hypocrisy of such policies. But racial nationalists cared foremost about protecting their self-interest and the fictitious purity of their imagined community. As in her earlier conversation with a “brown brother” who represented Japan, Laut creates a conversation with a “Hindu protagonist” who asks “‘Have not the English carried vices to India?’.... ‘Yes, answered British Columbia, but we do not purpose poisoning the new young life of Canada to compensate the vices of English soldiers who have gone to pieces morally in India’” (155). Again, Laut insisted that Canada was separate from the Empire, and should not be made to shoulder the racial burden for Britain’s imperial undertakings. For Laut, the “white man’s burden” did not include the burden of living alongside non-white people in Canada.
While the Canadian government had studiously ignored pressure from critics like Laut, who demanded discriminatory legislation, tensions steadily mounted. Torn between popular racial nationalism and imperial interests, the government did its best to mediate, and to appease all sides. But clearly, this was an unsustainable situation—something of a pressure cooker of unresolved contradictions and competing desires. In the context of an economic slowdown and the subsequent Vancouver race riot (1907), the state had to act, and to take sides. As with previous waves of “alien” migration, the critiques of darker-skinned people would again be drowned out by cries to close the gates.

Continuous Journey Regulation (1908)

Government officials carefully considered a number of exclusionary measures, including deportation, “but this had proved too costly and too open to court-review” (Buchignani et al: 23). Similarly, a possible head tax was also discussed, but this was controversial, given British imperial interests and “[p]roposals that the such as that by the Minister of the Interior to impose a $500 head tax on South Asian immigration were consequently unacceptable to the British” (Buchignani et al: 23). Finally, following a highly biased report by future Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, then Deputy Minister of Labour, the state settled on the Continuous Journey Regulation of 1908 (Buchignani et al: 23). Passed in January 1908, by Order-in-Council, the regulation “stipulated that all
immigrants to Canada were to come directly from their country of origin or citizenship by a continuous journey on a through ticket purchased in that country” (Knowles: 121).

As racial nationalist Agnes Laut explained: “[b]y intervention of the Imperial government and the authorities of India a sort of subterfuge was rigged up in the immigration laws. The Hindus had been booked to British Columbia via Hong Kong and Hawaii. The most [sic] of the Japs had come by way of Hawaii. To kill two birds with one stone, by order-in-council in Ottawa, the regulation was enacted forbidding the admission of immigrants except on continuous passage from the land of birth” (142). Laut goes on to enumerate how the laws were selectively interpreted on the basis of race, writing, “Canada's immigration law also permits great latitude in interpretation as to the amount of money that must be possessed by the incoming settlers. Ordinarily it is fifty dollars for winter, twenty-five dollars for summer, with a five hundred dollar poll tax against the Chinaman. The Hindus were required to have two hundred and fifty dollars on their person” (142).

Passed the same year that Canada negotiated the Gentleman’s Agreement with Japan, the “Continuous Journey” requirement effectively curtailed migration from India, since no direct steamboat passage was available for purchase. The restriction was also effective in preventing Japanese from entering Canada via Hawaii (Knowles: 121). Because direct passage was offered from Europe, the regulation did not limit the migration of preferred populations. Rather, the provision allowed the Canadian
government to exclude racialized migrants without enacting specific racial prohibitions. Canada could both reject Indians, despite their membership in the British Empire, and cut off immigration from Japan without further alienating this ally (Kelley & Trebilcock). This superficially ‘race-neutral’ strategy was calculated to avoid creating offense, but as with the Natal Act model that the Canadian government had eschewed the discriminatory intent of this regulation was patently obvious to those it targeted.

As we have seen, the 1908 cartoon from the Montreal Daily Star decried the fact that “British” did not mean “Freedom and Liberty!” for Indians, as imperial leaders had claimed. As with the passage of exclusionary immigration laws throughout “white men’s countries” of the British Empire, Canada’s Continuous Journey regulation represented yet another instance in the ongoing “betrayal of the idea of imperial citizenship” (Lake & Reynolds: 146). For South Asian communities in Canada, this betrayal was all the more cruel because “[t]he ban was total and no one was exempted”, not even the spouses or children of men already in Canada; “[m]oreover, it shattered any illusions that South Asians’ status as British subjects meant anything. Even the Chinese and Japanese could immigrate, while they could not” (Buchignani et al: 23-24). British Columbia’s provincial legislature added to the Continuous Journey regulation their own local equivalent of the Natal Act, enacting language requirements for migration, which Sikhs challenged in court, and ultimately the ban was declared ultra vires”—beyond their legal power to pass (Buchignani et al: 24).
After Indian migrants had struggled to build a life for themselves in Canada and advocate for racial justice, they found antipathy and legal discrimination a poor reward. The Indian community had attained a fair measure of success in Canada, and had even constructed the first permanent Sikh temple the same year that the regulation passed (Buchignani et al: 24). Even while Mackenzie King journeyed to England to assuage British fears about the consequences of the ban, Indian migrants prepared to challenge its legitimacy. The first major legal challenge occurred a month after the passage of the regulation, in February 1908, when six South Asians from Fiji sailed directly to Canada, but “immigration officials interpreted the regulation to refer to one’s country of ultimate origin (in their case, India) and they were held for deportation” (Buchignani et al: 24). Shortly after, the law was challenged again, when twenty Indians arrived aboard The Empress of Japan, as well as another 186 aboard the Monteagle, many of whom were deported for various trumped-up infractions, but some of whom the state was forced to release and allow to settle in Canada, which prompted the rewriting of the Order-in-Council to make the “continuous journey” ban more effective (Buchignani et al: 25).

South Asian critiques of the British were indeed warranted by British sympathy for the perceived plight of Canadian racial nationalists. Imperial approval of Continuous Journey regulations was of course contingent on keeping the peace with India. But British fears were ultimately realized in the form of increased Indian “nationalist, anti-British sentiment in the local community” (Buchignani et al: 25). In April, Taraknath Das
began to publish *Free Hindusthan* in Vancouver, “the first South Asian publication of any kind in Canada” and also “one of the first in North America”, a “violently anti-British English language monthly,” which also circulated in India, where publication of such tracts was expressly prohibited (Buchignani *et al*.: 25). The Canadian state attempted to crack down on this local “sedition” and banned *Free Hindusthan*, which subsequently moved outside the Empire, to continue publication in Seattle (Buchignani *et al*.: 26).

By 1905, “Indian Revolutionaries” had already “circled the globe, moving from one South Asian community to another” (Buchignani *et al*.: 37). “The British were determined not to let this “nationalist ‘infection’ spread to Canada,” and ironically, British support for the ban had been part of the strategy to limit the spread of political dissent to Canada, as was the creation of a complex network of spies, including within the ranks of the Northwest Mounted Police (Buchignani *et al*.: 37). In precisely the contrary effect the British had hoped to create, opposition to the Continuous Journey Regulation and support for Indian independence became “two inextricably intertwined political movements among South Asians in Canada” (Buchignani *et al*.: 37).

As did African Canadians and Chinese workers, however, Indian migrants also had allies amongst “white men”. Just as debates about the “Chinese question” had brought to light conflicting definitions of whiteness and Canadian national identity, discussions of Indian migration took this further still, and unearthed competing visions of empire. An April 1912 image from the *Toronto World* echoed the critique of the 1908 political
cartoon and also expanded upon it—putting two rival definitions of empire face-to-face, and condemning both British and Canadian hypocrisy. The image depicts an angry Indian woman confronting John Bull, and holding out to him an “Order of Expulsion of Hindu Women from British Columbia” (Fig. 4.11). The caption to the “Under One Flag” cartoon reads: “[y]ou take away our country, teach our men to fight for you, and preach to us of liberty, yet we may not even live in the outskirts of your Empire.” This image encourages readers to critically interrogate the notion of imperial unity. What exactly did the notion of being “under one flag” mean?

Images of Imperialism

This image pits two rival imperial visions against each other: viewers could choose which one to endorse. Was the Empire an “imperial family”, with shared values and economic and political interests? Was it characterized by reciprocity and guided by a benevolent leadership that advocated for the best interests of all members? Or was imperialism instead a top-down enterprise, in which powerful members preyed upon the weak, sucking them dry in a relationship characterized by crass self-interest? Was empire based, not on shared aspirations and ideals, but rather on extraction and exploitation? The Empire certainly made great efforts to promote the former vision, as did pro-imperialists throughout the Empire. The Empire’s marketing machine generated extensive propaganda about the value of belonging and importance of imperial unity.
For instance, a common motif from the imperial age was a great, richly-maned lion, guiding its aspiring offspring.

An August 1914 political cartoon from the *Vancouver Daily Province* announced the World War I and the call to imperial duty with a mighty roar (Fig. 4.12). In the image, a proud lion stands on a Union Jack flag and projects a powerful battle cry out into an ocean dotted with battleships, likely a reference to Britain’s tremendous naval power. The lion’s cubs clamor to flank it and “answer the call.” Among the eager cubs, the image prominently features South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, “joining their sire” and taking up arms to defend the Empire. The image also includes a rather hesitant-looking India. The lion cubs labeled “South Africa” and “New Zealand” scramble up a sheer rock-face to "join their sire" atop, while “Canada” roars on a nearby rock, and “Australia” advances decisively to Britain’s side. But "India" hangs back, neither roaring nor looking eager to join Britain. Despite a poised paw, the little lion seems frozen-still, looking rather introspective, if such a thing is possible for a lion. Perhaps in an effort to conceal this ambiguous representation of Indian enthusiasm, or perhaps so as not to offend Britain's smaller colonies, a few unidentified cubs mill about near "India." Or maybe this gesture is more about flattering white Dominions, or urging India to prove its loyalty by again fighting for Britain.

For Indians had already taken up arms to defend the Empire. The British Indian Army, also known as the Indian Army, had been established in 1858, and existed until Indian
independence in 1947. Not to be confused with the post-Independence "Army of India", the British Indian Army was the major military arm of the British Raj, and was an important part of Britain's military forces during the two world wars. The army had also contributed to the Boer War in non-combatant roles. Mahatma Gandhi himself had volunteered in the ambulance corps and as a stretcher bearer in Britain’s conflict against the independent Boer Republics in South Africa, as did British colonial subjects throughout the Empire.

The Boer Wars (1880-1881 and 1899-1902) had ended with the crushing of the Boer uprisings and with the instatement of British rule in the Boer republics: the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. In the second Boer War, “Gandhi, the true believer still, threw in his lot with the British, organising and leading an Indian ambulance corps" (Lake & Reynolds: 133). By the time he left South Africa, briefly, in 1901, Gandhi still declared himself a loyal British subject, committed to the imperial ideal of racial equality," (Lake & Reynolds: 133) yet the discrimination he had experienced in Natal on account of his skin color and turban had made an impact on Gandhi. He had learned that “[n]o matter how well he dressed, how polite his manners, how correct his diction, how well-versed in Christianity, European literature and British law, he could never become a white man” (Lake & Reynolds: 133).

Loyal Indian subjects had backed the Empire, including going so far as to help suppress another British colony’s desire for independence. So what does the 1914 portrayal of
the hesitant Indian cub mean? This image circulated in newspapers throughout the Empire, presumably after being granted imperial approval. So the fact that, whether intentionally or incidentally, the image portrays India as hesitant certainly says something about imperial politics, and Indians’ place within the empire. As we have seen with mobility “rights” that turned out not to be rights, the logic of serving empire and being rewarded for these efforts did not apply equally to non-whites. Perhaps, in the minds of racial nationalists, it was simply the inherent duty of “inferior” races to serve white masters: simply their racial lot in life to remain in a subordinate position. And the policies of white men’s countries did their level best to ensure this. Yet, despite these racial mythologies, the reality of imperial power was much more complex. In his condemnation of foreign imperialism in *Distant Possessions*, Andrew Carnegie quotes Benjamin Disraeli, a past Prime Minister of Britain, who had complained, “[o]ur colonies are millstones round the next of Britain; they lean upon us when they are weak, and leave us when they become strong” (241). Carnegie added: “[t]hat is just what our Republic did with Britain” (241).

