

**“Aliens go Home”:
A Critical Media Analysis of the Chinese Migrants**

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

During the summer of 1999, four boats carrying 590 migrants from the Fujian province in China arrived on the shores British Columbia. July 20th, 1999 the first boat arrived and there were 123 migrants (106 men and 17 women) on board. The media described them as being in good health despite the ordeal they had endured. They were housed at CFB Esquimalt's Work Point Barracks and immigration officials began the process of determining if the migrants could seek refugee status. The majority of the migrants on this boat were released after undergoing a series of interviews and were requested to appear at their refugee hearings dates.

A second ship, containing 131 migrants (13 juvenile girls, 36 juvenile boys, 36 adult women, and 46 adult men) arrived on August 11th, 1999 and those on board were transported to Esquimalt's Work Point Barracks. Additionally, the boat's crew nine Korean men, were charged with smuggling and taken into custody.

On August 31st, a third ship arrived carrying 190 people. The fourth and final boat arrived September 8th 1999, with 146 people. As of December 1999, the majority of the Chinese migrants are in custody across British Columbia, as they await the processing of their refugee claims. They are seeking refugee status on the grounds of the lack of political and religious freedom, and fear of persecution. Some of the women reported instances and fears of forced sterilisation and abortion due to China's one-child policy. As of December 1999, only one refugee claim had been granted.

In contrast, 4,374 Kosovar refugees were welcomed into Canada in the spring of 1999. They were given speedy and automatic entry into Canada, but not "official" refugee status. While they were not immediately granted status on the basis of their war victim status, this unimpeded process has been identified as an extraordinary event (Chakkalakal 33). Many of the Kosovar refugees were also welcomed into Canadian homes until they found more appropriate arrangements.

The arrival of consecutive boatloads of Chinese migrants off the coast of Vancouver Island was the largest news item of the summer of 1999. During July and August, it was reported on television and both national and local newspapers, on a daily basis. Given the extent of the coverage it was impossible to escape.

This thesis will analyze the representation of the Chinese migrants within the *Times Colonist*, Victoria's daily newspaper and how it relied on the process of racialization. According to Robert Miles, the process of racialisation

refers to those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities. The characteristics signified vary historically and, although they have usually been visible somatic features, other non-visible (alleged and real) biological features have also been signified. The concept therefore refers to a process of categorization, a representational process of defining an Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically. (Miles 75)

The perception of what a somatic feature is, can shift historically and culturally. It is not static. Using this theoretical conceptualization, I will explore how and why the Chinese migrants were represented and 'othered' as 'aliens' and as 'criminals.' I will also examine who benefited

from these representations and how Canada's narratives, the culturally accepted discourse around who Canadians are and what qualities best represent us, were upheld.

An exploration of this topic is timely, given that a growing numbers of people choose or are forced to migrate across national borders. Concerns about immigration and refugee issues have heightened. Globalization has legitimized the international movement of capital and goods, but the movement of people to rich nations from poor ones is becoming more restricted. Despite various difficulties, migration is increasing as demonstrated by the events of the summer 1999.

I focused on the media because it plays a central role in shaping public opinion. As Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman point out,

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and *to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society* (Chomsky and Herman, 1). (my italics)

The media has the ability to indoctrinate and perpetuate modes of behaviour and thinking. This provides that structure with tremendous power. Media ownership is and has become increasingly concentrated. This can allow for 'agenda setting' or 'manufacturing of consent' to form around the interests of some. As Herman and Chomsky argued, this does not, however, suggest a conspiracy:

In most cases, however, media leaders do similar things because they see the world through the same lenses, and are subject to similar constraints and incentives, and thus feature stories or maintain silence together in tacit collective action and leader-follower behavior (Herman and Chomsky, xii).

Not only does the media have the power to shape public opinion, but as Teun van Dijk argues, it can influence other elites:

This means that despite their dependence on other, for example, political, corporate, academic, and social elites, mass media institutions have at least some means to control these other elites, which is also an important element of the power dimension that goes beyond that of simple mediation (van Dijk, 1993, 243).

In this respect, the media plays a central role in the reproduction of racism, both through its interdependence with other elites and its influence over the public, or social mind (van Dijk, 1993, 243).

The influence of the media over other elites became clear from the reporting of the story of the Chinese migrants. It fuelled a climate for debate by both government elites and the general public on tougher immigration and refugee policies. Some people were portrayed as 'experts' in the media and this gave them credibility both other elites and the public. It appears from some of the expert comments that they were interested in more restrictive immigration and refugee policies.

Racism can exist in many forms. There is everyday popular racism that occurs between individuals. Also there is an elite racism that manifests its influence in a hierarchical form. This is dangerous because the media controls public discourse and can perpetuate specific narratives and denials, such as the carefully managed self-image of 'tolerant' citizens and leaders (van

Dijk, 1993, 17). The interests of the elites can become the interests of average Canadians. The racism was recurring and increasingly blatant during the coverage of the Chinese migrants. The denial of this racism was also recurring and loud. I assert that this denial revolves around maintaining Canadian narratives. These narratives include that Canada and Canadians are friendly, giving, naïve, open, multicultural and therefore not racist, are dominant cultural discourses. This led to a theme of denial. Elites perpetuate these narratives, which Canadians use to identify to identify themselves as a national group. I examine the question of who are the 'ideal' immigrants and Canadians from these narratives.

I will examine my own position within this audience. As a white, working-middle class, university educated, bisexual woman raised by European immigrant parents, my biases appear throughout the analysis and conclusions of this thesis. I am aware of aspects of privilege that my whiteness and this dominant position brings with it. However, I am the first to recognize the limitations within my own self-exploration. I will and have attempted to address my biases as I work through the material. I have relied on the analysis of well-known theorists to substantiate my work and ideas. The biases within an interpretive work do not discount its importance. It is however, important to recognize them.

This analysis is a beginning and by no means exhaustive. Unfortunately, there were time and length limitations. The majority of the media coverage examined was from the *Times Colonist* during July and August of 1999. The *Times Colonist* was chosen because it is the only daily, local paper in Victoria. During these months the story was reported on a daily basis, usually appearing on the first few pages of the newspaper. I have drawn on other sources such as the *Vancouver Sun*, *Calgary Herald*, *Globe & Mail*, *National Post*, *Maclean's*, *Monday Magazine* and *This Magazine* for comparative and illustrative purposes.

Interconnections between media theory and racialisation theory have been used and made in order to provide background and context to the process of racialisation, the construction of race, and the systemic limitations and possibilities that occur within the mass media. My methodological approach is qualitative and interpretive, rather than quantitative. Stuart Hall aptly illustrates some of the benefits of using a qualitative framework:

The error is to assume that because content analysis uses precise criteria for coding evidence it is therefore objective in the literal sense of the term: and because literary/linguistic analysis steers clear of code-building it is merely intuitive and unreliable. Literary/linguistic types of analysis also employ evidence: they point, in detail, to the text on which an interpretation of latent meaning is based; they indicate more briefly the fuller supporting or contextual evidence which lies to hand; they take into account material which modifies or disproves the hypotheses which are emerging; and they should (they do not always) indicate in detail why one rather than another reading of the material seems to the analyst the most plausible way of understanding it. Content analysis assumes repetition—the pile-up of material under one of the categories—to be the most useful indicator of significance.

Literary/linguistic and stylistic analysis also employs recurrence as one critical dimension of significance, though these recurring patterns may not be expressed in quantifiable terms... These recurring patterns are taken as pointers to latent meaning from which inferences as to the source can be drawn. But the literary/linguistic analyst has another string to his bow: namely, strategies for noting and taking account of emphasis. Position, placing, treatment, tone, stylistic intensification, striking imagery, etc., are all ways of registering emphasis. The really significant item may not be the one which continually

recurs, but the one which stands out as an exception from the general pattern—but which is also given, in its exceptional context, the greatest weight. (Stuart Hall, *Paper Voices: The Popular Press and Social Change*, p15)

By drawing on this approach, my intent is not to analyze all the articles published, nor does it engage in counting the recurrence of specific words or phrases. The analysis looks at overriding themes and patterns in order to examine instances of racialisation, manifested through othering, alienating, and criminalizing the Chinese migrants, why this process occurred and the motivation behind it. In addition, phrasing, the framing of an article, the placement of an article, the authorship, and the focus of an article or series of articles can all reveal hidden assumptions, motivations, and biases. The meanings and assumptions that emerge from the newspaper coverage of the Chinese migrants will be tied into a larger societal analysis of the media. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's idea of manufacturing consent and Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony will be used to analyse the placement of articles, who is highlighted as an expert/given authority, and whose voice is published.

Chapter two engages in a direct analysis of the *Times Colonist* coverage itself. Chapter three examines the historical precedent of discrimination and racialisation of Chinese people within Canada, looks into the assumed whiteness of the readership of the *Times Colonist*, national myths and narratives, issues of denial, and my own place within this. Chapter four ties up the larger themes of the thesis, addresses the importance of this type of research, and offers some preliminary suggestions for action and change.

Chapter 2: How the 'Other' is Constituted

This chapter engages in a critical analysis of the Chinese migrants' media coverage and how the Chinese migrants have been represented and racialised in thirty-four selected articles. My analysis of newspaper material will consider the shift in tone that occurred over time, especially from a victim oriented perspective after the first boat arrived to a completely exclusionary ('Send them home') /threat to national security, oriented coverage by the fall. This shift led to increased sensationalism, which in turn led to higher readership, and consequently more advertisers and higher revenues. It will also examine the meanings and assumptions within the articles to illustrate how the Chinese migrants were constructed as 'other,' as 'alien,' as criminal.' Throughout my analysis, I will focus on issues relating to the media, race (visible and invisible), age, and gender (disease, women and sexualised children). Finally, my exploration will illustrate how, despite the number of news stories about the Chinese migrants, the coverage was extremely repetitive, addressing the same themes and 'statements of fact' over and over again. This is a common theme within the media. Quantity of copy on a similar subject is less costly to print than it would be for the labour and production costs involved in finding new angles or alternative authority voices on the same subject (Osler, 211).

