

## **Apple of the Empire: Landscape and Imperial Identity in Turn-of-the-Century British Columbia**

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[See table of contents](#)

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### Article abstract

With the dawn of a new century, the British Empire faced the world with a new monarch as the Dominion of Canada braced for one of the largest immigration movements in its brief history. These currents of change also mirrored broader societal transformations marked by dramatic industrial expansion and exploding urban growth. In this period of great transition, many well-to-do Britons found a powerful antidote to their fears and insecurities in the far-away province of British Columbia. Aggressively promoted by private land developers, immigrants found affinity with a radically-altered landscape defined by the agricultural practice of fruit farming. Representing a wealth of finance, culture, and refinement, notions of the land animated and perpetuated the values and identity of the new community. Although these settlers were eager to exclude difference and achieve a “natural” balance with nature, the intertwining of landscape and Empire could not preclude change, nor exorcise its own profound flaws.

# Apple of the Empire: Landscape and Imperial Identity in Turn-of-the-Century British Columbia

JASON PATRICK BENNETT

**L**andscape. If any single feature stands out in the Canadian historical consciousness, it is the land. Whether broken by settler's plough, breached by pickaxe and drill, or criss-crossed with iron track and lonely roads, landscape has played a central role in the unfolding drama of Canadian experience. One need not look very far to see this view corroborated in the vast literature of the Canadian West. Ambitious politicians, newly arrived homesteaders, resolute First Nations and Métis, organising labourers – all have been cast up on the stage of landscape by generations of historians. Curiously, despite the apparent prominence of the land in Canadian historiography, historians have shown little interest in developing a more challenging and rigorous theory of its role in the past. Fortunately, the recent infusion of cultural and critical theory into the historical discipline has presented alternative ways to understand landscape in its numerous manifestations.

Certainly, in reconsidering the issue of landscape, cultural geography has offered the most consistent work on the subject. Like history, cultural geography has been influenced by scholarship from a variety of disciplines, including the writings of Dominick LaCapra, Edward Said, Joan Scott, Michel Foucault, and Raymond Williams.<sup>1</sup> The resultant innovative and compelling studies attempt to theorise landscape beyond its more materially rooted conceptions. Indeed, geographers such as James Duncan have emphasised landscape's function as a cultural system or discourse, "for as an ordered assemblage of objects, a text, [landscape] acts as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored."<sup>2</sup> More specifically,

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- 1 Rather than recount their specific differences and contributions, it will suffice to acknowledge that their concern with textual analysis and cultural production has generated supporters and detractors alike.
- 2 James S. Duncan, *The City as Text: the Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyen Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1990), 17.

when viewed as a constitutive component of social identity, landscape is correctly recognised as performing a critical role in the organisation and maintenance of power relations on a variety of levels. Understood in this manner, situating landscape in the context of empire takes on new relevancy in delineating a fuller approach to social acculturation.<sup>3</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, a mass movement and displacement of peoples ebbed and flowed within the British Empire. During this period, Canada was the destination for many of these immigrants. However, in contrast to the Prairies where the federal government sponsored East European farmers, the settlement of southern British Columbia was orchestrated by private land developers who were interested in attracting very specific groups of potential emigrants – mainly, middle- and upper-class Britons. What must be stressed is that this particular movement of privileged Britons was never animated by a desire to blend into a proverbial Canadian melting pot. Rather, it represented an elaborate attempt to “transplant,” or more accurately, a bid to “rediscover” a lost way of life among the mountains of British Columbia – a haven from a world marked by racial mixing, class conflict, and voting women. These immigrants took refuge in the immensely popular and spiritually laden vocation of fruit farming.

This article considers the themes of imperialism, colonisation, and the discourse of landscape in early twentieth-century British Columbia.<sup>4</sup> To this end, it discusses the promotional literature prepared by the local orchard companies in Kelowna, BC, for their much-desired British audience, teasing out the complex set of power relations legitimised and perpetuated by the orcharding landscape.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the institutional means of state formation, such as legal codes and public

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3 While historical considerations of this relationship remain few in terms of Canada, a more literary-oriented study of landscape and identity can be found in W.H. New, *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing* (Toronto, 1997). Other related works include Kate Darian-Smith, Liz Gunner, and Sarah Nuttall, eds., *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia* (New York, 1996), and Peter Huggill, *Upstate Arcadia: Landscape, Aesthetics, and the Triumph of Social Differentiation in America* (Lanham, 1995).