Of course, an empire is nothing without colonies, possessions, and occupied lands. And the truth was that colonial subjects were *not* duty bound or racially obligated to serve the empire. Instead, they could, and sometimes did, revolt. So part of the imperial challenge was to convince racialized populations that *they too* had a stake in the Empire, even while assuring white Dominions of their inherent superiority. The advent of the World War disrupted this delicate balance, and created an unprecedented challenge for
the Empire and Canada alike. 1914 was a pivotal year, when imperial tensions and the rival visions of Empire came together over the question of Indian migration to Canada. 1914 saw the start of the massive and protracted conflict of WWI that required all British subjects to “answer the call” of the “sire.” This year also saw the greatest challenge to Canada’s racist immigration laws.

The 1914 voyage of the Komagata Maru represented a legal challenge posed by South Asian migrants to the 1908 Continuous Journey regulation. In what became an important test case, Gurdit Singh Sarhali set out to “circumvent the intention of the Canadian immigration ban by following it to the letter” (Buchignani et al: 54). Logistical difficulties, including the desperation to reach Canada of 150 Indians temporarily housed in and around a Sikh Temple in Hong Kong, ultimately forced the Komagata Maru, unofficially renamed Guru Nanak Jahaz by travelers, to set sail from Hong Kong rather than from Calcutta, as Sarhali had originally intended (Buchignani et al: 54).

The ship arrived at a quarantine station outside Vancouver harbor on May 21, 1914, carrying 376 hopeful migrants in total, including two women and three children. The Komagata Maru moved into Burrard Inlet on May 23, 1914, with its cargo of potential migrants, the majority from the Punjab province of India. Most of the migrants were Sikh, though a smaller number of Muslims and Hindus were also aboard. The Sikh
community of Vancouver had already formed a committee to deal with the impending legal battle, and to offer to post bail for the weary travelers. The state was equally prepared. After exhaustive medical examinations – European immigrants received only a cursory screening – the government inspectors rejected the majority of the passengers on health grounds (Buchignani, et al: 55). This was not only an outright form of exclusion, but also a rather transparent stalling tactic. Because the ship had been contracted to the migrants for a set time, based upon reasonable time estimates of the length of a roundtrip voyage, the delays provided an economic disincentive for the ship’s captain to remain in harbor, and the increased time pressure added to the migrants’ plight.

Even as British Columbia officials stalled, “[i]n Ottawa there was concern over what was becoming an international incident” (Buchignani et al: 55). In the end, the court case involving the Komagata Maru lasted for two months, during which time none of the

36 The deliberateness of health screening delays is evident in the fact that they took much longer than usual to complete. For as John H. Thompson notes in Forging the Prairie West, under normal circumstances, two-man teams of immigration health officials had a staggering quota of 300 immigrants per hour (1998: 74). Not only were health inspections cursory, but only 2 percent of settlers were rejected on the basis of health grounds (Thompson). While Buchignani, et al fail to comment on it, there is an inherent irony in claims of sub-par health, since in the trial following the Komagata Maru landing, sickness and even death befell passengers, as a result of their forced confinement aboard the ship, as a direct result of unhygienic conditions—resulting from their forced confinement—as well as from insufficient provisions, both of which I would argue that the government bore direct responsibility for. Not only had the government refused to allow passengers to disembark, but it also failed to provide adequate food and water supplies, or cleaning services for the entire two-month duration of the trial. After the disappointing but unsurprising verdict, the government finally agreed to provide the passengers of the Komagata Maru with sufficient provisions for the ship’s return voyage (57). Like tropes about climatic inassimilability, this strategy of false health screenings was a time-worn tactic, also used to exclude African Americans, ostensibly on the basis of health issues. For more on this, see: Troper, Harold Martin. Only Farmers Need Apply: Official Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the United States, 1896-1911. Toronto: Griffin House, 1972.

37 Predictably, racial nationalist press was not sympathetic with the migrants’ situation. Buchignani et al also mention a poem entitled “Gurdit Singh” by “Rudyard Tippling”—an unflattering play on Kipling’s name, implying that he is an alcoholic—in the Saturday Sunset on May 30, 1914, to which “the Province replied with a series of scurrilous series of cartoons portraying horde of ‘Hindoos’ perched on a dinghy-like boat” (55).
voyagers was allowed to disembark. They were instead forced to remain aboard the boat, in increasingly unsanitary conditions. As Hugh Johnston notes, conditions on the ship were squalid, with passengers living amidst “piles of garbage and debris” (65), in cramped, dirty conditions, that resulted in illness—and even the deaths of two unfortunate passengers. The government denied that it was their responsibility to pay to have the ship cleaned. Immigration agent Malcolm R. J. Reid refused accountability for accumulated filth during the passengers' confinement, even though immigration officials had prohibited passengers from disembarking for even the duration of the trial.  

In combination with courtroom delays and dwindling supplies of food and fresh water aboard the ship, these setbacks made it difficult for those aboard the Komagata Maru to await the court’s decision. Many white British Columbians fervently hoped the ship would be forced to turn back before the case was settled. It was only the Vancouver Sikh community’s mobilization and support that permitted passengers to remain long enough to await the outcome of the test case. However, their battle was doomed to failure, given the strength of white supremacy in Canada at this time. Ultimately, the court deemed all but twenty-four of the hopeful migrants inadmissible, and the ship was forced to return to India, as white Canadians cheered and jeered at the harbor-side.

Political cartoons celebrated this triumph of racial nationalism. A June 1914 cartoon from the *Toronto World* shows the face of a turbaned Indian man being buffeted on either side by powerful gales, his long beard intertwined with the word "Vancouver" (Fig. 4.13). Above the somber man, a stylized text box announced: “one dark cloud removed”. This motif echoed the Anti-Indian sentiment and imagery generated in anticipation of the ship’s arrival. A 1913 article in the *Vancouver Daily Province* had expressed the popular view that the “Hindu problem had assumed 'a most serious and menacing aspect.”39 The use of looming “dark clouds” enhanced any sense of foreboding and doom generated by the ship’s approach, and reinforced the threat Indian migrants supposedly posed to Vancouver’s vulnerable populace.

As with Chinese migration, the act of illustrating perceived racialized threats spawned a powerful visual vocabulary that circulated within popular culture. An April 1914 cartoon from *The Toronto World* pioneered the cloud motif that the [month or paper] image later borrowed. In “Sinister Shadows”, April 1914 image from the *Toronto World*, a white man stands on a Vancouver pier and observes the approach of a steam ship (Fig. 4.14). The man recoils in horror and dread at an ominous cloud that emanates from the

39 (Johnston: 22) As in the United States, the language of racialized groups as “problems” is a recurring trope of Canadian national identity at this time. As James Shaver Woodsworth noted in his now-infamous *Strangers Within our Gates; Or Coming Canadians* (1909), “we may be thankful that we have no ‘negro problem’ in Canada” (Woodsworth: 158). Although different racialized groups were characterized in specific ways, it is compelling to explore the ways in which many of the negative characterizations of non-whites took on similar forms. Like black men, Sikh males were also presented as both a danger to white women (Buchignani, et al: 19), and unable to tolerate Canada’s cold climate (Buchignani, et al: 8). Similarly, common stereotypes of South Asians as “racially different, biologically inferior, dirty, lazy, immoral, untruthful, litigious, and violent” (Buchignani, et al: 27) directly parallel stereotypes of both blacks and First Nations, with the exception of litigiousness.
ship. As in the later image, the cloud bears the visage of an Indian man, in this case, beardless, with a turban emblazoned with a single word: "Asiatics". Despite a dearth of text, this image speaks volumes. As with “dark cloud removed”, these images portray the triumph of “light” over a “darkness” that was at once racial, moral, and even existential.

Like political cartoons, the nation-state itself was also a political sphere of rival visions. For racial nationalists, Canada, which some critics of exclusion laws saw as the far-flung “outskirts of Empire,” was in fact a battleground of racialized rival imperialisms. After the “closing” of the American frontier, exclusionists imagined Western Canada as “one of the last frontiers of the white race against the yellow and the brown...where the swarming millions of ancient peoples, stung into restless life by modern events, are constantly impinging on an attractive land held by sparse thousands of whites” (Buchignani, et al: 5). By contrast, the imperial imaginary was built on hierarchical inclusion. Empires require subjects to rule. With the onset of war, Britain’s imperial power relied upon its colonial soldiers taking up arms to defend “their” Empire.

So even as racial nationalists literally pictured Indians as a “dark cloud” casting a “sinister shadow” over their white imagined community, the British Empire imaged Indians as allies—and invoked discourses of brotherhood and shared imperial burdens that transcended race. A November 1914 image from the Grain Growers Guide shows Britain and its subjects standing side by side, unified in the war-effort (Fig. 4.15). As
Charles and Cynthia Hou explain, "flags waving, thirty thousand Canadian troops sailed for England at the beginning of October 1914 to join Britain and the other colonies in their common cause" (225). In addition to celebrating Canada’s sacrifice, the image strikingly includes a turbaned Sikh man standing between white soldiers from Australia and South Africa. Soldiers from New Zealand and Canada flank John Bull on the other side. All six men stand together poised for battle, in front of a large waving Union Jack and an ocean full of warships.

In this remarkable image, the importance of Indians to the Empire is not downplayed by anthropomorphizing them into raceless lion cubs—or by representing India as a white “British Indian” as was sometimes done. Nor are Indians displayed in a marginal position on the periphery of empire. Rather, they are both central and brown. This image promotes the prospect of interracial unity Agnes Laut would find so terrifying in 1915 when she scorned the notion of ‘audacious’ “Orientals” demanding “to stand ‘shoulder to shoulder’ with white men ‘in the management of the world’s affairs’” (1915: 131-2). Of course, there is a marked difference between fighting and dying for Empire, and taking an active role in world leadership. The former role was available to all subjects, while the latter was more restricted. But the fact remains that Britain needed India. Unlike racial nationalist imagery, this image promotes imperial interests and sells the idea of unity to Indians and white men alike.
As with Canada’s contested place as either a remote outpost or a hub of white imperial power, Indian soldiers also embodied a complex category. These “brown brothers” were an essential part of the Empire’s defenses. Yet racial nationalists had difficulty reconciling their imperial duty with their racialized national identity—even though their nation-state relied on continued imperial membership. The representation of brown soldiers in popular culture posed something of a conundrum—an impossibility in racial nationalist minds. For racial nationalists, they themselves were the only true colonial soldiers, protecting the whiteness of their nation from a threat that had evaded Britain’s radar. In this narrative, India was the proverbial fox in the henhouse—a populous colony bent on ‘reverse’ colonialism and imperial domination—led by the ambitious Asian superpower, Japan. As Gandhi had learned in Natal, in the binarized worldview of racial nationalists it was virtually impossible to account for the complex reality of colonial soldiers or allies who upheld the burden of empire and had brown skin.

Of course, the image created at the outset of the war was propagandistic and polemical, designed to convince colonial subjects to join the war-effort. Nonetheless, it strikingly captured the complexity of race, nation, and empire in this era. Around 1914, two crucial events—the Komagata Maru voyage and the onset of wartime hostilities—put national and imperial identities in stark conflict. This conflict in turn spawned competing visions of nation and empire. As we have seen, these conundrums were manifested in the era’s political cartoons. We can see an undeniable conflict between two sets of images, and the competing visions of imperialism they espoused. These
politiciized images gave visible form to layered, sometimes abstract, notions such as race, nation, and empire. Here, in popular visual culture, two rival imperial visions fought it out in the court of public opinion. The stakes: the future of Canada and the Empire.

*Japan, India: Prospects for Racial Equality, and the Future of Empire(s)*

Migration from India and Japan represented the greatest challenges to national and imperial mythologies that racial nationalists in the Anglo-colonial world had ever faced. The era’s debates about imperial duty and national belonging spawned competing representations of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, about Indians’ place in nation-states, and even about the British Empire itself. On the one hand, we see biting critiques of imperial hypocrisy, and passionate pleas to defend the Empire—by keeping control of colonies and maintaining inter-imperial alliances. On the other hand, we see Indian and Japanese migrants portrayed as unassailable threats to the Dominions’ ethnic Britishness. The tension between the two sets of images is rich, and ultimately irresolvable. Yet analyzing these discordant images in conversation allows us to understand the transnational dialogues of the era, which in turn yields great insights into the historical formation of race and nation.
Political cartoons can be layered and subtle. Yet they are also sometimes extremely reductive. They are limited in the range of representations and perspectives they can portray. This is particularly true when it comes to capturing the complexities of imperial power and global politics. The celebratory notion of the Empire as a benevolent mentor—selflessly shouldering the burden to light the way for the “subject races” is obviously crudely reductive. But so too is the condemnatory view of the Empire as a predatory beast selfishly siphoning resources and people into its destructive clutches.