The *Times Colonist* chose Sandra McCulloch, Cindy E. Harnett, and Gerard Young as the main journalists to cover this news story. The perspective of these three journalists is white, as is the viewpoint of the editors and owners of the paper. The 'experts' and 'authorities' who are repeatedly selected to comment on this wave of migration are also predominantly white. Through the media, these dominant voices have the ability to shape and maintain the status quo. In addition, many of the 'news item' articles positioned any alternate perspectives to the dominant view of the Chinese migrants as 'other,' towards the end of the articles. Because many people skim the newspaper, reading headlines or the first few paragraphs, this further ensures that only one viewpoint, the dominant perspective, is being heard.

A) Human Smuggling and Migration:

Initially the media was sympathetic towards the Chinese migrants. The news coverage was framed within the context of human smuggling, which is recognised as a growing international problem. On July 21st, the day after the first ship arrived, a *Times Colonist* headline read, "Immigrant smuggling ship snared: Largest refugee scam on West Coast broken up." The subsequent article focused on the issue of smuggling and how it related to the Chinese migrants. As the article emphasised, "authorities described it as the largest human smuggling operation ever on Canada's West Coast." George Varnai, regional manager with Citizenship and Immigration, was quoted as saying that nothing of this "magnitude has happened before on the West Coast in terms of smuggling" (*Times Colonist*, 21 July 1999, A1).

On July 24th an article highlighted the fact that the Chinese migrants admitted to paying large sums of money for transport, which averaged about \$38,000. This payment of money by the migrants suggested that they were willing and active agents in the smuggling transaction. Jim Redmond, an Immigration Canada spokesperson and designated 'expert' on the issue, was quoted as saying; "they are being evasive and may well have been coached on what to say and are not willing to be forthcoming with us at this time." The suggestion that the Chinese migrants were coached may lead the reader to interpret that the migrant was knowingly engaged in criminal behaviour. This perspective was given credibility by being portrayed as Redmond's official position (*Times Colonist*, 24 July 1999, A1).

What is absent from this discussion of 'evasiveness' of the migrants is that these issues are not analysed in the context of human smuggling. If they had been smuggled into the country by a criminal organisation, it is likely that fear for themselves and fear for family members left behind in China would influence their actions and statements. A migrant who has paid money for the opportunity to migrate to Canada does not necessarily mean that he/she has any control over the process. This is evident in the state of the decrepit boats that the migrants sailed or the reports that two boats sunk during their voyages.

On August 8th the *Times Colonist* presented another perspective on human smuggling from a University of Victoria political science professor, Robert Bedeski. He argued that people are leaving China to increase their economic advantage, not to escape political repression or inhumane living conditions: "Chinese migrants are generally not fleeing desperate poverty, nor is there widespread political repression of the kind that prevailed during the days of Chairman Mao." Bedeski did not substantiate any of his claims, and he used terms like "generally" and "widespread" indicating that desperate poverty and political repression do still exist. He also suggested that the Chinese migrants would have 'easy access' into Canada by only having to "carry a Falun Gong text or amulet, and claim refugee status on the basis of escaping religious persecution at home" (*Times Colonist*, 8 August 1999).

On August 14th the *Times Colonist* documented Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan's perspective on human smuggling. The headline read, "Caplan promises tougher laws but adds it's a global problem." This article offered the position that identified human smuggling as an "international problem that requires international solutions." Caplan then went on to state that half of all refugee claims are credible. She also mentioned Canada's stringent requirements on rejecting entry to those with criminal records. The article ends with her statement, "When people arrive in Canada we can't assume they are or are not refugees... They are entitled to make their case here. That's fairness." Despite the headline promising discussion on human smuggling, the article discussed Canada's refugee policies. It did supply an alternate viewpoint on acceptance

of refugee claimants, it did so after two and a half pages of coverage vilifying the Chinese migrants. (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999, A3)

The issue of human smuggling continues to resurface throughout the summer, but the focus shifts from whether or not the Chinese migrants were 'victims' of this practice to how Canadian officials are combating such operations. This may have been done in an effort to pacify Canadians. Four days after the first boat arrived, Jim Redmond in an interview with the *Times Colonist*, pointed out that Citizenship and Immigration Canada was fulfilling the country's obligation to combat human smuggling while protecting the safety and security of Canadians. Human smuggling was portrayed as a threat to national security, and also being dangerous to the Chinese migrants as well. It is worth noting that this last statement was paraphrased by Sandra McCulloch, the author of the article. This gives her greater interpretative freedom in interpretation. As the author she has the power to choose voice, and to select particular aspects from any given interview (*Times Colonist*, 24 July 1999, A1).

An article, published on August 13th 1999 written by Juliet O'Neill (Southam newspapers), discusses official attempts to deter human smuggling and the increased penalties for those engaged in it. It also offers statistics of the RCMP's success rate against organised crime, in an attempt to assure Canadians that something is being done (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999, A3). The arrest of the nine Korean crewmembers from the second boat and their subsequent trials symbolise the actions being taken to combat international human smuggling by Canadian authorities (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999, A3).

In another article in the *Times Colonist* there is a suggestion that American authorities are applying pressure on Canadian officials to crack down on human smuggling and to tighten the border. On August 14th 1999 an article entitled, "Smugglers linked to organised crime and must be stopped at all cost, says U.S.," quotes an American spokesperson who discusses the evils of smuggling and how it must be stopped. The article focuses on an American expert's opinion as to why the Chinese migrants are migrating (he suggests it is for economic and political reasons), and why they are immigrating to Canada (because of the easy access). He advocates tightening up Canada's borders (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999, A3).

Originally the Chinese migrants were portrayed by the media as 'victims' by the international problem of human smuggling. Within the first week, the news coverage became much less sympathetic. The focus in the media changed to an issue of national security, the need to combat human smuggling, and protect Canadian borders. In addition, the Chinese were constructed as active agents in the process of migration and demonised under this guise. There were also suggestions that the Chinese migrants might bring in disease, that they might be lying about their situation in order to gain refugee status, and thus were dishonest and not law-abiding. This paved the way for the soon to be coined term 'illegal' migrants.

B) Refugee Debate

During July and August the debate was about the question of "illegal migration" and Canada's refugee policies, instead of human smuggling. July 21st, 1999, the day after the first boat of Chinese migrants arrived, a smaller lead-in headline used the term 'refugee scam.' Use of the word 'scam' implied that the Chinese migrants were engaged in something illegal. Sandra McCulloch, the author of the article, did not mention that people can claim refugee status at both Canadian borders and from overseas. In fact, the migrants were pursuing one of the available options for refugees as outlined by Canada Customs and Immigration. (*Times Colonist*, 21 July 1999, A1).

July 24th, 1999, three days later, a front-page headline read, "Migrant claims met by official scepticism." The author, Sandra McCulloch, documented the preliminary questioning of the 123 Chinese migrants by Canadian Immigration officials. The migrants were being held under police guard while applying for refugee status. The article stated that immigration officials doubted the honesty of the Chinese migrants because they were evasive in their answers. Ron Johnston, an enforcement manager with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, pointed out that officials were having difficulties identifying the individuals. Officials would not release the Chinese migrants until their identities had been ascertained. But a hearing would be required to justify holding the migrants in custody beyond a week. The article neglects to mention that many refugee claimants who enter Canada every year have scant identification and are not usually detained because of this (Duchenski lecture). Many of the Kosovar refugees did not have proper documentation, and understandably so given the war. (*Times Colonist*, 24 July 1999, A1).

On the same day, an unidentified spokesperson for the Vancouver office of the Immigration and Refugee Board, stated that 50 per cent of the 1,494 refugee claims made by illegal Chinese migrants in 1998 were abandoned because the migrants could not be located. It is worth asking why the author of this piece felt inclined to include this unidentified statement. It had no relation to the RCMP's enthusiasm over new leads in prosecuting human smugglers that preceded it, or to the description of RCMP involvement in such operations that followed, but simply hung in the article on its own. While the actions of previous refugee claimants are not necessarily relevant this case, the author felt inclined to include a statistic from an Immigration and Refugee Board spokesperson that specifically targeted Chinese people. She not only suggested an affinity among all Chinese refugee claimants, but also positioned them as 'other' by portraying them all dishonest.

The growing focus on 'illegal migration' gained legitimacy in early August when an article, written by Sandra McCulloch announced, "Victoria Chinese want migrants out." It began with the sentence, "The 123 Chinese migrants who circumvented Canada's immigration process by claiming refugee status have embarrassed and angered Chinese-Canadians who came here legally." Perpetuating the myth of illegality, the *Times Colonist* uses this framing to influence public opinion. The constant focus on the 'illegality' of the Chinese migrants serves to 'other' them from a 'true, law-abiding' Canadian. The article emphasises that many within the Chinese community are calling for the refugee claimants to be returned to China. Three businessmen are chosen as the spokespeople for millions of Chinese Canadians. They were given the voice of authority.

In an interview, Joe Leung, vice-president of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association argued that, "I'm totally against the release of them. The Chinese Embassy didn't say they wouldn't take them back so I would suggest we send them back. They are not refugees-they came out for a better life." Several weeks earlier he had been accepting donations for the migrants on behalf of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. While Joe Leung spoke about the pride he feels for the many accomplishments of China, but he does not discount the many human rights abuses that have and are occurring within China. Leung explained that the migrants came from a wealthy province, he confirmed this argument by stating he had attended the wedding of a Fujian couple. He suggested that the voyage was easy by stating, "You could see on TV how they dressed for the 30 or 40 days, they were as neat and tidy as the day they first came out (of China)." Also interviewed was Thomas Ho, a representative from the Chinese-Canadian Friendship Association, who stated that he felt embarrassed by the arrival of the migrants (*Times Colonist*, 7 August 1999, A1).

On August 13th 1999, these sentiments were reinforced by an article entitled, "Boat people get little sympathy in Chinese community." The newspaper again looks to the Chinese community for an 'authentic' voice. In this article the only Chinese person quoted is Joe Leung. The *Times Colonist* has selected him as the spokesperson for the Chinese community, under the mistaken assumption that everyone within the community shared the same opinions. In this case, Joe Leung is the sole voice of authority. This is an example of an individual being foregrounded at the expense of a group (Gitlin 28) (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999, A1).