4 At this juncture, I write “renewed” since in my estimation historians have neglected to give due attention to British imperialism as a context of British Columbia’s “development.” Indeed, recent work in postcolonial studies has played a large role in highlighting this absence in historical scholarship. However, Canadian (and British Columbian) history continues to remain generally immune from its influences. For a recent exception, consult Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver, 1997).

5 Situated in southern British Columbia, Kelowna was selected as a study site for several reasons. As a region that became synonymous with fruit farming, the Okanagan Valley was marked by dozens of small communities, and three major centres – Penticton, Kelowna, and Vernon – which were most directly influenced by fruit promotion in the early twentieth century. On a less academic but equally historical note, Kelowna is also the most familiar to me of all the communities since I was born and raised there.

education, landscape's role in the process of self-identification did not depend on the specialised knowledge of robed judges or bespectacled bureaucrats. At a time when state control was arguably tenuous and far less intrusive, the role of landscape in formulating and sustaining British hegemony is dramatically illustrated, suggesting a need to rethink traditional interpretations of British Columbia's colonisation. At Kelowna, landscape afforded the wider community the opportunity to actively formulate and nourish the values represented by fruit farming, whether at an afternoon tennis engagement or in the form of a letter to the local paper. The rural ideals of the British middle class were re-enacted in British Columbia both to establish order and to exclude. Since this imperial process involves linkages between metropole and colony, the article also places the concept of orcharding in the broader context of Great Britain and rural English culture.

Indeed, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, Britons' perception of themselves oscillated between the triumph of an industrialising "modernism" and the need to reclaim the "true" England of green hills and rural villages. The discourse of ruralism found expression and understanding in a variety of forms: schemes to blend the city and the country in "garden cities"; campaigns by the Federation of Rambling Clubs to pressure Westminster to save rural England and Wales from dreaded "development"; and the continuing evolution of parks, rife with class antagonism over the design and ultimate purpose of park space.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, ideas of agriculture were also in favour, hinting at a receptiveness to the bountiful schemes of orcharding among the mountains of "nature's garden spot," British Columbia. To encourage settlement, the orcharding landscape not only led to a dramatic reconfiguration of the immediate environment, but also showcased an imperial and Eden-inspired "natural" social order, sustained by and articulated through an exclusionary configuration of ethnicity, class, and gender. In creating their gentrified vision of rural bliss, promoters and community leaders had ultimately to confront the paradox that the privileged society they longed to establish rested on the backs of those non-Europeans and labouring classes they so desperately wanted to banish from paradise.

Long before dreams of apples and Empire, the land endured. As with any historical process, the transformation of the Okanagan Valley by European colonisers was an uneven one, fraught with conflict not only over resources, but images of the landscape itself. When the first people descended into the valley nearly seven thousand years ago, they found a hospitable semi-arid climate,

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6 Typically, conflicts revolved around middle-class desires for "escape" from the urban world, versus working-class pressure to use parks for recreation, such as sporting activities. Michael Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape* (London, 1994), 117, 145, 155; for a Canadian example, see also Robert A. J. McDonald, "'Holy Retreat' or 'Practical Breathing Spot'?: Class Perceptions of Vancouver's Stanley Park, 1910-1913," *Canadian Historical Review* 65 (June, 1984): 127-53.

similar in many regards to regions of southern California. Since the valley presented few agricultural opportunities, over the centuries the Okanagan Nation developed and perfected a hunting and gathering economy. Collectively, the Okanagans spoke a dialect of the Interior Salish language, and were organised into locally autonomous communities that often consisted of several villages. Each settlement had a shaman, a temporary war leader, and a headman or chief who only exercised power at the discretion of the collective, presiding over alliances and dispute resolutions. In short, Okanagan politics had a “quasi-federal quality”: while for the most part autonomous, “clusters of bands quite often participated in joint hunts and communal rituals, and occasionally united against a common enemy in warfare.”<sup>7</sup> While theoretically equal, Okanagan communities were often rivals for prestige, leading to occasional confrontations. On the whole, however, the Okanagans enjoyed peaceful economic and social relations with surrounding neighbours, establishing ties of trade and marriage.<sup>8</sup>

Like the numerous nations of the Interior, the Okanagans occupied traditional territories that would be protected from forcible incursion. While some areas were seen as the preserve of the immediate locals, vast tracts of land were regarded as commonages, with no particular band having absolute right to determine access for others. This was especially important since great numbers of people dispersed and moved about during the summer months between different groups and families, returning to their home villages in early autumn. Despite the collective use of the land, familial and individual private property was widespread, ranging from slaves to countless moveable items of property, including dogs, baskets, weapons, and tools.<sup>9</sup> To be sure, Okanagan society was a growing and changing one, like the land that sustained it. Change occurred in many forms and, as always, with consequences that could never be fully anticipated.