Both of these parodies obscure the complex function and continual renegotiation that characterized the tangled web of imperial power. A simplistic binary construction also elides the investments of individuals and groups located at various positions within the imperial project. This notably includes the so-called “subject races”, some of whose interests were genuinely implicated in the imperial project, or who simply wanted to believe in its promissory potential. Reductive binaries also mask the ways in which racialized peoples—including Japanese imperialists, and members of national liberation movements— invoked imperial and/or national mythologies critically, in ways that subverted their “white” racial nationalist origins.\(^{40}\) This is not meant to defend imperialism, but simply to point out the complexity of its functions. It is precisely because of this complexity that imperialism has been such an enduring model of power.

It is impossible to understand the sprawling web of imperial authority from either exaggerated perspective. The reality is far more nuanced. Unsurprisingly, social control and dominant values were established less through truth than propaganda. Political cartoons were themselves a battleground, a contested site of rival visions of race, empire, and nation. “White” men had to determine how they saw the Empire, and what, if any, were their duties and responsibilities to the mother country. So too did Indians, who had to decide whether to believe British claims of universal imperial citizenship and brotherhood. A major factor in determining Indians’ loyalties would be how their “white brothers” chose to treat them. Similarly, Japanese imperialists had to decide whether they were content with a “gentleman’s agreement” that tacitly reinforced their supposed racial inferiority, even as it grudgingly recognized their burgeoning power—their ability to dominant others, in true imperial fashion.

In this historical context of rival imperialisms and nationalisms, the image of imperial soldiers standing together was certainly remarkable in its portrayal of race, but did it allow a glimpse of what standing “shoulder to shoulder” or meeting “face to face” might actually look like? Did the image suggest that true brotherhood was actually a possibility? The Indian man in the image, the colonial soldier—at once brown brother and a colonial “other”—represented a challenge to reductive notions of empire and belonging. Was the “white man’s burden” now also the “brown man’s burden”? Or in Japan’s case, the “yellow man’s burden”? Had the dominant vision of empire expanded
to a point where non-whites could be imperial participants and not simply colonialism’s recipients? Or had imperialism always involved darker-skinned peoples, but only by creating racial mythologies and social boundaries that limited their participation to subordinate positions? Was it, in fact, the very function of racial mythologies to check minority populations’ aspirations to ascend to the level of European powers by insisting on the latter’s inherent superiority, even in the face of all irrefutable evidence to the contrary?

The more Indians and Japanese tried to prove they were equal to white men, the harder racial nationalists worked to demarcate their difference and distance. The notion of taking “brown brothers” seriously as allies and comrades at arms—who also defended the empire—threatened fragile myths of racial and national superiority. For these racial and national mythologies made very much of very little, and made it apparent both that they were constructed and constantly refigured to maintain the status quo, and also that racial nationalists were loath to relinquish power and accept anyone else into their club. Imperial leaders simply exacerbated the problem by pleading ignorance and proclaiming innocence. Through the Dominions’ exclusionary policies, and Britain’s insulting attempts to deny the obvious intention of these policies, nationalists and imperialists helped to create the two things they feared most—a politicized, unified, transnational Indian community bent on dismantling British imperialism, and an aggressive Japanese Empire hostile to the Anglo-colonial world.
Indian Independence

As Mohandas Gandhi ultimately realized, Indians were not, and could not be, equal to white colonial subjects within an imperial system. Racial nationalists had vested interests in closing their gates, as well as the power to sway imperial rulers to support them. The fact that white settler colonies were treated differently from the “dark”, “savage”, “exotic” colonies that meant “death to the white race” is patently evident. We can simply examine how and when India finally gained independence, in contrast to the white Dominions to see how power and race operated in this historical context. For Canada, and the rest of the self-governing “white” Dominions, a British Act of Parliament, the 1931 Statute of Westminster, granted full legislative equality to the Dominions. By contrast, Indian independence only came about a decade and a half later, and then only after protracted struggle between the British Raj and passionate proponents of Indian independence—from armed militia to advocates of non-violence and civil disobedience.

After decades of struggle, when India gained its independence in 1947, its British rulers partitioned its territory into two separate states: India and Pakistan. Partition was a violent process that resulted in the displacement of millions of people, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands, as well as lasting hostility and suspicion between the states of India and Pakistan. Clearly, despite the numerous sacrifices they had made for the British Empire, it was far more difficult for Indians to gain their independence than it
was for Canadians and other “white men”, who were generally granted autonomy willingly and peacefully. Lip-service had long been paid to standing “shoulder to shoulder” and meeting “face to face” with darker skinned subjects of the British Crown—particularly when it suited imperial interests. Yet when it came down to it, imperial leaders were reluctant to reward this loyalty as they did white men’s. The Empire was hesitant to grant self-governance to “subject races,” just as racial nationalists were reluctant to embrace their brown brethren as “kin.” In practice the touted ideology of imperial brotherhood fell far short of the ideal.

But contrary to its intended consequence, imperialist and racial nationalist recalcitrance galvanized advocates of Indian independence all the more. The evident disjuncture between claims to brotherhood alongside proofs of “otherhood” politicized new recruits, and highlighted imperial hypocrisy and the justice of colonized peoples’ cause. With striking irony, racial nationalists’ inability to embrace their so-called “brown brothers” and accept darker-skinned peoples as allies ensured the inevitability of Indian independence and heralded the downfall of the British Empire.

Following the Canadian rejection of the ill-fated voyagers of the *Komagata Maru*, British imperial rule endured in India for over thirty years, but the court case and other implicit endorsements of imperial inequality ushered in the demise of imperialism as a viable political system. Given how civil rights and self-governance had been gradually but systematically racialized, the white men’s Dominions might have rebelled or become
violently factionalized if denied self-government within the Empire, as we have seen with the American Revolution, the Boer War, and demands for Irish Home Rule. Imperialism has always been a juggling act. In its traditional iteration, imperialism meant the impossible task of trying to appease everyone enough to keep them in line, so that the balance of power can be maintained—all done while maintaining an outward façade of unity, effortless, regal grace, and bellicosity toward potential rivals.

Yet the slipperiness and messiness of imperial maneuvering comes alive in political cartoons from this era. For all that the “black and white” quality of the images may make them seem simplistic and reductive when examined uncritically and in isolation, a close reading of numerous discordant political cartoons side-by-side allows us to tease out the tensions and complexities of this visual form. With careful analysis, we can see how these cartoons, like other political discourse, are part of public debates and dialogues. These dialogues of course encompass a wide array of political issues. I have selected those that help us understand the place of non-white participants in nation and empire. By analyzing these images, we can better understand the historical functions of race, nation, and empire, as well as peek at related concepts of class and gender.

Japan’s Imperial Future

As with Indians, Japanese imperialists had to choose whether to accept a subordinate position in the imperial world order or try to reshape it to their own benefit. And unlike most other non-Western states, Japan actually possessed the power and political
influence to attempt to do so. Following World War I, during discussions at Versailles, Japan requested that an equality clause be implemented. Representatives of white men’s countries were divided about whether to create such a clause. There was heated debate between Britain and the white Dominions about whether to renew the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which would expire shortly if no action was taken. The future of the Alliance was a pressing issue at the 1921 Imperial Conference.

At Versailles, the United States vigorously opposed an equality clause, and any measures that would further strengthen Japan. America wanted to preserve its place as a foremost Pacific power. Ironically, America’s anti-imperial empire, with its more subtle and implicit economic, political, and military hegemony has proven to be a more enduring model than older forms of explicit imperialism, as exercised by Britain and Japan. As Merze Tate and Fidele Foy write, "Japan emerged from the war in a position of entrenched hegemony in the Orient. With Germany eliminated and Russia demoted to a second place in the Far East, Japan took possession of all the former's holdings...and became more aggressive than either of her predecessors...The 'Island Empire of the Pacific' was now one of the world's great Powers" (1959: 534). Given the stakes of the colonial contest, why pave the way for Japan to become more powerful still?

*Debates about the Anglo-Japanese Alliance*
Americans wanted nothing that would impede their access to the rich resources of Asia. Seeing Japan’s aggressive colonial endeavors, Americans feared that a further empowered and emboldened Japan would interfere with American interests. Despite Britain’s assurance that it would side with the United States in the event of Japanese belligerence, Americans held fast to their anti-equality stance. And at the Imperial Conference of 1921, Canadians spoke for the absent Americans, and opposed granting greater global clout to Japan. In this way, Canadians played a decisive role in determining the future of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In siding with Americans, Canadians acted in the interest of both racial nationalism and diplomacy.

Canada’s then-Prime Minister, Arthur Meighen "resisted the renewal of the alliance for he feared it threatened amicable Anglo-American and Canadian-American relations, upon both of which Canada depended for her security" (Tate & Foy, 1959: 543). By contrast, advocating for his own states’ national security and political interests, Australian Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes, argued to Meighen that "[t]he British Empire must have a reliable friend in the Pacific" (Tate & Foy, 1959: 543). New Zealand Prime Minister, W. F. Massey, sided with Australia and promoted a renewal of the Alliance. Neither Massey nor Hughes wanted to get caught in the middle if war broke out between the United States and Japan.

Interestingly, despite an ambivalent relationship over the course of their shared history, Canada’s security interests were now linked with its neighbor’s. In keeping with the
colonial contest between “white men’s countries”, each leader argued on the basis of his Dominion’s national self-interest, siding with whichever ally each believed most beneficial to the welfare of his state. As it had long been, the Empire remained divided over the “Japanese question” and imperial policy. Given this deadlock, ultimately, no affirmative decision could be reached, and the Alliance was allowed to expire.

As we have seen, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had long been a source of great tension between individual Dominions and the seat of imperial power. In the end, disagreement, both between and within Britain’s Dominions, over the question of Japanese migration was one of the major factors that caused the Empire to abrogate the Alliance. And as we have also seen, race was one of the major causes of Dominion dissent. So in a sense, Britain dissolved the Alliance largely over questions of race—losing a powerful ally, and weakening its imperial hold that much more. 41

Attack on Pearl Harbor

In trying to maintain the alliance, Britain had assured America that it would dissolve the treaty if Japan showed even a hint of aggression towards the United States. But this was not enough. America’s own imperialist ambitions commingled with racial nationalist

41 How might the current world order look if Britain had made different choices? We have no way to know, but it is an interesting question about which to speculate. This system of racialized, explicit imperialism might have endured far longer, with very different historical consequences, were it not for the ways in which Britain and its dominions alienated darker skinned allies who supported the imperial project.
hostility in Canada and other Dominions to ensure that no “yellow men” would gain entry to the “white men’s club.” Nearly twenty years later, on December 7, 1941, Japan would attempt to challenge the American juggernaut on its own terrain. In an unsuccessful bid to forestall American intervention against Japanese ambitions in Asia, Japan launched an early morning surprise attack against the principal U.S. Pacific naval base, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.42

Japanese military strategists had long understood that the United States might attempt to block Japan’s effort to expand its imperial reach into Southeast Asia. Planning its further rise, Japan looked to Pacific territories held by the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands. So Japan struck preemptively, to cripple America’s fleet. But little did Japanese leaders realize that American plans for possible intervention had been abandoned and that Japan’s peremptory military action would instead embroil the Island nation in a full-blown war—which would ultimately result in Japan’s crushing defeat, and the demise of its imperial ambitions. By contrast, America’s victory cemented its hegemony in the postwar world. However, U.S. prosperity and power was gained at great cost—following a protracted conflict that wrought tremendous destruction. In addition to the deaths about 100,000 Americans, the Pacific War had

42 The Pearl Harbor attack “credited Japanese pilots with sinking of damaging eight enemy battleships and a dozen other vessels, destroying nearly two hundred American planes, and inflicting almost four thousand casualties on U.S. servicemen, all at the cost of just twenty-nine Japanese aircraft and sixty-four men killed in action” McClain, James L. Japan, a Modern History. New York: W.W. Norton & Co 2002. 482. However, many aircraft carriers and other important military equipment remained undamaged or in repairable condition. A military action that was initially considered a tactical victory ultimately became a liability.
horrendous consequences in Japan, as well as in Asia more broadly. In Asia, millions—including Chinese, Indians, Koreans, Indonesians, and Vietnamese—perished as the result of conflict, famine, and Japanese occupation.43

This sad situation "became the grotesque reality of Pan-Asian brotherhood" (McClain: 498). The War also had grave consequences for Asians in North America. The notorious attack on Pearl Harbor marked what Franklin Delano Roosevelt proclaimed: “a date which will live in infamy.” After America’s declaration of war on Japan, racial nationalists no longer had to endure the “constant” humiliation and “strain” of “having to be polite” to “a yellow people” (cited in Lake and Reynolds: 170, citing Iriye). After the Pearl Harbor attack, it became acceptable for racial nationalists to express their antipathy towards Japanese migrants once again.