These are individual opinions from selected representatives from the Chinese Canadian community. It assumes that these Chinese Canadian men have special insight into this specific case of migration based on their ethnicity. It also allows the predominantly white readership further justification of their intolerance to the Chinese migrants. If Chinese Canadians agree, goes the logic, then Victorians can't be far off. White Canadians can't be racist if Chinese Canadians agree. While the Chinese migrants have been 'othered' continuously in the coverage, in this case, selected members of the Chinese Canadian community are aligning themselves with Canadians because the three neo-conservative businessmen want to be accepted as 'ideal' immigrants and it is the 'other' Chinese migrants who are deemed criminal and alien.

While these articles documenting the opinion of three Chinese businessmen appeared on the front page of the newspaper and were printed as 'news items,' in subsequent issues of the *Times Colonist* many rebuttals from the Chinese Canadian community appeared. However, these rebuttals were printed in the editorial section and were listed as 'opinion pieces' or 'letters.' Two letters, written by white Canadians, responding to Leung were published on August 13th, 1999 and served to legitimate his opinion. Both writers state that they are not racist, and that they agree that these 'illegal' migrants should get out of Canada. No dissenting voices are heard in this instance (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999).

On August 6th 1999, a rare alternate perspective was presented. In a letter written by Alison Longmore, from Global Alliance Against the Traffic in Women (GAATW) Canada, the distinction between immigration and refugee applicants is clarified, an issue that the *Times Colonist* coverage continuously avoided. The letter emphasised that the path taken by the Chinese migrants to claim refugee status was a legal one. It also pointed out that even if immigration laws are toughened up, migrants will still find ways into Canada, albeit through more underground channels and at greater risk to their own lives. The author also stressed that Canada is a signatory to many international conventions in which it has pledged to protect human rights, particularly within our own borders. Consequently, the Chinese migrants have the right to interpreters, legal counsel, information to their rights and access to services. While this is one of the few examples of a counter-position in the refugee debate, it was printed in the letters section, and so fewer people read it. It is presented as one view, and not one with any degree of authority (*Times Colonist*, 6 August 1999).

Bob Friedland, a Victoria city councillor, also offers an alternative perspective. It is unlike the decidedly anti-migration position of Robert Bedeski (the first article highlighted of the pair) whose opinions are presented as 'facts.' Friedland recounted a personal history of immigrant ancestry and suggested that the decision to leave one's country is never an easy one and that the lack of acknowledgement and sympathy of this fact by Canadians is saddening. He ended his article with the quote from Emma Lazarus, inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me, I lift my light beyond the golden

door." Friedland generated sympathy for the Chinese migrants by pointing out that immigrants have been valuable to our country. (*Times Colonist*, 8 August 1999).

The intensification of anti-Chinese migrant sentiment occurred with the arrival of the second ship. On August 11th, 1999, the headline appears, "Unmarked vessel: Patrol spots yet another suspect ship." Written by The *Times Colonist's* Sandra McCulloch, this article begins with the sentence, "Authorities are bracing for an onslaught of migrants circumventing Canada's normal immigration process by seeking refugee status," again criminalizing the migrants for making a claim to refugee status and continuing to frame the refugee debate (*Times Colonist*, 11 August 1999, A1). In fact the 60 Fujian migrants who came through airports in the fall of 1999 passed through normal immigration procedures without a ruffle and received no media coverage (Golden). The use of the term 'onslaught' contributed to a climate of being 'overrun' by 'illegal aliens.'

This sentiment was reinforced by the inclusion of the opinions of two Reform Members of Parliament, MPs, Keith Martin and Gary Lunn. Both voices are unsympathetic towards the refugees and call for changes to the Immigration act. There are no quotes from any other federal political party representatives. The Reform Party voice dominates because it is in agreement with the position of the *Times Colonist*.

The policy position of other politicians on the issues of migration and Canada's refugee policies are increasingly featured. The day after the arrival of the second ship, an article entitled, "Ottawa to get tough on human smugglers" highlighted the federal government's official position in the Chinese migrant situation. Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan's asserted that the federal government plans to change immigration laws to address human smuggling. Changes could include "beefing up interception of illegal migrants, stiffer penalties for smugglers and locking up suspect migrants rather than allowing them to go free while awaiting processing." The incarceration of suspect migrants does not address the problem of human smuggling and transnational crime syndicates, and is one of the outcomes of the debate over refugee claims occurring in the media. It is affecting the development of immigration policies in this instance. In response to suggestions that the boats should be forcibly turned back, Caplan backtracks and does say that "more than 10 years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that everyone on Canadian soil has the right to make their immigration case." She goes on to state, "We do not know if these people are refugees. We have to allow due process to determine what their status is... We value our rights and freedoms. (When) we take away other people's rights as we have been given by the Supreme Court, we also give away our own rights." This rarely publicised acknowledgement of due process, is followed by political pressure from Premier Glen Clark. He states, "Canada should reconsider its immigration laws to allow for removal of such immigrants without hearings," obviously unconcerned with individual human rights. Another Reform critic on immigration issues, Leon Benoit, agrees with Clark, suggesting that Canada must send a much stronger message that it will not tolerate illegal immigration, completely discounting the fact, that the actions of the Chinese migrants are not illegal, but a right under Canadian law. The push to have refugee claimants locked up has been successful due to the emphasis on illegality. The majority of the migrants from the second, third, and fourth boat are still incarcerated (*Times Colonist*, 12 August 1999, A2).

The next day, Elinor Caplan is quoted extensively, again presenting the official government position. She states that, "each year there are 25,000 refugee claimants in Canada. In the last couple of weeks, with the arrival of two boats, we're dealing with 300 people. I think that speaks for itself." I am unclear what this is supposed to say. It seems she is suggesting that these numbers are large and require a change in the refugee system. There were less than 600

Chinese migrants who arrived by boat in 1999, and Canada didn't make its refugee target. In this same year, over 4000 Kosovar refugees were accepted. At the end of the article, various statistics are provided concerning the number of refugee claims that are successful: "Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board showed a rise in the number of Chinese seeking refugee status from 925 in 1996 to 1,416 last year and 863 in the first six months of 1999. Only 288 of the claims were accepted last year. This is less than one third in a year where media coverage was virtually non-existent, and the response of the public was apathetic. The majority of the claims, 660, were abandoned; 382 were denied and 68 were withdrawn." Although the article suggests that the Chinese migrants will receive refugee status, these statistics contradict this assumption, particularly given the anti-Chinese migrant sentiment increasingly endorsed by the government and the public (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999, A1).

In contrast to Elinor Caplan's ambiguous position on the Chinese migrants and the hostile comments made by other politicians, Paul Martin challenges what he terms the "racist, hate-mongering" among the public and the press. In an interview, he suggests that Canada has more than enough room considering that the refugee target of 25,000 was not met last year and that jobs are available. This alternative view is of course, one tucked away within the mass of anti-Chinese sentiment (*Times Colonist*, 15 August 1999, A3).

Besides the differing position taken by Canadian politicians, various individuals and 'experts' also offer their perspectives on the Chinese migrants and Canada's refugee policies. In an editorial that appeared on August 12th 1999, Paul MacRae a journalist for the *Times Colonist*, suggests that, as long as the Chinese migrants go through proper immigration channels, Canadian sympathy is possible. He continues, "it is pure semantics to say that any person who makes a refugee claim is, by definition, not an 'illegal' immigrant. If we accept that, then we might as well give up any hope of controlling our own borders and determining who comes here to live." Canada has a selection process to determine valid refugee claims, and not all are successful. Given this, Canada has not given up its right to control its own borders. He argues that we should have taken precautions with the second boat of migrants. Mentioning Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan's suggestions for combating human smuggling, he suggests that the federal government should also look at "trimming the refugee and immigrant appeal processes, and beefing up apprehension of people already here illegally. This isn't hard-hearted. Canada has opened its doors to literally millions over the past decades." He seems to forget that Canada is made up of immigrants and refugees, including himself, at the expense of the local indigenous peoples. He has placed an arbitrary limit upon Canada's acceptance of 'other' peoples. He concludes the article by asserting that the problem lies in the circumvention of the law, on the 'illegal' entry of the migrants. It is clear that MacRae wants to actively who is an acceptable or ideal immigrant and who is not, and in his mind, the Chinese migrants are not the 'ideal' refugees for Canada (*Times Colonist*, 12 August 1999).

A Raeside cartoon illustrating a ship with 'illegal migrants,' joins this editorial and the caption, "Captain! Captain! Canadian immigration authorities have spotted us" is responded with, "JACKPOT!" The continued assumption that Canada's refugee process is sweet and easy is belied by the lengthy detainment and criminalization of the Chinese migrants thus far. It is, however, a simplistic framing of the complexities of migration and the reasons why individuals choose to leave their homes and families and strike out towards a new and unknown life (*Times Colonist*, 12 August 1999).

In responding to the arrival of the second boat, Robert Bedeski, in an article "Expert View: Soft-touch reputation hurts us, prof says." takes an extremely hardline position. Described as an 'expert,' Bedeski suggests at one point that, "It would be much more secure if they (the Chinese

migrants) were interned. I think as a security measure, it's important." While the racist, historical implications are horrifying this approach also contravenes the treatment of other refugee claimants who remain free while waiting for their hearings. An earlier statistic suggested that all of the migrants who had been released had reported as directed, discounts his concern over security. It becomes evident that Bedeski is less concerned about security, but more concerned over who is allowed into Canada, as an acceptable refugee. He concludes by intimating that Canada should renege on its international obligations under UN conventions: "Canada is trying too hard to conform to the letter of a United Nations declaration to give safe haven to refugees." While Bedeski's 'opinion' would be more appropriate on the letters page, his 'expert' status centres his perspective. Because his view coincides with that of the *Times Colonist*, he is repeatedly sought after (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999).

On August 26th 1999, a *Times Colonist* headline announced that, "Police hunt for fugitive migrants." Written by Dene Moore of the Canadian Press and Sandra McCulloch of the *Times Colonist* staff, the article goes on to document that seven of the 76 migrants released did not appear for their refugee hearings and warrants for their arrests had been issued. These disappearances are used to justify the government pressure to tighten the refugee process. A Reform Party perspective is heard again, MP Gary Lunn, suggested that changes to refugee law are needed. Francisco Rico-Martinez, the president of the Canadian Council for Refugees, argued that normally 15 per cent of refugee claimants disappear. While the seven missing Chinese migrants are in keeping with this number, the media did not give up the opportunity to construct the migrants as 'criminals' to further justify the incarceration of subsequent groups (*Times Colonist*, 26 August 1999, A1).