By the early nineteenth century, Britain and the United States had established trade alliances with many nations in the Pacific Northwest, including the Okanagans. All the while, these newcomers vied for territorial jurisdiction and dominance. Fatefully, in 1846 the British and American authorities settled on the 49th parallel as an international boundary, dividing the Okanagans’ homeland in the process. For the Okanagans, the border represented a first step in a new and hostile vision of the land. While this foreign survey line certainly impeded the free and seasonal movements of people, the disruption it caused also centred on whose image of the landscape would prevail. With the creation of the colony of British Columbia in 1858 and the official claim to British sov-

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7 Peter Carstens, *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation Among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto, 1991), 16.

8 Duane David Thomson, “A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites in the Settlement Era,” PhD thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985, p. 20.

9 Carstens, *The Queen's People*, 9.

ereignty over the region, the extension of British control represented a redefinition of the land which invited colonial newcomers as “natural” citizens, replete with the rights and privileges afforded to such membership, while simultaneously excluding the original inhabitants as little more than foreigners. Increasingly, a landscape that was once inviting for the Okanagans was becoming unintelligible and alien.

Guided by dreams of rank and privilege, European settlers converged on the Okanagan Valley in 1861 at the invitation of a colonial government eager to attract “gentlemen to this Kingdom.”<sup>10</sup> Upon their arrival, many of these immigrants dutifully began to pre-empt large estates for their own grand designs. Although diverse in background, ranging from members of the British middle class, the aristocracy, clergymen’s sons, and mercantile families, a combination of rank and education made these emigrants part of the “gentlemanly” persuasion.<sup>11</sup> Many of these men found great success and fortune in amassing land holdings in the thousands of acres, a task simplified by patronage, influential positions in the colonial government, and strategic marriages with British women from well-placed families.<sup>12</sup> Although their hegemony over the landscape grew, the new British elite could not escape the physical limitations of the land they occupied. Just as the Okanagans had done before, the new British community would have to contend with the aridity of the climate. While the Okanagans had adjusted to the land by hunting game, the recent arrivals adopted a modified response by raising cattle to supply the growing demand for food from the Cariboo Gold Rush further to the north. According to Patrick Dunae, these ranchers “could combine the excitement of the frontier, the romance of the West, and the comforts of civilized society” with ranching, “an industry that most well-bred Britons much preferred to cereal agriculture.”<sup>13</sup>

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10 Quoted in Thomson, “A History of the Okanagan,” 339. This invitation was prompted in large part by the arrival of thousands of “unruly” American miners following the northward migration of the Gold Rush in 1858, inducing the often haphazard extension of British control. Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890* (Vancouver, 1977), 95.

11 Patrick Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants: From British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver, 1981), 12-18.

12 Of the numerous examples, the story of F. G. Vernon is particularly dramatic. Arriving in 1863, he ultimately amassed 13,000 acres in the Okanagan Valley, and occupied important positions ranging from Justice of the Peace to Commissioner of Lands and Works. For further reading, please consult Margaret A. Ormsby, *Coldstream: Nullus Secundus* (Vernon, 1990). On the importance of marriage as a vehicle of advancement and respectability, see Jane Sproule, “The Polarization of Okanagan Fruit Farming Communities and the 1955 Packing House Workers’ Strike,” MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1991.

13 Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants*, 87.