**Japanese Internment**

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had monumental consequences for both Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans. In both the United States and Canada, virtually all

43 Japan’s role in the war had a ravaging effect on Asia. As James L. McClain explains in *Japan: A Modern History* (2002): “[i]n Asia the carnage wrought by war and abusive occupation policies was beyond imagination”. McClain discusses the tragic phenomenon of the “comfort women”, the approximately 100,000 to 250,000 Korean women kidnapped and forced into brothels to serve Japanese soldiers and colonial administrators. In addition to the suffering and violence experience by the comfort women "as many as 70,000 Korean males died as males died as manual laborers in Japan or as ‘volunteers in the Imperial Army’” (497). There were also roughly 125,000 Filipino civilian and combatant deaths, and 180,000 Indian war casualties on the Burma front, as well as 1 in 20 Vietnamese deaths according to French estimates, “chiefly as a consequence of Japanese agricultural policies that contributed significantly to the great famine of 1945” (McClain: 497). A United Nations report also estimates that 3 million people on Java and 1 million in Indonesia were killed by the Japanese, or perished as the result of hunger, disease and the lack of medical care, as well as tens of thousands of interned Europeans, and 1.3 million Chinese soldiers, and approximately 9-12 million civilians (McClain: 498). McClain, James L. 2002. *Japan, a Modern History*. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co. 2002.
people of Japanese ancestry were locked away in internment camps for the duration of the war. In both states, Japanese internment began shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Even as Canadians and Americans were fighting the evils of fascism in Europe, their own Japanese-descended populations were being subjected to state authoritarianism and racial oppression based solely on their ancestry. As Ken Adachi explains, out of a total of 23,149 Canadians of Japanese ancestry in December of 1941, 20,881 had been forcibly ‘relocated’ to internment camps by the end of the following year (1991: 234). Internees included Japanese nationals as well as Canadian citizens of Japanese descent. Internees included Nisei—second generation Japanese immigrants born in Canada. The abrupt shift in global politics set in motion by the Pearl Harbor attack catalyzed a shift in the representation of Japanese people from “gentlemanly” status to infantalization. As with Native Canadians well-before them, people of Japanese ancestry swiftly went from being valued allies, treated with grudging respect—to subordination under state authority.

*Internment and Imperialism*

A 1942 cartoon that ran in the *Toronto Daily Star* on January 21, 1942 showed a stern-looking Mounted Policeman leading a diminutive and childlike[44] Japanese man by the hand (Fig. 4.16). Drawn in racist caricature, with “squinty” eyes and foolish grin, the

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44 Unlike in the image of a tiny Japan triumphantly planted on a ponderous but powerless China, it is clear that in this image, the man’s small size and infantilized presentation is meant to show his disempowerment, and by extension that of the Japanese Canadian community.
small man holds a suitcase labeled “B.C. Japanese”, as he blindly follows the Mountie away from the “British Columbia coast area”. The austere Mountie—representing “Canada”, as written on the brim of his hat—scrutinizes a list, in deep concentration. Numbers float above his right shoulder to indicate that he is taking a tally: “22,001; 22,015; 22…,” as he counts off the number of Japanese Canadians being away locked away in internment camps in the province’s interior or sent to the prairies to work in sugar beet fields.

Stepping back to consider the visual vocabulary of race and nation, Japanese people had long been depicted as “small” in political cartoons; however, they were also still pictured as powerful, and adult. The extent of their infantalization here suggests an ideological shift, marked by the Japanese Empire’s fall from favor. Japan no longer had its big stick or imperial armor. The Japanese Empire ended after the war. In other visual culture, Japan’s imperial “rising sun” flag was shorn of its rays, and became the simple circle on a white background that is still used today. The sun was shorn of its rays, just as internees in the political cartoon were shorn of their autonomy and adulthood.

Like the Pied Piper, the Mountie is trailed by a long line of stupefied women and children, marching mindlessly, as if to suggest that Japanese Canadians were indifferent to internment. This portrayal of apparent obliviousness likely represented an effort to downplay the gravity of this state action. The same may be said for the cartoon’s caption, which reads: “Strategic withdrawal to prepared positions”. The cartoon
cleverly used military metaphors to disguise how clearly this policy contravened civil rights. And that is not to mention how it undermined myths of Canadian tolerance.

**Race, Civil Rights, and National Security**

In keeping with the rationale of military threat and national security invoked to justify internment, protection from systematic discrimination on the basis of race had been suspended under the War Measures Act (Miki, 2004: 42). Not only were all people of Japanese ancestry interned, but their property was seized. This included businesses and prime real estate. The assets of the Japanese community were liquidated—sold well-below market rates—at a considerable profit to the state. A 1986 assessment entitled *Economic Losses of Japanese Canadians after 1941*, “estimated that the loss in property and income suffered by Japanese Canadians amounted to $443 million in 1986 Canadian dollars” (Ostow & Omatsu 1996: 114). To add insult to injury, internees were even made to pay the costs of their own internment.

Despite overwhelming evidence that people of Japanese descent residing in Canada did not pose a security risk, “[f]ollowing the bombing of Pearl Harbor six months later, the committee recommended the removal of all persons of Japanese racial origin” (Kelley & Trebilcock: 291). This included women, children, and elderly people, all of whom were interned indiscriminately. Even given the wartime context, notions of “threat” and “security risk” were largely an alibi for a system of race-based incarceration of racial
undesirables. If any threat existed, it was not to national security so much as to the cultural and economic dominance of privileged racial groups. Although the rationale for internment was ostensibly the risk posed by treasonous loyalty to Japan, a Lieutenant-General was told by a B.C. delegate at the 1942 Conference on "Japanese Problems" that for years his people had been telling themselves that war with Japan would afford them a Heaven-sent opportunity to rid themselves of the Japanese economic menace for ever more" (Kelley & Trebilcock: 292, emphasis theirs).

Moreover, the fact that only a small percentage of the German Canadian population was ever interned—and then only after extensive questioning about their affiliations—strongly suggests profiteering and discrimination as motives for Japanese internment. Hughes and Kallen argue that "the racist colour bias which was directed against the Japanese did not apply to 'White' Germans"—despite the fact that "almost all of Canada's armed forces were engaged against Germany in the war" (1974: 146).

Hughes and Kallen go on to explain that “[d]uring the war period, repressive steps were enacted against other Canadian groups, especially communist, fascist and pacifist

45 By contrast, Canadian involvement in the Pacific was minimal, relatively speaking, though this was also due in part to the abrupt end of the war, following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Canadian troops were involved in the Defense of Hong Kong. Veterans Affairs Canada explains: "[i]n the Second World War, Canadian soldiers first engaged in battle while defending the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong against a Japanese attack in December 1941. The Canadians at Hong Kong fought against overwhelming odds and displayed the courage of seasoned veterans, though most had limited military training. They had virtually no chance of victory, but refused to surrender until they were overrun by the enemy. Those who survived the battle became prisoners of war (POWs) and many endured torture and starvation by their Japanese captors." "The Defence of Hong Kong", <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/history/secondwar/asia/canhk/defence>, viewed April 24, 2013. Also, Canada contributed a cruiser to the British Pacific Fleet, the HMCS Uganda, originally a British vessel that was later transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy. In addition, a small number of Canadians, including of Japanese and Chinese descent were involved in intelligence gathering and subterfuge. Some troops were also being trained for a possible invasion of Japan, which was never necessary, because of the atomic bombings which quickly terminated the war. For more about Canada’s role in the Pacific War, see: http://www.canadaatwar.ca/page-32-asia-pacific.html, <viewed Jan. 5, 2012>.
organizations but discriminatory measures taken against the Japanese were far harsher than those accorded any other group” (146).

What is more, Japanese Canadians were interned despite expert security advice against such a policy. Military and navy personnel and the state’s highest security apparatus, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), had assured a government committee that it was exceedingly unlikely that Japan would invade the West Coast of Canada, and that people of Japanese descent residing in Canada “did not pose a serious security risk” (Miki: 291). In addition to assuring leaders that Canada’s Japanese population was not a threat, law enforcement and military intelligence experts insisted that “adequate measures were already in place to ensure the safety of the West Coast and that other discriminatory measures against the Japanese population would gain nothing except to expose Canadian prisoners of war to possible retaliation” (Miki: 292).

Further evidence against the “national security” rationale for internment is the fact that the persecution of Japanese Canadians continued after the war’s end. In total, “[a]lmost four thousand Japanese Canadians were thus 'repatriated' (allegedly voluntarily) prior to the revocation of the deportation order in 1947”, well after the end of WWII, including many who had never set foot on Japanese soil (Hughes and Kallen, 1974: 145). Hughes and Kallen go on to argue that “[t]he fact that the deportations were ordered after the war and despite any evidence of subversive, pro-Japan activities on the part of ill-treated Japanese-Canadian internees, indicates clearly that the government and the
Canadian public were motivated more by anti-Japanese racism than by considerations of wartime security”(145).

And of course, these sentiments long predated the outbreak of Japanese hostility. Let us glance once more at the political cartoon that opened our discussion of race and nation in chapter one, and which ran exactly 40 years before the revocation of the deportation order. This 1907 image (Fig. 1.1) eerily forecasts future internment. The image portrays people of Asian ancestry policed and segregated. Asian migrants are locked in an encampment by Miss Canada, symbol of state authority. She holds the gate firmly closed, even as white newcomers move about freely. Sadly, this image seems to hold more explanatory power than the “national security” justification.
Conclusion: The Post-War World and Lessons of Imperialism

Rather than a legitimate reaction to a danger posed to the state, internment and the necessary revocation of Japanese Canadians’ civil rights under the War Measures Act represented the culmination of anti-Asian hostility that had existed for decades. As José Igartua explains, in relation to the Canadian government’s postwar policy announced by Mackenzie King in 1947, there were differences over Canadian national identity but “wide consensus that Canada was, and should continue to be, a white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant society” (36). This question of national whiteness strikes far closer to the heart of the matter. Not coincidentally, 1947 was also the year in which India at last gained its independence.

The postwar era ushered in a new world order. Historic imperial powers had fallen from glory, and new ones were on the rise. Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Japan were crippled and America was ascendant. Discourses of race and rights had also begun to shift. Following the incomprehensible horrors of World War II: the murder of millions of Jews in the Nazi Holocaust, the decimation of two populous Japanese cities by atomic bombs—myths of racial superiority became more precarious and less defensible. New discourses of human rights emerged, even as former-empires clung to their waning power.
More and more, formerly-colonized peoples demanded, fought for, and won, independence and the right to national self-determination. These fights sometimes took the form of bloody armed conflicts. But tactics ranged from passive resistance and civil disobedience to outright guerilla warfare. Fights for national independence and self-determination were also paralleled by internal struggles for racial and gender equality and civil rights at the state level. And of course, social justice movements were transnational—sharing inspirations, resources, and sometimes even participants. Ultimately, the post-WWII order saw a major shift to reconfigured, more enduring national mythologies. These were built on foundations laid by colonial and nineteenth century myths, but were better suited to the postwar world. In my Conclusion, I will briefly visit late twentieth and early twenty-first century racial mythologies, and examine what a history of race and nation in transnational context might teach us about the function of nationalism and xenophobia today.
Figure 4.1

1886, “Imperial Federation, map of the world showing the extent of the British Empire in 1886”
Figure 4.2

January 16, 1898, supplement to *Le Petit Journal*
Figure 4.3

September 29, 1894, Japan Punch
Figure 4.4

1907, Jou and AMRR
BRITISH COLUMBIA: "Now, Uncle Samuel, I propose to take over these fisheries and give Canadian boats and men the benefit of them. Yours will have to go."

UNCLE SAM: "And how about our brown friend? Will he have to go, too?"

Figure 4.5

June 29, 1907, B.C. Saturday Sunset
Figure 4.6

1903, The Moon (Toronto)
MISS B. COLUMBIA—Now, Mr. Bull, have you really any objections to my keeping these Japs out of my province to make room for your sons and daughters?