C) Refugee Process-Tax Burden:

In the days following the arrival of and detention of the first group of Chinese migrants, the *Times Colonist* offered readers information about the procedures involved in processing their refugee claims. This emphasis, however, quickly dissipates into coverage that casts them as law-breakers and an extreme drain on the public purse.

On July 23rd 1999, a 'news item,' written by Sandra McCulloch appeared with the headline, "Chinese face immigration hurdle." Given that the immigration officials had begun to interview the first group of Chinese migrants to ascertain whether they would be seeking refugee status, the article describes logistics of the process. It suggests that those not considered a threat could be released from custody the next week and those who paid to enter Canada illegally could be detained. Mr. Redmond an Immigration spokesperson, situated this work in a broader context stating that, "We deal with this daily across our country at our airports and our land borders. This is not a unique situation for us. It's a bit of a unique number, it's a bit unique how they arrived, but we've dealt with this issue every day for years." Redmond further explains that the way the migrants, already referred to as 'illegal immigrants' by the author of the piece, were being treated, "is no different than (those) arriving at one of our international airports or sneaking across our border at Emerson, Man." He rejected the possibility of immediate deportation, he concluded that "it's not within Canada's humanitarian tradition to tell a tugboat to push up to that ship and push it back out to sea" (*Times Colonist*, 23 July 1999, A1).

Four days later, Lois Reimer, spokesperson for Citizenship and Immigration Canada, stated three reasons why the refugee claimants could be detained. First, if Immigration "officials are unsure of the applicant's identity, the applicants pose a risk to Canadian society at large, or if it is doubtful whether the applicants will reappear for future legal hearings into their refugee status." Even though Reimer stated there were problems with identification, many refugee

claimants have scant identification and are never detained. Peter Golden, the lawyer coordinating the activities of the six lawyers representing the refugee claimants, however, expressed concern about the problem of accessibility to the claimants and issues of privacy. He also asserted that a hearing must be held within seven days if the claimants are to be detained (*Times Colonist*, 27 July 1999, A1). The ongoing detention of the 123 migrants is obviously exceptional and as reporters pointed out, costly. From the outset, initial expenses included having to pay a dozen off-duty Mounties to help with security at Esquimalt (*Times Colonist*, 24 July 1999, A1), the legal costs of the detention hearings, as well as housing and food expenses (*Times Colonist*, 27 July 1999, A1).

By the end of July, the financial burden associated with processing the Chinese refugee claimants became the subject of intense criticism, diverting attention away from the plight of the migrants and increased hostility toward them. In an article entitled, "Boat People: Taxpayers stuck with \$200,000 tab" Gerard Young documented the cost breakdown for that amount, stipulating that Citizenship and Immigration is covered the tab. The breakdown included the cost of food, supplied by Ming's restaurant in an effort to provide food similar to regular diets. This expense was relatively small when compared to the cost of security by the RCMP, estimated at \$25,000 per day. This focus on money tended to encourage a simplistic attitude of, 'send them home to get rid of the problem.' It also ignored Canada's legal requirement as a signatory to the UN Convention on refugees to certain kinds of support and due process. Costs for other refugees, like the Kosovars are never reported (*Times Colonist*, 29 July 1999, A1).

In early August, Robert Bedeski suggested that the Chinese refugee claimants would constitute a long term financial burden. He argued "most, if not all Chinese migrants, will apply for refugee status, and draw upon Canada's welfare while their appeal is heard." He also pointed out the supposed losses illegal immigration brings to "local and state/provincial treasuries in the form of education, welfare, medical, and other costs, as they provide services to non-tax paying residents." Bedeski did not supply any documentation for any of these claims. The reader was supposed to accept them, perhaps because they reinforced racial stereotypes about immigrants/refugees as a drain on the national economy (*Times Colonist*, 8 August 1999).

The arrival of the second group of Chinese migrants, increased concerns over costs. The increased sensationalism on the part of the media encouraged the mounting hysteria within the public and in government. An article entitled, "A new shipful of migrants will tax the already thinly stretched resources of federal agencies" focused on how illegal migration is translating into a 'misuse' of Canadian taxpayers' money. It concluded with a comment from an immigration official Varnai who stated, "It has to be done and it's expensive, but good lord, that's what the legislation wants us to do." Varnai's comments imply that it is the system that is at fault, and the focus on money is effective in rallying public support to tighten up the refugee process (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999, A1).

Several days later, Susan Danard's headline announced, 'Cost of compassion could clobber B.C. for \$5.6 million.' The article suggested that B.C. could spend \$5.6 million on social assistance for the two boatloads of Chinese migrants. Moe Sihota was quoted at length, describing his disgruntled constituents and the length of time (up to three years because of backlog), that it could take to determine the legitimacy of a refugee claim. The article gave a monthly cost of \$613 per refugee claimant per month for shelter and basic living expenses. Robert Beckett, a Streetlink shelter employee in Victoria, contradicted Sihota by saying that beds in shelters are available, the migrants are "no trouble at all," and that in his opinion Sihota is "shedding crocodile tears." He brought up the example of the \$250 million overrun cost on the fast ferries and suggested that Sihota is simply playing politics. This

contrary opinion is printed at the very end of the article on the second page. Its position clearly indicated whose voice the paper wished to highlight (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999, A1).

On 16 August 1999, the first of two articles entitled, "Waves of boat people: Most face deportation," was written by Cindy E. Harnett of the *Times Colonist* staff. This article points out that the majority of the 131 Chinese migrants detained had not yet applied for refugee status, and thus face deportation in the near future. Lorna Tessier of Immigration Canada, stated that the speed of deportation depends on how fast travel documents can be obtained. The desire for speed has been exacerbated by the focus on costs. The second article on the front page justifies the speedy removal of the Chinese migrants by the 'limited funds' available in Canada. Written by Cindy Harnett, the headline reads, "What about us?" This article constructed an 'us and them' situation in which a mother plead for money to help her daughter with special needs. The article framed the issue in a way that suggested there was enough money for either her daughter or for the 'illegal' Chinese migrants. Moe Sihota was quoted again. He responded to his concerned constituents and buckled under political, media, and public pressure, by wanting the migrants, 'sent home' (*Times Colonist*, 16 August 1999, A1).

On August 17th 1999, removal orders were issued for 77 refugee claimants from the second boat. However, the *Times Colonist* ran an article the next day with the headline, "Migrant interviews bungled." Written by Gerard Young, it appeared on the front page but without a photograph or highlighting. The article documented the mistakenly ordered deportation of 20 Chinese migrants who wanted refugee status. The mistake was revealed because of complaints by immigration lawyers and the Canadian Council for Refugees. There were concerns that, because there were no lawyers present at the first two hearings, Chinese migrants were being sent back even if they have expressed fear of deportation. Lawyer David Aujla, was convinced immigration officials were receiving orders from higher ups and was seeing an independent inquiry. The difference in treatment of the Chinese migrants and other refugees is clear. The media, never points this out. They document some 'facts' around the refugee process but never provide analysis. The *Times Colonist* concentrated on the issues of cost and money for the purposes of 'othering' the Chinese migrants (*Times Colonist*, 18 August 1999, A1).

D) Criminalization:

Another mechanism utilised by the *Times Colonist* for constructing the Chinese migrants as the 'racialized other' is through the process of criminalization. Throughout much of July and August, many of the photographs of the Chinese migrants had them behind several layers of wire and handcuffed. The need for enhanced security at Esquimalt was fuelled by several events that were 'reported' on extensively.

On July 27th 1999, the *Times Colonist* announced that, "Weapons seized from migrants awaiting hearing." This 'news item,' written by Richard Watts, described the discovery of various makeshift weapons made out of pens and tinfoil plates. Apparently a tin foil plate had been found that was "flattened and folded over and over, into a knife-blade shape. Its edge had been honed." The immediate assumption was that this knife-like item was to be used as a weapon. There were alternative accounts that it was made for the purpose of shaving. After searching the migrants some pens, a comb, and brass plugs were discovered. The possession of these items was enough to dramatically increase the 'othering' and criminalization of all the Chinese migrants. Mountie spokesperson, Tracey Rook implied they had become a security risk and "from now on, whenever they are outside the building they will be in handcuffs." Given this provision almost all the media photographs in the future showed the Chinese migrants in handcuffs, further representing them as dangerous criminals (*Times Colonist*, 27 July 1999, A1).

Two days later a photo of one handcuffed Chinese migrant surrounded by four law enforcement officers appeared on the front page of the *Times Colonist* flanked by an accompanying article on human smuggling. While the photo depicted a smuggled 'victim' rather than the smugglers, she is clearly portrayed as a lawbreaker (*Times Colonist*, 29 July 1999, A1).

A second event was recorded on July 29th 1999. The headline read, "Chinese refuse to eat, sent to beds." The article, written by Gerard Young and Sandra McCulloch, described a protest that erupted in the Esquimalt barracks, when one of the suspected smugglers expressed dissatisfaction over the porridge and Chinese noodles and other detained migrants refused to eat the food. While Mountie spokesperson Constable Tracey Rook argued, "we're doing everything we can to accommodate them with authentic Chinese food so it doesn't upset their digestive system," she implied it was their way of expressing frustration with the process. There was also the suggestion that the "19 suspected ringleaders in the smuggling ring incited the others not to eat," implying the possibility that the migrants were in league with the smugglers. Although the protest dissipated when they received a full meal supplied by Ming's Restaurant, this action was deemed as non-compliance even though there was no violence or threat of violence, and further justified their treatment like convicted criminals (*Times Colonist*, 29 July 1999, A1).

The link between the Chinese migrants and possible criminal activity is forged in other ways. For example, Robert Bedeski argued the Chinese have a tendency to establish a 'benchhead' in a wealthier country, from which to bring other family members. He also suggested that illegal immigrants live on the fringe of society because of a lack of contacts, and thus are prone to be involved in criminal activities, 'including drugs, prostitution, and theft' (*Times Colonist*, 8 August 1999). An article on Asian crime gangs was written by Cindy E. Harnett, it implied connection between illegal migrants and Asian crime, suggesting that the safety of Canadians is at risk (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999).

The perceived need for greater security, the hunger strike, the visual images, the linking of the human smugglers and the migrants, Asian organised crime, the question of dishonesty, and the continued demands for incarceration all actively separated the Chinese migrants from Canadians. By constructing them as the criminal 'other,' they were positioned in opposition to the average 'law-abiding' Canadian citizen, thereby fuelling anti-Chinese and anti-migration sentiments.

E) Dehumanization:

In reporting on the events of July and August 1999, the *Times Colonist* focused on the Chinese migrants as a group or homogeneous whole and never provided any individual stories. This stands in contrast to the standard procedure of the media which is to select one spokesperson out of a group as a representative (Gitlin 28). The complaint often heard is that the diversity within a group is lost under the representation of this sole individual, like in the case of the *Times Colonist* using Leung as a representative for the entire Chinese Canadian community. In this case, the opposite occurred. By representing the migrants as an undifferentiated group without individual stories they generated less sympathy in the public and were easier to dehumanise. Gender for example, was completely lost under this focus and the plight of individual women disappeared.

This pattern was evident in a statement made by Sergeant Rockwell in late July, which paralleled the migrants with drugs. Referring to the small numbers of migrants who are caught,

he stated, "It's the same thing with drugs-they say we get five or 10 per cent and the rest get through. This is no different, no different at all." This comparison allows Sergeant Rockwell to dehumanise the migrants. The article highlighted how the RCMP along the coast are working hard to keep people landing along our shores, 'protecting Canadians from the threat of the hordes' like they do with illegal drugs (*Times Colonist*, 29 July 1999, A2).

Similarly, with the arrival of the second ship, the *Times Colonist* used the headline, "A new wave of migrants to B.C.: Ship dumps human cargo." The term 'dumps' has a clear connotation to garbage, implying that the Chinese migrants are less than human, especially white humans (*Times Colonist*, 12 August 1999, A1).

Help was not actively requested for either individual migrants or for the group. An article on July 24th 1999, ends with, not a request for help as was often found for Kosovar refugees, but a statement, "Anything local community groups can give will be offered to the migrants, said Joe Leung of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association." Were help to be given, it is not made easy, as there is no address or phone number provided. In the case of the Kosovar refugees, numbers and addresses were easily found for any Canadian who wished donate time or money to their plight. One article among many garnering help for the Kosovar refugees appeared in the *Times Colonist*, on May 23rd 1999, with the headline, "B.C. appeals for refugee help." The entire article consisted of a list of different ways people could help the Kosovar refugees. The media framing was antithetically sympathetic.

An exception to this process of dehumanization theme taken by the *Times Colonist* was the limited discourse around age. One article described the detention hearings still being held and reported that juveniles, some whom have been separated from family, had been taken to a ministry location. The reporter states that the youths would be supervised in outings, but were not technically under house arrest. Evidently there were three youths that were to go with the ministry, but the ministry refused them, spurring a debate over their 'true' ages. Peter Golden, quoted in two paragraphs at the end of the article, stated that these three were asked to leave after lock-down, placing them in a difficult position. Placing the youth in separate housing perpetuates the assumption that they have no agency. It is interesting to see the transfer of three individuals to 'adulthood.' The children are only discussed in a periphery manner, perhaps in order to avoid an increase in sympathy (*Times Colonist*, 29 August 1999). Several weeks later, the youth are discussed in a very cursory manner again. The headline reads, "Ship youths pose housing challenge." There is debate over where the 43 youths are to be placed. While the children are an exception to the dehumanisation process, the *Times Colonist* provides no individual stories about their lives.

While the *Times Colonist* consistently depicted the Chinese migrants as one obscure group of 'illegals,' each refugee claimant has the right to be treated as an individual under the laws of Canada. The *Times Colonist* news coverage does not make this clear. Furthermore, by referring to the Chinese migrants as a faceless group, it becomes easier for readers to disassociate themselves from them as humans and makes it easier to demonise and alienate them. Were Canadians to hear about individual cases as they so often did in the case of the Kosovar migrants, it is likely that Canadians would feel more sympathy for the individual plight of a young child or a woman who had undergone forced abortions. Even the *Globe and Mail* went further than the *Times Colonist*. On August 20th, 1999, the *Globe and Mail's* front page contained the story of a 15-year-old Chinese migrant boy. A description of this boy, supplemented by a discussion a larger group of children allowed the reader to acknowledge that the 'illegal migrants' were just kids. The article acknowledged that the dog received more national concern

than these individual children. Nevertheless, the children were in hand-cuffs because and were deemed a 'security risk.'

While each of the migrants had their own life story, the media is unjust to focus on them as a group, their race, their illegality, and their criminal behaviour. The parallels to the drug trade and the use of terms like human cargo create a hierarchy in which the Chinese migrants are represented as subhuman.

F) National Security (Disease):

The growing hysteria over Canada's unprotected borders and the invasion of illegal or 'aliens,' the increasing fears over national security and the 'send them home' attitudes were the logical results from the modes of representation discussed in the previous sections. The human smuggling issue, the refugee debate, the financial drain, the criminalization, and the dehumanization all fuelled a panic over floods, deluges, and disease that increasingly appeared in the pages of the *Times Colonist*.

Several days after the arrival of the first group of migrants, Lois Reimer, an immigration spokesperson stated, "we haven't had a large boatload of people arrive off Canadian shores since 1988" (*Times Colonist*, 23 July 1999). Shortly after, an article by Sandra McCulloch referred to the Chinese migrants as 'aliens,' illustrated by the headline: "Bet on more smuggling of aliens, Mountie says." Thereafter, the use of this term becomes commonplace. The article also quotes Staff Sergeant Glen Rockwell from E Division's immigration and passport section in Vancouver at length, who stated the treatment of these refugees will determine future migration into Canada. He argued that if the Chinese were sent back, it would spell an end to the smuggling and the risk of Canada being overrun with refugees. It was not noted that we have not been able to fulfil our immigration or refugee quota for many years. It is also a comment on Canada's 'soft touch,' and the notion that Canadians are too humanitarian, generous, and innocent. The thinly veiled warning was that Canada should seal its borders.

In an opinion piece entitled, "Canada faces a much larger tide of humanity." Robert Bedeski reinforced these fears. He mentioned that the boat "represented only the latest-and one of many-attempts of Third World desperation to sneak into Canada by way of its long coastline," this suggested that there are hordes in its wake. He also concluded with a dire warning: unless Canadians take care, we will see a flood of migrants land on our shores (*Times Colonist*, 8 August 1999).

The arrival of the second boat, however, generated even more dramatic coverage as illustrated by the headline, "Migrant Invasion: Hello! Third ship on way." The term "invasion" brings to mind B-movies depicting alien take-overs, illustrating the 'alienness' of and threat from the Chinese migrants. While the accompanying article, written by Sandra McCulloch gave details of the transfer of the 131 migrants, from the Queen Charlottes to Victoria. She stated that the Canadian Press has learned that official attention is now focused on a third mystery ship. There was the possibility of a notion that Canada's national security was being threatened (*Times Colonist*, 13 August 1999, A1). This sense of threat and national invasion was perpetuated in another article, entitled "Waves of boat people: More to come? Bet on it" (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999, A1). In the same issue, the *Times Colonist* supplied a sampling of random excerpts from newspapers across the country which suggested that there was "Little support for migrants found across Canada." There were no sources provided except for the name of the paper. What this random sampling did was legitimate the *Times Colonist's* viewpoint at a national level (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999, A1).

Disease was also used to invoke the 'threat' to national security. On the day after the arrival of the first ship, one article noted that 65 officers from Immigration, the that RCMP and Health Canada were waiting to board the vessel. However, given concerns about disease, they were waiting for appropriate measures to be taken. Such fears about the spread of disease were illustrated more overtly in August. When the nine Korean smugglers appeared in court, the judge ordered that only masked individuals could enter the courtroom. While the connection between the nine men and any health hazards remained unsubstantiated, it did succeed in producing fear (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999, A1).

Monday Magazine also reported on this incident and provides a more sympathetic perspective in an article entitled, "Welcome to Canada – The Chinese migrants aren't the ones acting like aliens." The journalist, Paul Willcocks, attempts to place himself in the Chinese migrants' shoes. He considers the migrants' line of thought as they are brought into courtrooms only to see everyone in the room masked, at the Judge Jeanne Harvey's orders. He likens this to a low budget horror movie, and certainly, the judge who gave no explanation, should not jump on the bandwagon of scare mongering, since the crew was completely healthy. This article had a remarkably different tone than most of the headlines examined in The *Times Colonist*. However, the author never mentioned that race may have been a factor. *Monday Magazine* is Victoria's 'alternative' newspaper. The article evaded the issue. Only occasionally does a peripherally related article appear. *Monday Magazine* should be a leader in complexifying the issues at hand and provide an outlet for alternative voice. It is clear, given the extreme anti-Chinese migrant sentiment, that the *Monday Magazine* did not want to place itself, or its advertising income at risk and take on a 'hot' issue.

The growing hysteria and fear around national security generated overt manifestations of racism and intolerance from Canadians. Chapter three will examine the historical precedent of this racist fear and the denial that actively operates today. Questions of who is the ideal immigrant/refugee, and further to this, who is the ideal Canadian will be examined, and attempts will be made to address the responsibility of the *Times Colonist* audience.

Chapter 3 - How Whiteness is Centered

This chapter expands on the criminalization, alienating, and othering of the Chinese migrants through the process of racialisation that was perpetuated in the *Times Colonist*. The Chinese migrants were often demonised in order to uphold the national myths of Canadians. These national myths or narratives include many culturally understood aspects of 'Canadianism, such as innocence, purity, naivety, humanitarianism, openness, acceptance, lawful, multicultural, and non-racist Canadians. This chapter will explore these myths and endeavour to examine the responsibilities and the assumed whiteness of the Canadian audience, and my own individual responsibility. It will illustrate how the national myths of who and what is Canadian were used in an attempt to deny the racism occurring. It will acknowledge the importance of how and why this denial operates and exists and the importance in moving forward beyond it. Different components of the print medium will be examined in terms of validity, placement, and illustration (editorials, opinion pieces, 'news items,' letters, placement of articles within the newspaper).