JOHN BULL—Certainly not, my dear. I have no interest in the matter. Do as you please.

Figure 4.7

July 13, 1907, B.C. Saturday Sunset
Figure 4.8

1907, The Globe (Toronto)

HAPPY THOUGHT!
(Rudyard to the Rescue.)

"I have it! Listen, now. Cram the country full of your own kinspeople, and there simply won't be room for the Asians!"
"Oh, East is East, and West is West . . .
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!"

Rudyard Kipling.
(October 4, 1905)

Figure 4.9

1905, Punch (London)
Figure 4.10

1908, Montreal Daily Star
Figure 4.11

April 1912, *Toronto World*
Figure 4.12

August 1914, Vancouver Daily Province
Figure 4.13

June 1914, Toronto World
Figure 4.14

April 1914, Toronto World
Figure 4.15

November 1914, *Grain Growers Guide*
“STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL TO PREPARED POSITIONS”

Figure 4.16

1942, Toronto Daily Star
CONCLUSION Looking Forward: Race, Nation, and Migration in the Twenty-First Century

The historical legacy of race, immigration, and nation-building has shaped contemporary national mythologies. On June 11, 2008, Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada and leader of the Conservative Party, officially apologized to for Canada's residential school system that, for over a century, aggressively attempted to eradicate Native culture. In his national apology, Harper admitted that the schools had aimed to forcibly “remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.” He acknowledged the widespread physical, psychological, and sexual abuse endured by survivors of residential schools, and proclaimed that “[t]oday, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.” Yet little over a year later, at the September, 2009, G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh, Harper boasted to the world that Canadians “have no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them.”

As critics in Aboriginal communities and the national press pointed out, Harper's comments reflect a schizophrenic view of Canada’s history and its place in the world. At stake in these public proclamations is the question of what Canada's racist colonial
history means for national identity and policy today. For Harper’s remark that such policies have “no place in our country” elides the fact that these policies did and still do have a place in Canada. Critics of the apology argued that the symbolic gesture did little to mitigate the social and economic inequality faced by First Nations and other people of color in Canada today—particularly given ongoing disputes over land claims and other questions of Native Rights.¹ For it was precisely such policies as forced assimilation that created Canada: contemporary inequalities and racisms are rooted in that past. Since its founding in 1867, the Canadian nation-state was built on land extorted from Native peoples, in part with the labor of enslaved and indentured workers, including First Nations. And as we have seen, after its founding, Canada erected and maintained racially exclusionary immigration policies, which welcomed most white settlers while barring many non-whites, until well into the twentieth century. And those racial minorities who were admitted labored for a fraction of the wages paid to white workers.

Yet in his denial of Canada's colonial history, Prime Minister Harper invoked a myth of national exceptionalism which, like racism itself, has been a bulwark of the Canadian

¹ At the time this chapter was being written, in the winter of 2013, Theresa Spence, Attawapiskat Chief, as well as 100 other First Nations Chiefs were on a hunger strike, as part of the “Idle No More” movement. The protest movement was formed in November 2012, in response to Bill C-45, a federal government Bill that proposed changes to both the Indian Act and the Navigable Protection Act, which critics fear will undermine Aboriginal treaty rights. As of January 2013, Spence and other leaders are currently engaged in treaty discussions with Prime Minister Harper. For more about the hunger strike, see “Chief Spence vows to continue hunger strike after GG meeting” <http: //www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2013/01/11/pol-first-nations-spence-pm-gg-talks-friday.html>, viewed January 12, 2013, and “Idle No More protests continue, with larger events planned”, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2013/01/12/aboriginal-idle-no-more-protests.html>, viewed January 12, 2013.
nation-state since its founding. Canadians have vocally proclaimed their moral superiority over Americans, condemning U.S. wars upon Native peoples and lynching of African Americans, oblivious to the quieter Canadian ways of keeping these subordinate populations in their place: residential schools, disenfranchisement, and forms of segregation perhaps more subtle than those in the United States, but equally effective. In terms of immigration restriction, Canadians participated with racial nationalists across the Anglo-colonial world in erecting a global color bar that curtailed migrations from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Contemporary Canada proudly proclaims itself a “mosaic” rather than a “melting pot”, and boasts of its identity as a nation of immigrants. In seeming contrast to the Canada of yesteryear, which celebrated its Anglo-Saxon origins, contemporary Canada mythologizes multiculturalism, diversity, and tolerance. In 1971, the Liberal government of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau enshrined multiculturalism as the official policy of the Canadian government. In 1982, multiculturalism was recognized in section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and in 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The Multiculturalism Act recognizes and protects diversity of language religion, and culture. The Act recognizes Aboriginal rights, as well as and Canada’s multicultural heritage. The Multiculturalism Act made both English and French official languages and guaranteed every Canadian’s right to maintain cultural traditions. So what of race in Canada today?
And what of accounting for this history that forged the state? Where does the past fit into the present?

Neither Prime Minister Harper’s schizophrenia concerning Canadian identity, nor his short historical memory—extending even to his own public remarks—represents a startling aberration. A similar ambivalence is echoed in the attitudes of the general populace. In 2008, the *Globe and Mail*, Canada’s English-language national newspaper, reported that “[a] majority of Canadians say their country bends too much in trying to make visible minorities feel at home, even as voters pat themselves on the back for being a welcoming society.”

2 Entitled “Majority believes Canada coddles minorities,” the article reported that 61 percent of respondents believed “that Canada makes too many accommodations for visible minorities.” In Quebec, the percentage was higher at 72 per cent. Yet a vast majority of respondents—88 percent—nonetheless believed that “their community is welcoming to members of visible minority groups.” A smaller number, 45 percent of those polled, believed that “new Canadians hold on to their customs and traditions for too long.” But, distressingly, in a country that has both formally and informally disavowed assimilation as a policy agenda, and where the head of government has formally apologized for assimilationist policies of the past, this figure

lags “only two percentage points below those who feel newcomers integrate into
Canadian life at a natural and acceptable pace.”

I would argue that when assessing questions of race and immigration today, many
Canadians forget the unequal history that made Canada. Canada has a history of
colonialism connected to Native rights today. Popular attitudes about the need for new
immigrants to assimilate more rapidly connect to a history of racial nationalism and
assimilationism. These Canadian “founding values” are officially disavowed today, but
live on in assumptions about what a “Canadian” is. If Canada is truly a tolerant,
multicultural mosaic, as it claims, what is there to assimilate to? The insistence on
assimilation revealed by opinion polls implies a hierarchy of cultures, social classes, and
ethnicities that is remarkably similar to what John Porter termed “the vertical mosaic” in
1965. 3 In that sense, the idea of Canada as a “white men’s country” lives on in the
notion that some Canadians are more Canadian than others: those whose culture
closely matches Canada’s historical origins and Loyalist cultural inheritance as a British,
Christian, English-speaking colony.

We see nineteenth-century rhetoric repackaged for the twenty-first century not only in
the notion that immigrants should assimilate more quickly, but also in attacks against

multiculturalism. Scholar Eva Mackey argues that prominent critics of multiculturalism, such as Neil Bissoondath and Richard Gwyn create a false sense of threat. Mackey explains that Bissoondath "proclaims that multiculturalism weakens national identity" and Richard Gwyn warns that "if Canada continues to laud the cultures of others—meanwhile discarding the British symbols that have historically defined the nation—the nation is in danger, because if the core element of Canada is obliterated, there may be nothing left" (153). She responds that "[a]lthough there is in reality no imminent risk of this 'obliteration' occurring, the sense of impending 'crises' gives these arguments for the defence of 'core culture' (and one might say the obliteration of multiculturalism) a sense of urgent necessity and increasing legitimacy" (153). Mackey points out that these arguments are not confined to Canada, but rather represent "a broader trend of white backlash against the gains made by minorities in Western nations such as the USA, the UK and Australia" (153).

What is more, these arguments are discouragingly similar to arguments that have been invoked continually over the course of Canadian history—in different forms, but with similar core premises—to justify immigration restriction and systemic inequality. We

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5 For more about racial inequality economic disparities affecting people of color in contemporary Canada, see:
have seen throughout the chapters that preceded this how consistently a sense of threat and national fragility has been cultivated, in order to garner support for exclusionary policies, even when they fundamentally contradicted stated official values. In fact, especially when they were in conflict. One reason why many Canadians simultaneously deem themselves tolerant and welcoming, yet decry what they perceive to be a slow pace of assimilation, is because Canadians forget their own history. They forget the difficulty with which various European ethnicities, religions, and social classes became part of the fabric of the Canadian nation-state. To a greater degree, Canadians forget the struggles of migrants of color and the multitude of barriers created to bar them. Members of these groups are less readily identified as fully Canadian today, despite self-congratulatory national narratives to the contrary.

Historical amnesia enables such contradictions. Unlike in the United States, where race is deemed a “national obsession,” many Canadians know relatively little of our past, especially in terms of racial inequality. While America has a teleological narrative of national identity—a self-congratulatory story of steady improvement overcoming a flawed history—most Canadians aren’t even aware that their history was flawed.

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America, so the narrative goes, is always in the process of becoming a better version of itself, drawing closer to its founding ideals even as it remains short of realizing them.

In Canada, the idea of rectifying past wrongs is not a component of the dominant national narrative, especially in terms of race. Constance Backhouse argues that Canada has a “mythology of racelessness” that, coupled with a “stupefying innocence”, form the “twin pillars of the Canadian history of race” (14). George Elliott Clarke reports in “White Like Canada”, that a “1995 poll conducted by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association found that 83 percent of Canadian adults did not know that slavery was practiced in pre-Confederation Canada until 1834, when Britain abolished the institution throughout its empire” (1997: 103). Again, such startling figures could never exist in America. How then would America remember national heroes such as Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, and reinforce its teleological narrative with comforting stories about their past?

In Canada, by contrast, in addition to a lack of awareness of slavery, “[y]ou would most likely find a similar ignorance regarding the existence, as recently as the 1950s, of school segregation in Ontario and Nova Scotia; the $500 head tax that the Canadian government once slapped on all Chinese immigrants; and the numerous ‘Black Codes’ enacted by various levels of government to control where Chinese, Japanese, Native, and African citizens could work, live, be buried, and even, in some cases, vote” (Clarke,
1997: 103). And despite official apologies from the Canadian state for the Head Tax, residential schools, and Japanese internment, many Canadians still seem blissfully ignorant of this past and its connection to the present.

And I will include an earlier version of myself in that category. In fact, it was my own personal process of discovering how much the historical past fell short of the imagined ideals with which I had been inculcated that prompted my interest in questions of race, nation, and belonging. So I can say with reasonable certainty that part of why such contradictions can easily coexist—claims to be tolerant and welcoming alongside the idea that newcomers should quickly become more "Canadian"—is because Canada is a nation-state whose citizens frequently forget their own history. This selective obliviousness has long been the case, even as we have continually reproduced very similar national narratives over time.

During the nation-building era, the dominant discourse emphasized elite British imperialists benevolently ruling inferior peoples. Today, state discourse is oriented towards multiculturalism and celebration of diversity. Critics of the limits of multiculturalism have argued that this is an asymmetrical relationship, in which dominant groups tolerate more marginal populations, and partakes in their cultures as tourists pass through a country, with little structural change, redistribution, or ceding of power or privilege. And what I am most interested in is how the changing garb of
national exceptionalism allows Canadians to keep believing in it, even while the same populations that were historically disadvantaged and marginalized in Canada for the most part continue to be disadvantaged and marginalized today. Prime Minister’s Harper’s remark to the G-20 in 2008 that Canada has “no history of colonialism” simply modernizes the narrative from the 1876 political cartoon I analyzed in Chapter 2, which condemned America’s “Indian Policy” and praised Canada’s (2.5).

The precise ways in which inequality is manifested and maintained may change, but similar themes and tensions remain. Racism is and always has been structural, sometimes with more acceptably blatant and violent manifestations than at other more “enlightened” eras, but Canada has never been racism-free or “color-blind” in any meaningful way. Similarly, national identities always have been and still are fictional and contradictory. But each nation’s explanation of its exceptionalism has its own distinct character. These exceptionalisms are rooted in the historical origins of states, and the stories each group of would-be nation makers chooses to repeat. One final set of texts and images can summarize how Canada’s contradictory dialectic of tolerance-claims / repressive realities has repeated over time.