I will sporadically examine the media coverage of the Kosovar refugees who were invited into Canada to illustrate the range of how race is constituted and specifically for comparative purposes. There were different degrees of distancing and 'othering' the two groups. The focus within the media on Canadians' affinities to the Kosovar refugees stood in stark contrast to the differences illustrated between Canadians and the Chinese migrants. The affinities with the

Kosovar refugees revolved around subjects of dress, food, lifestyle, and the assumed similarity of whiteness. For example, the media coverage of the Kosovar refugees was very positive, and unlike the surveys initiated to gauge public opinion about the fate of the Chinese migrants, played a role in placing refugee families through various cover stories and 'pleas for community help.' Unlike the surveys both phone and printed that were depicted and reported in the *Times Colonist* (in order to justify the 'Go Home' headlines perhaps), the media was actively used and willing to help place various Kosovar families. Despite the anti-Muslim sentiment within North America, their religious faith was never brought into the media as an issue. The media representation concentrated on the affinities between the Kosovar refugees and Canadians, while doing the opposite with the Chinese migrants and Canadians. While focusing on different examples at different times, I will attempt to interconnect these issues into a cohesive analysis, coming back to the main theme of the media construction of the Chinese migrants as the 'other' and whiteness as the assumed centre.

The othering and alienating of the Chinese migrants has historical precedent in British Columbia. At the turn of the century, for example, newspaper coverage of the Chinese community in British Columbia was blatantly racist. It is important to link the portrayal of the Chinese during this time as a "threat to the White race" to the recent portrayal in the summer of 1999. Using historical sources to illustrate the coverage at the turn of the century, this chapter will assert that the coverage of today has become more subtle and assumed, but is as effective in creating and maintaining hysteria around the 'threat to national security.'

Examining the history of Vancouver's Chinatown from the 1850's to the early 1900's illustrates parallels in the racialisation process, including themes of disease, criminalization, dehumanisation, the financial drain, and the invasion of large numbers that still exist today. According to Kay Anderson,

There were moral and sanitary dimensions around the Chinatown idea, showing how, with the imprimatur of the state, the area was represented through the filter of European imagining. Successive local administrations between the mid-1880's and about 1920 took their justification from and gave fresh effect to the idea of a (vice-ridden) Chinese race and place (Anderson 5).

The case of Chinatown and its history in Vancouver can be deconstructed to expose the workings of one of the most influential and resilient of cultural hegemonies. Chinatown's story is not exceptional, but rather reveals a European way of seeing and acting that impacts on an individual's possibilities and the construction of Western social reality (Anderson 10). The race concept can be conceptualised as a "critical unifying principle" in consolidating and justifying the rise to "hegemony" of a white European "historical bloc" from the sixteenth century onward (Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 55). The "critical unifying principle" has allowed the white population to stand together in solidarity through defining what they were not based on somatic features. As Robert Miles points out,

It is not denied that there are somatic and genetic differences between human beings. Neither is it denied that phenotypical (and sometimes genetic) characteristics are signified in the 'real world' as indicative of meaningful differences between human beings, and that at a certain historical period the idea of 'race' was employed to name the collectivities so distinguished. What is at issue is the scientificity of the terms that are used to analyse this representational process, this historical construction and reproduction of common sense in the European world, and its economic and political consequences. If 'races' are not naturally occurring populations, the reasons and

conditions for the social process whereby the discourse of 'race' is employed in an attempt to label, constitute and exclude social collectivities should be the focus of attention rather than be assumed to be a natural and universal process 'race' and 'race relations' are ideological notions which are used to both construct and negotiate social relations (Miles 73).

In this process, the defined 'other' is deemed inferior justifying exclusion culturally and nationally. While the race concept is not static, but changes over time, it is still used as a "critical unifying principle" today. Race was used to construct the Chinese immigrants as 'other' at the turn of the century. Specifically, they were designated as the 'yellow peril.'

The idea of a "Chinese" race was a most convenient concept for political manipulation, as we have seen at both provincial and dominion levels, used (not necessarily consciously) to win electoral support and inspire a collective sense of identification among a "white" in-group (Anderson 63).

While this statement refers to the turn of the century, it is still valid today. A historical memory of the 'yellow peril' allows the institutions and people of British Columbia to resort back to racist modes of thinking easily.

Historically, the "Chinese" were legally labelled as 'alien' in 1875 (Anderson 53). As Surveyor General Pearse argued before the Royal Commission in 1885,

we want here, a white man's community with civilised habits and religious aspirations, and not a community of 'Heathen Chinese' who can never assimilate with us, or do ought to elevate us, and who can be of no possible value to a state in any capacity other than that of drawers of water and hewers of wood (Anderson 54).

The 'alien' Chinese are depicted as unchangeable and openly degraded as subhuman. The term 'alien' resurfaced and was also used as a catch-phrase this past summer in the *Times Colonist*, as a way of sensationalising the successive arrivals of Chinese migrants and to generate panic.

The theme of being flooded, by 'undesirable' immigrants, the concern over the loss of a white Canada also emerge clearly in the historical documentation. As the *Colonist* pointed out in 1900:

If we allow this Asiatic deluge to continue much longer," one correspondent told the *Colonist*, "even our law courts and legislature will be given over to the 'heathen Chinese' and the 'little brown men'. Are we to have this big province-a land virtually flowing with milk and honey-conserved for the best interests of the white British subject-English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, etc.-or must it be given entirely over to the yellow and brown hordes of China and Japan? (*Colonist*, May 2, 1900. Ward, 56).

Similarly, the Smithe government reported to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald was that, "the hordes of Chinese ... surge in upon the country and carry with them the elements of disease, pestilence and degradation over the face of the fair land"(Anderson 50). Although more subtle, the fear of losing one's terrain also emerged with the arrival of the Chinese migrants. An editorial written by Paul MacRae appeared on August 18th 1999, entitled, "Canadian anger over migrants is not racism." He asserted that the results from a previous telephone poll (14 August 1999) had no racist implications, but that "anger would arise against any nationality or race

trying to come here in large numbers in this way, because it's a natural human reaction to get passionate about defending one's turf from a perceived assault." The question of why Mr. MacCrae felt he and other (white) Canadians have special rights over this turf is another issue. He surely comes from an immigrant background and is on the 'turf' of First Nations people. Paul MacCrae may use a study by the English military historian John Keegan to support his defensive reaction, but it does not discount his desire to maintain his dominant position and control who enters 'his' country.

MacCrae, however, articulated a recurring theme that emerged in the *Times Colonist* in July and August, that of being swamped. Authority voices, governmental, political, academic, and journalistic, 'warned' Canadians against their naivety, and encouraged us to take a strong stand while 'we' still had a chance. More importantly, these fears were compounded by concerns about the type of immigrant/refugee allowed 'in.' The Chinese migrants were depicted as criminal, subhuman, and disease ridden. This is not the ideal migrant for a pure, white Canada.

The newspaper coverage at the turn of the century was more extreme than the depiction of Chinese migrants who came in by boat in 1999. "I defy any writer to pen-picture that awful place. The degraded humanity from the Orient, more beastly than human, live in places that a hog would die in stench of" (*The World*, 23 March, 1893, cited in Anderson 84). However, descriptions of the conditions on the boat did not produce sympathy or concern over the factors that encouraged these individuals to seek passage. Rather, they were used to dehumanise the migrants, much in the same way as the above quote did. Breeze, the migrant dog was effectively used to dehumanise the Chinese migrants. This dog was found on the second migrant ship and the ensuing article described how he was rescued. The author of the article, Gerard Young stated that Breeze, in the care of and named by the SPCA, "is gaining as much attention from international media as the 131 Chinese migrants and nine Korean crew members involved in the human smuggling ring." There was more sympathy for this sole dog than there was for the Chinese migrants trying to claim refugee status. One reason may be because, as the article suggested, Breeze was on board to provide meals for the migrants and crew. Given the propensity of North Americans to place great value on their pets, these rumours further dehumanised the Chinese migrants as unfeeling, foreign, and inhuman. It creates a hierarchy and confirmed 'white' people as superior due to their compassion for animals. According to Lynn West, the executive director of the SPCA, the media calls never stopped, coming from around the world. With the propensity of the news media to want emotionally impacting, dramatic stories, and the idea of a 'poor dog in danger of death by consumption' was apparently too much to resist. It is a sad statement on some Canadians that they felt more for a single dog, than for many human beings. This single dog was an effective tool in othering the Chinese migrants from Canadians (*Times Colonist*, 18 August 1999).

As stated, the racist sentiment at the turn of the century was more blatant in expression. On September 7th 1907, during the Vancouver Riot, marchers waved banners reading, "Stand for a White Canada," and "What shall we do to be saved." (Ward 68). The current discourse is much the same, however, there is a denial embedded within the myth that Canada is a open, multicultural society. Our refugee and immigration policies are still blatantly racist, favouring those with money, and a western education. Our politically correct trend disallows the blatant signs that occurred in 1907, but the thoughts behind the politically correct words are perhaps closer in character to the signs of the riot than to the words spoken.

There are, of course, exceptions. There are people actively struggling to change the belief systems within Canada. During July and August, the dominant public perception of the Chinese migrants was challenged by a small tolerant segment of Canadian society. A small collection of

people, for example, travelled to the Esquimalt barracks with welcoming banners. An article published on the August 22nd 1999, showed a photograph of a group of Victorians marching to welcome the Chinese migrants into Canada. The accompanying article documented the support shown by some Victorians and gave suggestions to spend money on welcoming in the Chinese migrants instead of on the Kosovar war. While the press covered this event, it was tucked into the centre of the paper in contrast to the great majority of anti-migrant coverage that was smeared across the front pages (*Times Colonist*, 22 August 1999, C1).

Now, as in the past, the press plays a key role in perpetuating the status quo. Peter Ward asserted that the press played a significant role in the spreading of racist belief at the turn of the century. The papers were full of racist rhetoric and this helped to circulate anti-Asian opinion. He stated that public leaders reflected the dominant cultural beliefs. Social acceptance was conditioned by the strength of this cultural norm. There were no sanctions in BC to curb racial prejudice. "The pattern of informal, unrestricted circulation of attitudes facilitated the generation and continuation of racist consensus"(Ward 168). Many of these conditions are still maintained today. Our public leaders actively perpetuated the notion of toughening up immigration and refugee policies. While there may be a spoken rejection of racist attitudes and beliefs on the part of Canadians, it remains to be just this, spoken. Racism is still inherent within institutions, and the denial of racist opinions often seems to precede a racist comment. The act of placing a clause onto a statement, such as, "I'm not racist, but..." seems to be common practice in Canada, allowing racism to continue in the assumptions and position of the speaker, and yet works to relieve any guilt that may accompany these beliefs (van Dijk). For example, the author of the letter printed on August 12th 1999, stated that he is not racist on account of the fact that, the Chinese migrants were here illegally. This notion of illegality is used to justify the lack of tolerance on the part of Canadians. The tongue and cheek letter suggests that we should use B.C. ferries to facilitate the migration process, and open the doors for, "the tired, poor, and pushy" (*Times Colonist*, 12 August 1999).

It seems that the more things change, the more they stay the same. While the historical examples include more transparent and obvious examples of racist discourse, this discourse still very much exists in today's media. It has become more assumed and implicit in our media, more subtle. While there are obvious racist statements that are still easy to detect, it is the subtleties that may be overlooked and are more difficult to identify. The implicit racist assumptions allow for a greater denial within the media that was not needed at the turn of the century. Racism was overtly accepted. Today, Canadians have a façade as being non-racist, and the denial is necessary to perpetuate this myth.

At present, the 'threat to the white race' is still perpetuated through the media, but the 'white' race is now implied and assumed. The term 'white' is implicitly understood as the dominant position. We are at a point where the position of the reader of the *Times Colonist*, the white reader, is still at the centre. White consciousness has become so assumed that it is now possible and frequent for the mere mention of the white race to cause discomfort and defensiveness on the part of the white reader. The centring of the white readership of the *Times Colonist* is accomplished by the 'othering' of the Chinese migrants through racialisation, criminalisation, dehumanisation, and invasion themes.

The media, specifically the *Times Colonist*, simultaneously accomplished the othering of the migrants and the recentring of the white readership through their public opinion polls.

Skewed surveys/public opinion polls were published, asking for Victorians' opinions on the situation. The following example clearly illustrates the bias of the *Times Colonist*. There was no

option for supporting the Chinese migrants and effectively 'othered' them. The placement of the choices clearly indicates what the 'proper choice' ought to be. Three choices were supplied with room on the left for a selection. The fourth choice, which is the only choice allowing for a possibility of support, was tucked off to the right. No one took credit for the creation of this survey. Even upon repeated requests, the creator's identity was not made known. This poll was printed numerous times, allowing Victorians to, make their mark.

[figure not reprinted]

On August 14th 1999, a different survey was published. This was a telephone poll stating, 'Have your say.' The small in size (2x4") telephone survey begins with the headline, "Should they be sent home?" This is followed by the words, "The arrival of more Chinese migrants has raised questions about Canada's policies. We'd like to hear your thoughts. Should the migrants be sent home immediately? Please call our line by 2 p.m. today with your opinion. Try again if the number is busy-the lines can become overloaded. If you prefer, you can e-mail us at edit@victoriatimescolonist.com. A summary of opinions expressed will appear in Sunday's *Times Colonist*." The framing of the question is hardly objective, and implied that the migrants should be sent home. A more objective question might have been, "What is your opinion on the issue of the Chinese migrants?" The skewed wording of the question provides readers with an in-group to identify with, and the results of the poll are not surprising (*Times Colonist*, 14 August 1999, A1).

The next day, *Times Colonist* readers were provided with the outcome of its biased telephone survey. The front-page photo featured a young woman in black coveralls/prison garb behind three fences. Again the implication to the reader was that this individual is dangerous, criminal, and deviant. She is the 'other.' The headline reads, "Go Home." The sub-headline was, "We asked you to have your say about the latest wave of migrants to reach our shores. Your response was huge, the message was clear: Send them back immediately. YES:3362; NO:105." The following article by Cindy E. Harnett began to document the responses of the readers, consisting mostly of individual quotes. While the question posed is hugely problematic in the first place, the racist newspaper coverage had a great influence on public opinion. This poll had the effect of reassuring Canadians with racist, discriminatory, or ignorant views that they are in the majority, and therefore justified in their opinions. The (white) majority has been effectively centred. The components of the news media up to this date, the framing of the question itself, the history of BC's racism, and the prejudices, biases, and ignorance of Canadians themselves must all be taken into account when analysing the results of this *Times Colonist* telephone poll.

Canadian national myths, however, deny that this racism exists. Canadians think of themselves as honest, generous, forthright, and open to all. At worst, we consider ourselves to be naïve, and more often this naivety is forgiven through a perception of innocence and purity. As mentioned earlier, labels of Canadians as racist immediately bring up a defensive reaction. It is this defensive reaction that must be examined, particularly by myself, a white member of the audience engaged in this analysis. It is the myth of naivety and innocence that removes any guilt from Canadians (Frankenberg, 1996, 5). By denying racism, based on this innocence, Canadians can come to accept that they are indeed not racist. Race becomes something that is separated from themselves. It is not whiteness that needs to be addressed, that is the problem, but rather it is the 'other' that requires consideration.

The Chinese migrants who arrived this summer may not write about racialisation, but they experienced it every day. White Canadians were already aligned with the Canadian state, and

the history of discrimination and racism towards the Chinese that is embedded within it. "The power relation between the refugee and the asylum state can be characterised as that of Self and Other. This relationship is shaped by the global political economy and the interplay of race and gender (Foster 45).

Again, the fear of loss of privilege was being played out. However it was not named as such. It remained invisible, couched under the guise of illegality and disease. The issue of the migrants 'jumping the queue' was raised again and again as a justification for the intolerance towards the migrants. Information was never supplied through the *Times Colonist* that applying for refugee status at the border was a legal path into Canada. This would have removed one of the means whereby the illegality of the Chinese migrants was juxtaposed to law-abiding Canadians. The media are highly skilled in the process of how whiteness is rationalised, legitimised, made normal and natural (Frankenberg, 1997, 3). They not only influence the framing of events and ethnicity for the public at large, but they have considerable influence over other dominant institutions, given their interdependence on one another and mutual benefit in maintaining the status quo (van Dijk, 243-246).

In contrast to the depiction of the Chinese migrants, the Kosovar are a prime example of how whiteness is rationalised, legitimised, made normal and natural. While the national, ethnic, cultural identity of the Chinese migrants was highlighted under the banner of difference, these three aspects neatly disappeared when it came to the case of the Kosovar refugees. Because they were white, this naming was overlooked. Seen as 'ideal' refugees, whiteness and the Canadian national identity have been subsumed. The white refugees are accepted, while those of 'other race' are deemed a threat to national security. "There is at times expression of whites' fears of being culturally and linguistically overwhelmed- and again, some cultures and languages are perceived to be more threatening than others (Frankenberg, 1997, 6). Over 4000 Kosovar refugees were accepted into Canada in the summer of 1999, while less than 600 Chinese migrants caused hysteria.

Hegemony is never complete. It ebbs and flows; it is challenged and responds to that challenge. Race is a construction; however the effects of a historical time and place on the process of racialisation are real, and race is felt. I am sure that it is felt much more than I could know. The invisibility of whiteness is accomplished by marking others. The assumption that white people own the nation is clearly indicated in the *Times Colonist's* coverage. White dominance and white centrality is assumed. "Whiteness is a construct or identity almost impossible to separate from racial dominance" (Frankenberg, 1997, 9). I am attempting to recognise whiteness as being made, rather than as self-evident (Frankenberg, 1997, 11). Whiteness was indeed reconfirmed and reconstituted through the treatment and representation of the Chinese migrants. Whiteness needs to be addressed as a problem, instead having its invisibility perpetuated through its denial. We have reached a point where Canada's national myth as being non-racist, actively ignores, not only whiteness, but other races that have historically been used to define ourselves. The coverage and framing of Reena Virk's murder is a case in point. Not only was the racism of the situation erased, even the possibility of such a suggestion was removed (Jiwani 181). Canadians denials of racism are creating gross misrepresentations of reality for the purpose of perpetuating our national myths.

While race is a construction, the effects of racialisation are very real, for all of us. It is essential to realise that white is indeed a racialised position that holds its dominant position by virtue of subjugating the 'other.' According to Ruth Frankenberg,

This way of naming whiteness is much harder work, for it entails the specification and historicization of an almost infinite number of cultural and disciplinary practices.... How was I racialised? How was I made white? I was made white, in the moment that the effort was made to teach me to be English (not British), to be of the north, of the suburbs, to be lower-middle-class, to be Church of England, to be politically conservative, to be (of course) heterosexual. To be white. Without ever naming it, to be white. To be English. There is at least one "not that" as counterpart to each of these characteristics. And each has a set of histories and practices embedded in it (Frankenberg, 1996, 8).

I have asked the same questions of myself. How was I racialised? How was I made white? I was made white in the teaching of English as my mother tongue, in the proud immigrant identity of my northern European parents, in the working class attitude of my father that they started with nothing in Canada (this is not true of course, they began with many unrecognised advantages), in my father's attempts to bring me up as a 'good' Roman Catholic girl, in his working class, gendered, racialised expectations of what a fitting occupation was for me, to be politically conservative, in my mother's 'liberal' encouragement that I could do anything, in my mother's upper class childhood that allowed her (some) freedom of thought, in the heterosexual expectation, and in my post secondary education despite the incompleteness of my high school degree (I wonder if I would have been so readily accepted as a mature student based on my 'life experience' had I not been white. So much of my 'life experience' came from the privilege of being white). There are, as Frankenberg states, histories embedded in all these definitions of whiteness, based on the 'other,' based on what I am not.

The "boundaries of my experience; the boundaries of my acquired knowledge; the boundaries of my imagination"(Frankenberg, 1996, 11) are based on my whiteness. The limitations of my thinking and of my analysis are based on these boundaries. I recognise that those who are oppressed by their racialised positions have a clearer view (Frankenberg, 1993, 5). I strive to be aware of my limitations and extend the boundaries. The work on analysing the treatment of the Chinese migrants has extended my view, despite the many oversights based on who I am, my background, my experience, my whiteness. The treatment of the migrants has shaped my life, because it continues to perpetuate a system of racism that shapes my experience and sense of self, and my definition of who is Canadian. Whiteness shapes and defines my life, as it does for many of the readers of the *Times Colonist*.

I question if I have the ability to see, given that I stand in a place of privilege. I question how much I have the ability to see, given my privilege. After all, "I have been performing whiteness, and having whiteness performed upon me, since before the day I was born" (Frankenberg, 1996, 15). I accept, to prevent myself from falling into stasis or despair, that this is a beginning. My path forward is long. I will make mistakes. And it is my hope, that through these mistakes I will learn. I hope that I will not remain silent, and will find the strength to challenge the dominant, as a member within it. I hope that I can move beyond.