The images (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2) and the text date from the final days of World War II in August 1945. The Montreal Gazette featured a two-part retrospective on slavery in Montreal alongside two political cartoons depicting the atomic bombings of the
Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These pages unintentionally convey the complexity of race and national identity in Canada. They not only illustrate historical thinking about race and nation, but also mirror the contradictions that still exist today. The pages capture the process of remembering and resurrecting ideas of race and nation alongside a contemporary depiction of dominant racial attitudes, in all of their messiness.

"All Our Yesterdays" was a regular weekend retrospective by Montreal historian Edgar Andrew Collard. What made it remarkable was his topic of his two-part column: "Negro Slavery in Montreal." The first installment, published August 6, 1945, focuses on slavery under the French regime (Fig. 5.1). Reinforcing myths of Canadian benevolence, the article argued that the treatment of slaves in New France was "not unkind," and that "[t]he evidence, on the contrary, would indicate that the condition of slaves was not hard." What is more, Collard continued, "the Roman Catholic Church used its influence to mitigate their condition," by allowing slaves to be baptized and to receive communion. To add another layer, the author also mentions the enslavement of Native peoples, stating accurately that the majority of those enslaved in New France were Aboriginal peoples—and questionably, but in keeping with racial attitudes at the time—that "[t]he Negroes represented a superior type of slave labor." In fact, part of how the article justifies the relative ease of black slave life in Montreal under that French regime
is by arguing that the more difficult labor was performed by enslaved Native peoples rather than Africans.

Collard also presents the story of Marie-Josèphe-Angélique, an enslaved woman accused of burning down much of old Montreal. He recounts Angélique’s terrible torture and execution, yet quickly assures readers that her treatment did not mean that slaves in Montreal were "subject to cruelty." On the contrary, he argues, echoing the slave-era mythologies of the American South, that "negro slaves" who displayed "remarkable" "faithfulness" were often emancipated in return for their years of service. Collard adds that notarial deeds "contain many of the illustrious names of the French regime," and describes "Negro slavery as a social institution of long and respectable standing" that colonial leaders went out of their way to “protect” and “perpetuate.”

The second article, which ran on August 13, 1945, continues in the same vein the first (Fig. 5.2). Collard explains that by the time the British supplanted the French regime in 1760, "in the British colonies of North America slavery was a social institution of long standing." He lauds the British-colonial slave-holders just as he did the French,

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6 For more on the story of Marie-Josèphe-Angélique, and how this has been taken up in Canadian scholarship and popular culture, see:
explaining that "[e]arly in the British regime many of the most distinguished of the new English-speaking citizens had Negro slaves in their households." This included "Hon. James McGill, founder of McGill University." Protestant churches and slave owners were apparently just as open to slave communicants as the Catholic Church had been under French rule. As with French slave-owners, the article emphasizes that English Canadian slave-owners were "[n]ot uncompassionate", and that "as under the French Regime Negro slavery under the British rule was without many of the harsher features that characterized it in other places."

As we have seen, Canada’s national imaginary has been defined largely in opposition to its historic foil, the United States. The Antebellum South was surely one of the unnamed places on Collard’s list where slavery was “harsher.” Of course, so too were the Caribbean and Latin America. But the conception of Canadian slavery as mild probably gained the most leverage in comparison to its adjacent North American neighbor. But despite repeatedly emphasizing how exceptional slavery in Canada was, Collard also reproduces many of the tropes and mythologies common to slave-owning societies: most notably, the notion that "[s]ometimes slaves were emancipated by their owners in appreciation of their faithful service"—a practice which made slavery no less systematic or unequal.
Collard acknowledges that slaves could and sometimes did flee their bondage, even in its “kind”, “compassionate” Canadian iteration. Apparently, people didn’t like being owned anywhere. What is more, his article makes clear that Canada could have had a very different type of slave system: some leaders initially encouraged the establishment of plantations and the large-scale importation of enslaved labor. Though Collard doesn’t state this, it was in part because of racialist conceptions about the inability of “tropical” peoples to thrive in cold climates that slavery didn’t become a more central part of Canada’s economy and society—and presumably also a better-known chapter of its history (Winks, 1997). In creating a sense of national exceptionalism, Canadians drew upon British imperial values, espousing enlightened and just rule, and extended them in a national context.

Emphasizing Canada’s national exceptionalism by presenting its slave system as exceptional, Collard also explains how slavery in Quebec ended peacefully and organically: again, in contrast to the United States and its bloody Civil War. Collard described a steady growth in Quebec of abolitionist sentiment until Montreal courts increasingly ruled against slave owners so that slavery was effectively abolished in Quebec well-before the British government banned it throughout the Empire in 1833.7

7 Frank Mackey’s extensive archival research on slavery in Montreal in Black then: Blacks and Montreal, 1780-1880’s corroborates Collard’s claims about judicial activism in New France. (Mackey, 2004).
But in terms of broader questions of race and national identity, this is of secondary significance. While it is important that Collard presented this largely forgotten history for his World War II-era readers—especially given that the memory of slavery had already been all but forgotten\(^8\)—he fails to acknowledge that slavery could not have possibly remained a “kind”, “compassionate”, “respectable” institution if Canadians \(\textit{had}\) implemented large-scale plantation slavery, as had once been proposed. That this ultimately never occurred was not because Canadians were more benevolent and morally superior to slave owners elsewhere. Rather, if Canadian slavery was ‘gentler’ (and the evidence for this is by no means conclusive) this was surely because of other historical factors, such as its scale. If enslaved persons had not been so rare, and had almost all of them not been domestic servants rather than agricultural workers, their treatment would surely have been far harsher.

For me, the more interesting question is: what is to be gained by reproducing this perennial founding myth, in this particular context? What are the broader implications of these national narratives for considering race and nation in World War II Canada? In answering this question, let us examine the political cartoons that ran alongside “All Our Yesterdays” retrospectives on “Negro slavery.” Just as the articles insistently downplay

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\(^8\) For more on slavery in Canada, see:
the cruelty of Canadian slavery, the two images just as persistently present racial violence as a game or competitive sport. The losers? That vanquished imperial and racial threat: the Japanese. The first cartoon shows three burly white men – two sailors and a pilot -- playing a carnival game called “Hit the Nip.” One sailor is labeled “U.S. Third Fleet” and the second “Royal Navy,” emphasizing Canada’s British connection. Their “target” is a Japanese man's face, portrayed in a racist caricature. This cartoon by John Collins, the Montreal Gazette’s regular cartoonists, appeared on the very day that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan.

The uranium atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima had an explosive yield of around 15,000 tons of TNT. It killed 90,000 people immediately, and 145,000 died within months from injuries and radiation. With a destructive power that had never been seen, the bomb laid to waste an entire city in a single blast. This unprecedented act of wartime violence is caricatured in the cartoon. Through its caption “No Longer a Sideshow,” we see that the atomic bombing of Japan has propelled the war in the Pacific onto center stage, no longer dwarfed by the war in Europe.

9 It is fascinating to see how recipient of this violence is visually depicted. This form of racist caricature parallels the portrayal of black “Sambos” and other denigrating minstrel tropes. The Japanese man has exaggerated “squinty” eyes and “buck teeth”, much as blacks were portrayed with obscenely enlarged, bright red lips. The Japanese man is passively receiving the brunt of ‘sporting’ white aggression, his face evidencing what appears to be only discomfort, despite the fact that we can see two large welts on his head where the baseballs ricochet off his skull. He is discursively presented as animalistic, in that his face seems incapable of registering human emotion such as pain, humiliation, or discontent. The man is presented as an insensible recipient of violence rather than suffering human being. The supposed inability of non-whites to feel acute emotional, and to a lesser degree physical pain to the same degree as white people is a colonial trope. For more on this, see: Woods, Marcus. Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780-1865. New York: Routledge, 2000.

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The second political cartoon ran after the subsequent bombing of Nagasaki. The plutonium atom bomb released an explosive yield of 21,000 tons of TNT. Another 45,000 people died immediately, followed by an additional 75,000 by the end of 1945. So although the destructive power of the atomic bombs was now fully understood and the combined loss of life resulting from the bombings tremendous, these bombings are presented as legitimate recourse for the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

In the second cartoon, John Collins again uses a sport metaphor to represent violence against the Japanese. His two frame depiction of a tennis match features a similarly racist caricature of a Japanese man. In the first frame, the Japanese player aces his opponent with his serve, and exclaims in 'broken English', “I’ve won the Pacific Championship yes, please”. On the other side of the net, his white opponent objects, “Hey! I wasn't ready!” — an obvious reference to the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. In the second frame, the white player whacks the ball with such ferocity that it flies over the net, through the Japanese player's racquet, and smashes into his face—an “air attack” that makes him see stars. The cartoon’s title is “Return Service”: a tennis analogy for the atomic bombing of Japan as retaliation for Japan’s surprise attack.  

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10 Japan’s surprise at its bombing with atomic weapons of unprecedented destructive power is implicitly echoed in the white player’s protest, which presents the caricatured Japanese as unsportsmanlike, sneaky, and unfair. Similarly, the image disregards the fact that a surprise attack by the Allies would no doubt have
Both images portray cartoonish brutal violence against the Japanese. More interesting is that here, atypically, a Canadian cartoon does not criticize U.S. violence against a racialized population. Surprisingly, a Canadian publication does not exploit the display of American aggression to bolster Canada’s nationalist narrative. They don’t reject the bombings as savage, barbarous, or un-Canadian. Instead, they celebrate this turn of events, even vicariously participate. Collins made sure to include the Royal Navy, to credit Britain and its Dominions with a role on the Pacific front (Canada’s role was minimal)—and thus entitled to share in America’s military victory.11 Far from Canada’s customary condemnation of and self-satisfaction at U.S. violence, “Return Service” relishes the racialized vindication the atomic bombings represent. Inflicting racial violence is presented as a bonding experience—an opportunity to solidify white masculinity, embodied in the three brawny military men pummeling the emasculated “nip.”12

11 The role of the Royal Navy in the Pacific front was mostly tragic, with its two warships, the Repulse and the Prince of Wales both being sunk quickly by Japanese air attacks. For more about the engagement of Britain’s Force Z and its destruction by Japanese torpedo bombers, see: Grove, Eric. The Royal Navy since 1815: A new short history. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2005.

12 If anything, the three white men are presented as hypermasculine. The member of the third fleet boasts bulging, muscular forearms, and an anchor tattoo, and a broad chin and jaw, set with malevolent determination and focus. The air force and Royal navy enlistees in the background, with smaller feature less detail, but they too look like strapping exemplars of ideal, white, masculinity. Unlike the other man, rather than a look of malice, they feature what can better be described as boyish grins. But while they lack the furrowed brow of the sailor in the foreground, all three men look like they are enjoying themselves immensely in this ‘sporting’ display of racialized violence. This mirrors the portrayal of lynching in the 1901 Montreal Star cartoon.
So what can we learn from these two provocative and contradictory pages of the *Montreal Gazette* about the function of national identity and exceptionalism: in the past as well as the present? What is an apologist portrayal of black slavery, and discussion of enslaved Native peoples, doing alongside a celebratory image of the atomic bombing of Japan, by Canada’s “ambivalent ally”, America? And what of Japanese-Canadian internment? Internment is completely overlooked in both of the Collins cartoons—ironically, given that the Canadian state would eventually recognize Japanese internment as a national embarrassment, much as Collard’s apologist account implies that slavery was. But the utter unselfconsciousness with which Japanese internment is erased here is starkly evident – although not surprising, given a legacy of “stupefying innocence”.