I realise, as Frankenberg has pointed out, that I have the privilege of choice when it comes to racism because of my dominant position within whiteness. I have the privilege of being removed from racism, should I desire to fall back into the dominant mode of thought that 'race' applies to the 'other.' I have taken on the task to write about racism and racialisation, and yet, like Frankenberg, I can avoid experiencing it in any other way. If I should fail it is a personal failure; it will not, as Frankenberg points out, kill me (Frankenberg, 1996, 11).

It is crucial to recognise history. "Among the effects on white people, both of race privilege and of the dominance of whiteness are their seeming normativity, their structured invisibility (Frankenberg, 1993, 6).

One of the primary factors in this invisibility is cultural racism and the belief in the concept of the "rightness of Whiteness." Whiteness is considered the universal (hidden) norm and allows one to think and speak as if Whiteness described and defined the world. (Henry and Tator, 2000, 58)

It is this invisibility at the very least that I strive to lay bare. To make visible what has previously been unseen, is to reveal the fear that lies behind *Times Colonist* readers' voices to "send the 'aliens' home," fears, perpetuated by the media, of disease, of being overrun, of losing dominance, of losing their Canada, their white Canada, their 'normal' Canada.

Ruth Frankenberg states that, "But there's a risk here, of still not naming or specifying the self, seeming to act as though the centre still holds. But it didn't (Frankenberg, 1996, 14). Unfortunately we are working hard to recenter it, and unfortunately, in large part, we are and have succeeded. I have documented a recent example of racialisation for the purposes of recentering whiteness, by looking at the arrival of the Chinese migrants on Canadian shores in the summer of 1999. My own process has only recently begun. I must work at "a refusal to go along with certain practices and expectations (performing whiteness). In other instances, the change is that of stepping back from an earlier way of seeing so that it may be witnessed rather than practised unthinkingly"(Frankenberg, 1996, 16). The more that I can see, and the more that I can speak, the further along the road I am to understanding the complexities and long histories of my own whiteness.

"If I have changed the meaning of my whiteness, it is inasmuch as I have refused, whenever possible, to perform certain versions of it. When does seeing tip over the edge into refusing to perform? And what are the circumstances wherein that refusal might be successfully achieved? And in what moments can this be an individual question, and in what moments must it be a collective one?"(Frankenberg, 1996, 16).

Encouraging other Canadians to do the same is a challenge that must be undertaken. It is time to reconstruct our national myths and narratives in a more honest form.

Chapter 4 - Conclusion

This thesis has provided an analysis of the *Times Colonist* coverage through July and August of 1999, and an analysis of the assumed white audience of that coverage who enabled and reciprocated the ideas put forth by the media. The two issues are interconnected, and yet this thesis attempted to illustrate a specific example of racialisation, namely the Chinese migrants, and then move on to examine the reaction to and participation in the racism around this group of refugees. The Kosovar refugees were used to illustrate the difference in both media coverage and in public response to a group of people whose affinities were highlighted, rather than downplayed. Examining national myths and narratives, served to identify the underlying emotion of fear and the defensiveness that this fear promotes. My own place, as a member of the white audience was acknowledged and examined, albeit in a limited way.

The media coverage of the Chinese migrants perpetuates many stereotypes. As van Dijk states, "mainstream media are less interested in majority problems such as xenophobia and discrimination than in alleged crime, deviance, or cultural differences interpreted as a threat to

white, western norms and values (van Dijk, elite discourse and racism, 1). In chapter two, the analysis of the *Times Colonist* provided a clear look at the issues of human smuggling, the refugee debate, the financial drain, criminalization, and dehumanization that led to the growing hysteria around invasion and national security. Specifics around the change of coverage over time, the process of racialisation, the focus (or lack of) on gender and age, the focus on the group over the individual, the importance between different pieces in the newspaper, and the manufacturing of consent and hegemony that took place during and after the summer of 1999 were examined.

The change within the coverage occurred rapidly. Originally couched as a human smuggling problem, the focus changed within a week to an issue of national security. The authority and 'expert' voices were decided upon and then aired recurrently in the weeks to come. Sandra McCulloch and Robert Bedeski are only two examples of how the selection of these authority voices managed to perpetuate the perspective of the white status quo. This change occurred in order to begin the demonisation and criminalization process of the Chinese migrants. This othering and alienating allowed Canadians to distance themselves from the migrants as human beings and demand their exclusion based on their supposed unlawfulness, potential health threat and refusal to follow the rules. The racialisation process was invisible in part, with the media suggesting that it was not race, but their 'criminal' behavior that was the cause of Canadians fervor and lack of acceptance. Beneath the spoken problems, however, lay a history of discrimination and prejudice within B.C. and a desire for a white Canada. Therefore, the definition of the ideal immigrant or refugee falls into a narrow definition. In order for Canadians to maintain their dominant position within white Canada, they need to contain who has access to it.

The racialisation of the migrants was furthered by the specific tact undertaken by the media. Representing the migrants as a group, rather than telling individual stories and in the process humanizing individuals, allowed the migrants to be seen in much more abstract terms. The focus on the group rather than on any individual story, is in stark opposition to current news practice. Disallowing any sense of connection by refusing to tell the reasons for individual refugee claimants removed any sympathy that might have been felt by Canadians. One effect of this process was to remove any differentiation between gender and the specific realities that women may have had to face. Age was referred to in a cursory manner, more sympathy automatically being given to the children because they were not deemed to have agency over their own lives. Even here, in some cases, news coverage centered on how the migrant children's ages were unverified, and some were not accepted into juvenile homes because they were thought to be adults, the implication being that they have agency.

The framing of the newspaper coverage was effective in increasing hysteria. Not only did the second and third boat increase hysteria, but the newspaper became more extreme and anti-migrant as the boats came in. The question of migrants jumping the queue brought in a debate over who is a legitimate or illegitimate refugee. This debate simply obscured the real issue around who the Chinese migrants are. This played out in the recurring theme that Canada was being overrun and that we lacked room for the Chinese migrants. While Canada has not reached its annual refugee target of 25,000 persons in years, the numbers were touted as a serious concern. During the same summer, Canada had over 4000 Kosovar refugee claims and fewer than 600 for the Chinese migrants in question. The discourse analysis shows the increasing sensationalism used within the headlines and within the articles themselves. The incredibly biased and extreme opinion polls appeared after the arrival of the second boat, and not only encouraged peoples' thinking through the lack of options, but further increased hysteria by publishing the results. The drama and sensationalism that the *Times Colonist* used, is akin to

the methods used by all mass media in order to increase readership/audience. Little analysis was given. Opinion pieces would often appear in a factual form, as a news item. The news items themselves were largely written by two *Times Colonist* staff members. These white journalists contributed to the hegemony of ideas of the white owned and operated *Times Colonist*. The editorials clearly stated the 'official' view of the *Times Colonist*. All of the coverage, with the exception of a token opinion piece or letter to the editor, contributed to the manufacturing of consent within the assumed white readership of the *Times Colonist*.

The *Times Colonist* was effective in recentering the white audience. The example of media coverage around the turn of the century was intended to illustrate the history behind the recurring recentering of the white audience. The threat to the white race has now become assumed rather than remaining overt. This assumption allows for the national myth that Canadians are not racist, but rather that they are accepting of diversity and judge people on individual merit rather than on physical characteristics, to flourish. Canadian and whiteness have collapsed into one another, and whiteness has remained the assumed racial background of a Canadian. The Kosovar refugees were used to illustrate the affinities that the media highlighted, of an 'ideal' refugee in comparison to the 'illegitimate' refugee.

So we are left with the question of what to do with all of this and what is the value of these findings? One value of the research is that it engages and challenges unquestioned assumptions of whiteness. It also challenges the myths and narratives of the imagined Canadian community that we live in. By challenging these myths, narratives, and assumed whiteness, this research attempts to expose and make visible the denials that are used to cover up the fear of the unknown, of difference, of losing one's position of dominance and power. Perhaps by revealing these raw nerves, individuals may begin to question themselves, and their contribution to the reality of Canadian society. Perhaps individuals will engage in denials even more. Perhaps individuals will recognize their own place within the power dynamics and actively work towards redefining who we are and who Canada represents.

It is also a goal of this thesis to increase the reader's understanding of how the mass media functions in its representations, what the limitations and possibilities of the media are. Suggestions for change include public education to increase awareness of media. Whether it be through conferences, forums, or through word of mouth, it is essential to increase the critical awareness of individuals. It is only through this increased critical awareness that anti-racist work can be successful.

Working within the media through writing letters to the editor is fraught with limitations. The placement of the letters and the choice of the letter published lead to low readership exposure. It does, however get one's voice out and provide an alternative view. Certainly the more alternative views that are voiced, the more the media will be forced to listen. Hegemony is by no means static, and can be challenged by the public.

In reporting on the Chinese migrants situation, the alternative press in Victoria was sadly lacking. *Monday Magazine*, Victoria's alternative voice, evaded the issue. While they did publish a few stories peripherally related to the migrants, they never examined the issue head on. One alternative was successful in challenging the homogeneity of opinion published by the *Times Colonist*. The "*Times Colonizer*" published 1000 front-pages and replaced the front page of the *Times Colonist* with the doctored version. Their version supplied sympathetic stories on the plight of the migrants, pointed out the fact that we present immigrant Canadians were accepted onto this land by its indigenous peoples, and provided, through humor, evidence of the extreme

racism with which Victorians met the migrants. Alternative viewpoints can be very effective in disrupting the status quo, and shedding light on the dominant power structures.

With ownership of the media tightening to fewer individuals, and the increasing dependence on other elite institutions for 'news,' the dominant viewpoints become more entrenched. With the ownership of and journalists writing for the news medium being predominantly white, the assumed white perspective continues unchecked. It is our responsibility to question the media, to deconstruct the assumptions that take part in the creation of media in order to ensure 'fair' coverage. This thesis is only a beginning, and the question of how we can get our voices heard continues beyond its margins. Writing and speaking, especially for those who are members of the dominant group, will go a long way in opening up assumptions about who we are and how we want to treat fellow Canadians. Recreating Canada, and ourselves under new national myths is one way forward.

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