Japanese people are caricatured and dehumanized, in the form of the “nip” and the sneaky tennis player—in ways that implicitly reinforced the policy of interning Japanese Canadians. This racial “othering” also echoes how Native peoples were infantilized to legitimate colonialism, expansionism, and land-grabs—or how black people were characterized as “exotic” and “savage”, in order to justify their enslavement. Yet the racialization of disparate groups is presented as unrelated. And what is more, it is not just Japanese internment that disappears here, but also other ongoing forms of racial
inequality—including segregation, residential schooling, eugenicist policies of forced sterilization,\(^ {13}\) and Chinese Head tax laws, which would not be repealed until a year later, in 1946. The residential schooling system and other forced assimilation policies endured far longer—from 1857, with the passage of the Gradual Civilization Act, aimed at assimilating First Nations—until at least the closure of the last residential school in 1998.\(^ {14}\)

**Meanings for National Identity**

I chose to introduce two *Montreal Gazette* pages because in them we can discern the very same processes that comprise the central themes of my chapters. First, we see how transnational definitions of whiteness, masculinity, and (national) belonging are created, through the three men’s attack on the Japanese man. We see ethnicity and class subsumed under racial categories. In direct contrast to the Japanese man, the

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\(^{13}\) For more on residential school abuse and forced sterilization, see the March 25, 2007, article by Amnesty International, “Soul Wound: The Legacy of Native American Schools” <http://www.amnestyusa.org/node/87342>, viewed September 15, 2011. The article reports that “A 2001 report by the Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada documents the responsibility of the Roman Catholic Church, the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the federal government in the deaths of more than 50,000 Native children in the Canadian residential school system. The report says church officials killed children by beating, poisoning, electric shock, starvation, prolonged exposure to sub-zero cold while naked, and medical experimentation, including the removal of organs and radiation exposure. In 1928 Alberta passed legislation allowing school officials to forcibly sterilize Native girls; British Columbia followed suit in 1933. There is no accurate toll of forced sterilizations because hospital staff destroyed records in 1995 after police launched an investigation. But according to the testimony of a nurse in Alberta, doctors sterilized entire groups of Native children when they reached puberty. The report also says that Canadian clergy, police, and business and government officials “rented out” children from residential schools to pedophile rings.”

\(^{14}\) Assembly of First Nations “Residential Schools Unit” <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/history.html>
three men are presented in Collins’ cartoons—not as Irish, Italian, or working class—but as white. Second, in a related but divergent process, Canada’s particular British imperial whiteness, masculinity, and national exceptionalism is reinforced through Collard’s apologist discussion of slavery. Alleged Canadian ‘kindness’ and ‘compassion’ toward slaves is highlighted vis-à-vis that perennial foil, the United States.

Third, we see cleavages in national identity and values. Tensions within the nation-state are revealed through the disconnect between the celebration of racialized violence in the cartoon and its disavowal in the article. And of course, great contradiction exists even within the article itself. Finally, we see imperial ambivalence, in relation to Japan. Celebratory violence against Japanese people not only ignored internment, but also highlighted the fickleness of imperial alliances. The historic stance that Canadians would never treat Japan like China fell by the wayside. So too did the conciliatory Alliance-era rhetoric that the importance of “East” and “West,” “breed,” and “birth,” diminished “[w]hen two strong men stand face to face, tho’ they come from the ends of the earth”. Following the Pearl Harbor attack—that racial and “economic menace”, Japanese-Canadians, could be systematically incarcerated—even as “wartime security” was substituted as an alibi for racism. Similarly, when it came down to it, the notion of imperial unity, and standing “shoulder to shoulder” with India proved to be an empty promise. Given the strength of the global color line, the assurance of “universal imperial citizenship” proved little more than a carrot to be dangled in India’s face when Britain
and the Dominions needed its support. Promises of meaningful unity and equality within the Empire were never kept.

As these two pages of the *Gazette* illustrate, complex, contradictory, and layered processes occur *simultaneously*. It is for this reason that I chose a *process* as the thematic basis for each chapter—as opposed to a more conventional mode of organization. These *Montreal Gazette* pages highlight the complexity of nation-building and exceptionalist mythologies—specifically in terms of immigration and racialized definitions of belonging and exclusion. Hopefully, my chapters have elucidated the complexity of these processes and shed some light on how we might go about better understanding them. The importance of doing so is pressing. For while this project is historical, many of these processes it takes up are *not*. We can see similar contradictions and tensions at work in discussions of race, immigration, and national identity and belonging today.

In Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s public remarks, and the opinion polls of twenty-first century Canadians, we can see how many of the same unquestioned and unselfconscious contradictions can be used to legitimate unequal citizenship today. These concerns are as relevant in contemporary Canada as they were in 1945—or even in 1885. Just as in the World War II political cartoons, Harper’s comments emphasized the “greatness” of Canada—a country with “all of the things that many people admire
about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them”—including “no history of colonialism”. And just as with the 1945 article, we see an intense contradiction between nationalist exultations and apologies for the past, alongside a concurrent and ongoing reality of racial inequality.

In the wake of criticism, Harper attempted to reconcile his public boasts with his recent apology for residential schools and policies of forced assimilation—what some survivors have termed “cultural genocide”—protesting that he had been misunderstood. Harper argued that he was actually referring to Canadian participation in foreign colonialism. Leaving aside Canada’s frequently troubling foreign policy—which many have argued convincingly is neo-imperialist, but which is far too complex to take up here—let us examine the implications of such contradictions. As in the 1945 newspaper, national shame and contrition commingle alongside bombastic claims to greatness. And as with “All Our Yesterdays,” Harper’s laudatory statements at the G-20 Summit hide structural inequality and elide the damaging effects of government policies that disadvantage marginalized populations.

In general, the same types of contradictions were intact and flourishing then as now. But of course, there is also a significant symbolic difference between the article’s apologia, which downplays the injustice slavery in Canada, and an official state apology—as a public disavowal of past policies, and open recognition that they had
been misguided and discriminatory. But we should still take the time to ask ourselves exactly what these apologies mean. Cynics may argue—and they may well be correct—that these apologies are little more than an effort by the Conservative Party to garner favor with newcomers to Canada, in order to win their votes—especially given that Conservative government policies generally tend to hurt these constituencies.

It is true that Conservative governments in Canada have history of issuing such national apologies. To the surprise of many at the time, another Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, had made history 20 years earlier, in September 1988, when he apologized for the WWII internment of Japanese-Canadians.\(^1\) Similarly, Prime Minister Harper not only apologized for residential schools, but also, in June, 2006, for the Chinese Head Tax, and then again in August, 2008, for the Continuous Journey provision that restricted immigration from India. Interestingly, the Liberal Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau—the architect of multiculturalism in Canada—had staunchly refused to issue an apology or restitution for the head tax, when approached by a Member of Parliament in 1983. The Member of Parliament had taken the request to the Prime Minister in response to a constituent’s request for a refund for the $500 head tax he had paid to

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\(^1\) In September 1988, Brian Mulroney formally apologized in the House of Commons and granted restitution for wrongful incarceration, seizure of property, and disenfranchisement of Japanese Canadians during WWII. This came just a month after U.S. President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1888, which granted redress to surviving internees, following ten years of lobbying by the Japanese American Citizens League. So Canada’s official apology may have largely been the result of a desire to keep pace of American developments.
enter Canada.\textsuperscript{16} This failed call for restitution and recognition began a national movement for head tax redress.\textsuperscript{17}

In regard to this startling trend among Conservative Party Prime Ministers—and the residential school apology, in particular—maybe there is even less complex maneuvering at work here than trying to sway ethic constituencies. Maybe all we see is politicians’ near-universal tendency to craft different messages for particular audiences. Maybe this is really only about disparate agendas clashing in close quarters with each other—one message intended for the national voting public butting up against another designed to save face in front of the world. But suppose we take these apologies at face value. What do they mean? Do they suggest that the historical memory of racial oppression and the violence of nation-building is more alive in Canada than public opinion polls might lead us to believe? Or maybe since Canadians have such short memories anyway, this is just intended to elevate leaders like Harper and Mulroney in the eyes of the few who \textit{already} know and care about this history. Or are these

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{16} As Lily Cho explains in “Rereading Chinese Head Tax Racism: Redress, Stereotype, and Antiracist Critical Practice”: “In 1983, Dak Leon Mark walked into the offices of his local Member of Parliament carrying his original head tax receipt for five hundred dollars and asked for his money back. The MP took the request to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Mark’s act inspired many other Chinese Canadians to do the same. When the prime minister rebuffed his request for an apology and compensation, the Chinese Canadian community went public with the request on Chinese New Year’s Day in 1984. This was the beginning of the Chinese Canadian head tax redress movement” (62).


\textsuperscript{17} As Lily Cho goes on to explain: “In the first week alone, hundreds of elderly Chinese Canadians arrived at the office of Hanson Lau’s Overseas Chinese Voice radio station on East Pender Street in Vancouver with their original head tax receipts. The Chinese Canadian National Council eventually registered thousands of head tax payers and descendants” (62). The apology had not yet been issued at the publication of Cho’s article, she explained that this had been a site of political solidarity. Cho wrote in 2002 that “[a]lthough the call for an official apology and compensation has been unsuccessful so far, the head tax continues to be an important point of mobilization for the Chinese Canadian community and Asian Canadian critical discourse” (62).
\end{footnotesize}
apologies more about forgetting the past, so we can move on? Certainly, Trudeau’s refusal to apologize was probably motivated by an unwillingness to dwell on the past, and reify the segmentation of Canada’s imagined community. And generally, his policies were more beneficial to marginalized Canadians than Harper’s or Mulroney’s neo-liberal agendas.

So this must bring us to ask: does apologizing for things make them okay? A sincere, well-meaning apology can ameliorate some of the harm of a past hurt. Certainly, the unwillingness to apologize to a particular group can remain a smarting wound—almost a formal disavowal. Such is the case for advocates of an apology for slavery, for which the state has yet to apologize.18 What is more, apologies are not given freely. As we have seen with the movement for head tax redress, apologies are hard-won, and their champions have generally had to fight for decades to win an official recognition of past generations’ suffering and mistreatment at the hands of the state. At least some of the apologies were accompanied by monetary tokens of redress, which are then distributed to survivors and used to found anti-racist organizations, geared towards historical education. Again, a cynical reading might conclude that redress payments emanated from self-serving efforts to avoid a more costly payment in the event of a successful

18 And even when a formal apology is offered, as with residential schools, not all survivors are recognized. For a discussion of how some residential schools were left off the official list, and how former students were denied an apology, see the article: "'Sorry' does not extend to all, "'The apology will be a hollow one for us,' says native whose school is not on official list" – Jun 11, 2008 04:30 AM.
class action lawsuit. Canada, however, is a less litigious society than the United States, so perhaps we can take this symbolic gesture at face value. But that does not mean we should not also be critical of the limits of such gestures. Such apologies—though a meaningful and important form of recognition—may also have the unintended consequence of detracting attention and support from ongoing demands for social justice and racial equality in Canada.

Harper’s apology to Canada’s First Nations certainly appeared to have been quickly forgotten, at least by the Prime Minister himself. Invoking Canada’s mostly-positive reputation in the world is a usually a good way to paper over the unsightly blemishes and imperfections that deface the nation’s history. This also extends to the nation’s present. Placing excessive emphasis on how misguided and un-Canadian past policies were allows us to delude ourselves into imagining that such incidents were exceptions, when in fact, they fell well within the norm. The events that I study in this dissertation project were part of a sustained series of policy decisions that entrenched unequal power relations in ways that had lasting historical effects. But contrary to dominant perception today, if anything, such policies were quintessentially Canadian. They were an integral part of Canada’s founding mythology, power structure, and process of nation-building. In 1879, racial nationalist George Grant had articulated Canada’s mission as follows: “[a] nation to be great must have great thoughts; must be inspired
with lofty ideals...[t]o be a light to the dark places of the earth; to rule inferior races mercifully and justly.”

Rooted in British imperial mythologies, this founding vision was completely compatible with land grabs, slavery, and other forms of subordination. These unequal arrangements were justified by harnessing discourses of Anglo-Saxon superiority—both racial and moral—attributes particularly abundant in the ruling class. As we have seen, the nation-building era saw a state established on the basis of these imperial mythologies and racial and class discourses, accompanied by the creation of seemingly-unassailable national narratives. Elite British rule was posited as an enlightened alternative to messy, unruly American republicanism. In this narrative, Canada’s hierarchical imperialistic structure was presented as the best system for ensuring peace and tolerance—and these qualities were ascribed to the imagined community itself—even as the social and racial order closely resembled that which flourished elsewhere in the Anglo-colonial world. Did the notion of a hierarchical Anglo-Saxon rule at the center of Canadian society and power ever go away?

Despite a twentieth century emphasis on multiculturalism and the mosaic, many scholars would argue vehemently that it did not. As Maureen Elgersman explains in her

study of slavery in Canada, “contemporary problems are not modern aberrations, but, rather, form part of a continuum of racial privilege. It is not an evil that has penetrated the Canadian border from outside and tainted its culture; Canada has its own history of subjugation with its own investments, privileged rewards, and protections to reconcile” (Elgersman 1999: 4).

While some might argue that the collective national head of Canada’s body politic is buried in the sand, others proclaim that Canada doesn’t have a race problem—at least insofar as they refuse to acknowledge that one exists. As Maureen Elgersman decries, some Canadians attempt to avoid any serious discussion by falling back on that perennial trope—comparing themselves to Americans and condemning their neighbors’ presumably more deeply dysfunctional society. For discussions about how to rectify a legacy of inequality is neither an easy discussion, nor a particularly pleasant one. Denial and ignorance are far easier. As George Elliott Clarke goes on to say, “Canadians do not believe that they have committed any racial sins for which they should atone. If anything, they are self-righteous in maintaining their innocence” (102).

An emphasis on a fictional past allows Canadians today to avoid both a discussion of the racist roots of the nation-state and discussions of how contemporary racial inequality is rooted in a history of racial oppression. As Daniel Frances notes, “[w]ith repetition” over time, “core myths” eventually “come to form the mainstream memory of the culture, our national dreams, the master narrative which explains the culture to itself
and seems to have express its overriding sense of purpose” (10). In effect, these national myths become “true”. A belief in a mythologized national past is something that all nations have—but it can be treacherous in that it allows us to divorce past mistakes from today’s struggles for equality—and much-needed discussions of immigration policy. First Nations—the rightful descendants of Aboriginal communities that inhabited the land long before European colonialism—are in many ways one of the most marginalized populations in Canada today. It is almost painfully ironic, given his landmark formal apology for residential schools, to observe Prime Minister Harper’s ongoing dispute over Native Rights, especially in terms of treaties, sovereignty, and land claims. This same tension was evident in debates about the use of contested land to build sites for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.20

20 The Harper government’s treatment of First Nations was also frequently in the news in the time leading up to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. The Vancouver Olympics saw vigorous protests from Aboriginal Rights groups, including demonstrations attended by thousands, including anti-poverty and environmental activists, as well as advocates of Native Rights. Rallying around the slogan “No 2010 Olympics on Stolen Native Land”, protestors opposed holding the games on sovereign land that had not been ceded to either the federal or provincial government under any existing treaty. The state response? A celebratory opening ceremony, which places Native Canadians front and center—with various tribal communities performing a dance and welcoming Olympians and the world to Canada—decried by activists as an obvious attempt to detract attention from ongoing disputes and present a façade of national unity.

The so-called “Anti-Olympics” protestors—who would no doubt be more accurately hailed as “pro-Native Rights” protestors, since they did not oppose the Olympics per se, so much as disregard for existing land claims—also opposed the extensive destruction of forest land to build transportation systems for the Olympic Games. Questions of Native Rights have also been intertwined with environmental causes, as in the case of “fracking”, a process of hydraulic fracturing, that uses high pressure injections into the ground to extract the hard-to-reach natural gas found in shale deposits. This extraction process is highly controversial because in addition to tremendous quantities of water and sand, it also requires the injection of toxic chemicals. These toxins, along with any uncollected natural gas, can leak to the surface and contaminate groundwater and rivers affecting nearby ecosystems and water supply. Similar environmental safety concerns have been expressed by Native Rights groups and environmental activists in relation to the “dirty oil” of the tar sands, also known as the “oil sands”—deposits in sandstone beneath the earth’s surface. The extraction process for the oil sands produces an incredible amount of waste—two gallons for each gallon of oil extracted. The waste includes toxic slurry laced with mercury and arsenic, which can seep into surrounding aquifers and rivers. Many mysterious illnesses have been attributed to exposure to this toxic byproduct of “dirty oil” production, chiefly amongst Native populations.

On the oil sands, see: “Scenes From the Tar Wars”,
http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2008/05/scenes-tar-wars
I hope that my project will help provide an antidote to this historical amnesia and will allow us to better examine the connections between the past and the present. There is an urgent imperative to do so. Today, we see a frightening resurgence of xenophobia and racial nationalism across much of the world. This is particularly true in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, as well as the ensuing Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and subsequent economic crises. A palpable climate of anxiety and uncertainty seem to have prompted a battenning of hatches, to have fostered a more receptive atmosphere for various forms of scapegoating, “othering”, and exclusion. Conservative advocates of immigration restriction, such as Samuel P. Huntington, with his essentialistic reifications of east and west—refigured as “Jihad vs. McWorld”—and fears of “Hispanicization” of the United States, call for besieged nation-states to close their gates once again.

Following the rise of discourses of universal human rights following the horror of World War II, the global color line relaxed somewhat—as seen through in massive migrations

The Olympics were billed by Time Magazine as "restrained" and "respectful" — typical of how Canada likes to represent itself in the world
See “Olympics Open with Restrained, Respectful Celebration”, 
<http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1963484_1963490_1964184,00.html>, viewed January 12, 2013
from former colonies to historically racial nationalist nation-states in North America and Europe. But as in the era of nation-building and expansionist imperialism, we are once more in a moment of fear and perceived threat and precariousness. Our worst impulses tell us to build bombs and build walls. The United States has done just that—erecting a high fence to curtail migration from Mexico—and many social and legal fences as well. In Europe too, we have seen the resurgence of defensive, xenophobic nationalism, with nativist groups gaining a troubling foothold in France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, and much of Eastern Europe.

Canada has created a guest worker system that allows the state to harness migrants’ productive labor, without extending citizenship rights. In fact, on January 25, 2013, “Fox News Latino” ran an article with a self-explanatory title: “Canada-Mexico Guest Worker Program Touted as Model for U.S. To Replicate.” Canadians frequently accuse Americans of being xenophobic, so what does it mean if Americans are touting Canada’s as the model to emulate in addressing the question of undocumented workers in the United States? An official website from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) explains that “[e]very year, more than 180,000 foreign workers enter Canada to work temporarily in jobs that help Canadian employers address skill shortages,” the website

makes it clear that national skill shortages are now addressed—not through opening immigration, and granting citizenship rights and other entitlements enjoyed by Canadian workers, as had been done for decades—but rather through an increasing shift toward temporary contract labor. This is a disturbing trend in global labor. And it does not affect all workers equally, but disproportionately affects less educated, more vulnerable workers from less affluent countries.

To its credit, the website also includes a link to a website about “Assistance for victims of human trafficking”, which explains that "Citizenship and Immigration Canada can help protect victims of trafficking by securing their immigration status with a special temporary resident permit (TRP)". These permits are only valid for 180 days, but can be reissued. The website also explains that if a temporary foreign worker "becomes sick, has an accident, is hospitalized or needs home recovery", he or she is entitled to sick leave and should be covered by provincial or territorial workers' compensation plans. The site exhorts employers: “[d]o not force your employee to work if they are ill”. Speaking of illness, temporary workers might also be required to take a medical exam, as was widespread practice during the nation-building era—hopefully not so

24 "What if a foreign worker becomes sick, has an accident, is hospitalized or needs home recovery?" <www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?q=213&t=17>, viewed January 27, 2013.
selectively enforced—yet the particular foreign nationals outlined here seem to be selectively targeted for these health screenings.\textsuperscript{25}

That the government needs to exhort employers not to exploit their workers in this way seems both troubling and ironic, particularly given that many of the workers are themselves employed as caregivers. The website explains that one of the so-called “low-skill” occupations in high demand include “live-in caregivers”.\textsuperscript{26} In a major historical shift, global labor migrations are becoming increasingly “feminized”, particularly in the caregiving professions. The outsourcing of caregiving labor to overseas workers can negatively affect migrant women’s own homes and communities—as they must frequently make the difficult choice between caring for their own families and helping to support them financially.\textsuperscript{27} Unlike with citizenship, the spouses/domestic partners and dependents of temporary former workers cannot easily go to Canada with them. Family members must also apply to work, and are subject to the same eligibility requirements, which would obviously disqualify children and the elderly. Domestic partners can apply for an "open" work permit only if they are the spouse or common-law partner of someone working in particular "high-skill" job

\textsuperscript{26} The website also explains that "[e]very year, Canadian employers hire over 150,000 temporary workers with specific skills, including live-in caregivers". <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/>, viewed January 27, 2013.
\textsuperscript{27} CITE Global Woman
categories. It seems that Canada’s guest worker policy actually actively and intentionally separates families. If the Fox News Latino article is to be believed: “Canada also requires that approximately 16,000 yearly recruits be married — but only they, not their spouses and children, can travel to Canada”.28

Most disturbing is the website’s announcement that, beginning in 2013, the state intends to implement “biometric identity screening”.29 The website explains that these new requirements will apply to citizens from 29 countries and one territory, and provides an implementation schedule with lists of countries.30 Included in the proposed timeline are primarily citizens from countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Colombia, Jamaica, and Haiti; Africa: Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria, Sudan and South Sudan; the Middle East: Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Authority; Southeast Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Cambodia; and one lone country in Eastern Europe: Albania. Most of Europe is notably absent,

28 Though the article doesn’t explain why, I suspect that this policy might be little more than an effort to avoid marriages between migrant workers and Canadian citizens, which would make it easier for the migrants to gain Canadian citizenship. If this is the case, separating families seems like a cruel way to prevent citizenship applications by “unskilled” migrant workers, especially since the state is obviously in need of their labor.

29 The site explains that “[s]tarting in 2013, CIC plans to require nationals of 29 countries and 1 territory to appear in person to have their fingerprints and photograph taken when they apply for a temporary resident visa, study or work permit”. It is unclear whether fingerprints and photographs are the only “biometric” assessment measures taken, since the term suggests more detailed information-gathering.

30 “Countries and territories whose citizens will soon need to provide biometric information to enter Canada as visitors” <www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/biometrics.asp>, viewed January 27, 2013.
while Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East are vastly overrepresented. Is this any coincidence? Much of the formerly-colonized “black, brown, and yellow” world is here, where the “white”, Western world is exempt. This suggests a disturbing step towards reinstating the global color line. Of course, this is not racially-defined in an explicit sense, but neither was Canada’s old system of national immigration quotas—yet this was obviously still a thinly veiled alibi for racial nationalism.

Of course, this list does not mean that people from these countries cannot immigrate to Canada. However, it does represent the introduction of another color line—this one drawn in new surveillance technologies—wherein the movement of some bodies across national boundaries is controlled, monitored, and scrutinized to a different extent from other bodies. If there is any doubt that this is related to Canada’s history of racial exclusion, one only has to look at the list of foreign nationals subject to mandatory biometric screening. Not only are almost all European countries absent, but so too are China, Japan, and India. The very same Asian and Southeast Asian states whose migrants had been subject to racist immigration laws are left off here. Clearly, Canadian leaders wish to avoid comparisons between today’s new immigration policies and Canada’s historically racist laws. The state has already had to deal with Indian Canadians, Chinese Canadians, and Japanese Canadians angry at the treatment of past generations of migrants, as well as their outraged home countries. Clearly, the
Canadian government wants to keep the past in the past and doesn’t want to risk offending either voters or rising world powers.

But as in the past, these official state policies are about maintaining an advantageous position in the world, and we should never lose sight of this. In a world divided into discrete states, each trying to advance its own agenda—states’ policies are, and have always been, first and foremost about power, control, and self-interest—not “kindness”, “compassion”, or tolerance. In fact, these national myths, while they might make us feel warm and fuzzy—and contain at least the inevitable kernel of truth—should always be taken with a grain of salt. For they are also what enables the status quo to be maintained, however unjust. It is important to connect the present and the past. And it is important for those of us in a position to do so to oppose both exploitative labor practices, and also the attitude that new immigrants should become “more Canadian”, along with its implicit assumption that some Canadians are “more Canadian” than others. And these problematic assumptions are obviously not limited to Canada, and our analysis should not stop there either.

Rather, we should hold ourselves and our national leaders to a higher standard. We should always push for critical evaluation and dialogue. To this end, a lack of historical analysis is a serious problem that must be rectified if Canada—or any state—aspire to become the sort of enlightened, tolerant, havens we frequently hold them up as—to
more closely match the self-congratulatory national imaginaries we project to the outside world. Similarly, we should to be critical of all renewed forms of racial nationalism, and other harmful nationalisms, and especially mindful of their most subtle and insidious iterations, as these can sometimes sneak under the radar. As I hope that I have demonstrated in this project, Canadians have virtually always simultaneously concocted exceptionalist national myths and actively oppressed and exploited marginalized populations—just as have nationalists elsewhere. As Constance Backhouse argues, this has long been a part of Canada’s historical tradition. Perhaps it is time to create new traditions.
Figures for Conclusion

Figure 5.1
August 6, 1945, Montreal Gazette
Figure 5.2

August 13, 1945, Montreal Gazette
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