The transformation of the environment was marked clearly by new structures and new values. Previously open ranges with an abundance of wildlife were now populated with vast herds of grazing cattle, as wooden fences cut across the land to mark ownership and enforce exclusion. As a consequence, the traditional pattern of Okanagan life was profoundly disrupted. No longer able to move freely from summer to winter village grounds collecting food and hunting game, the Okanagans were restricted to a fraction of the land they once occupied in the form of government-approved reserves. Treated with disdain and apprehension, their status as “wards of the state” stripped them of the self-sufficiency and freedom enjoyed by the colonisers. In time, the environment continued to change further as many native communities experimented with raising their own livestock; later, others would plough the earth and plant crops, while a small number also engaged in orcharding.<sup>14</sup> Any economic pursuit would remain difficult, however, as native access to capital and irrigated water was severely limited by an ambivalent government. Consequently, wage labour also became part of the Okanagan economy with members employed in various occupations including mining, mill work, cattle herding, rail road work, and agriculture.<sup>15</sup> In the face of European hostility, divisions within Okanagan communities often centred on those who embraced economic integration with colonial society as a means to prosper versus those who rejected any such association.<sup>16</sup>

Through the ensuing decades, marked by the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, the image of British Columbia as a vast ranching frontier persisted. However, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, the shape and form of the landscape found a new articulation as a proverbial Garden of Eden for a British middle class eager to find solace in the countryside of the Empire. And like the original garden, these Britons were invited to become caretakers of a blossoming and fruit-laden paradise. This latest transformation of the landscape benefited from the development of a critical “tool of Empire” – irrigation.<sup>17</sup> Refined extensively through vast irrigation projects in India during the 1840s, this imperial technology would permit a radical reorganisation of the land, which had profound consequences for both the environment in general and the organisation of the orcharding landscape in particular. In place of grazing herds of cattle on vast arid ranches, hundreds of neatly rowed seedlings fed by diverted creeks with cement flumes and earthen ducts refashioned the contours of the land. Under the unforgiving heat of the summer sun, developers planted a vast garden in the desert.

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14 Thomson, “A History of the Okanagan,” 257.

15 Carstens, *The Queen's People*, 110.

16 *Ibid.*, 113.

17 Donald Worster, *An Unsettled Country: Changing Landscapes of the American West* (Albuquerque, 1994), 34.

Interestingly, the development of fruit farming coincided with a growing conservative reaction against the rapid industrialisation of Britain, which surfaced in conjunction with a more culturally intrusive and politically driven imperial mission. Instead of figuring as a somewhat vague and remote feature of the late eighteenth-century British imagination, Empire was transformed into the “plot of novels, the dialogue of plays, the rhythm of ballads, the inspiration of oratorios.”<sup>18</sup> In equally dramatic fashion, Empire was showcased with awe-inspiring splendour during the Great Exhibition and paraded with dazzling fanfare during Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee.<sup>19</sup> And all the while, the coal-burning engines of this change also fueled a growing middle- and upper-class glorification of the rural landscape, free from the perceived industrial and urban pollution of Empire.

To be sure, the growth of the imaginary rural landscape took many forms and guises, often with intersecting and conflicting political agendas. While Britons sailed for British Columbia pursuing the gentrified ideals offered in the pages of *Country Life* magazine, the Garden City Association began to solicit funds for the creation of the first “garden city” at Letchworth in Hertfordshire. And as authors and politicians sounded the call to colonise the depopulated regions of rural England, fruit-farming promoters, in cooperation with the British Columbian and Canadian governments, circulated pamphlets and books describing the wondrous life that awaited the cultured and educated Briton among the rolling mountains of Canada’s very own “Garden of Eden.” The hand of the people extending these books and pamphlets was strengthened considerably by the unquestionable aristocratic flavour of fruit farming. As early as 1890, Lord and Lady Aberdeen had purchased a fruit ranch a few miles from Kelowna, while years later Lord Grey would acquire a fruit farm in the neighbouring Kootenay Valley, after declaring in Summerland that fruit farming “was a most beautiful art” and that “fruit growers are a refined and cultured class of people – the finest class on earth.”<sup>20</sup> Faced with an industrial economy that marginalised their land-based power and influence, fruit farming emerged as the “anti-modern” antidote of the aristocracy with its valorisation of rural privilege over urban capital. And although England’s countryside was often too costly for many aspiring owners with a comfortable income, British Columbia, seen as an extension of the English countryside, offered Britons the possibility of finally achieving the desired status and harmony of country living.

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18 R.G. Moyles and Doug Owsram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto, 1988), 6.

19 Christopher Lane, *The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (Durham, 1995), 27.

20 Kelowna Centennial Museum (KCM), “The Okanagan Valley Booklet,” (1905), 5.



Indeed, while the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation in Britain clearly heralded the diminishing importance of the rural lifestyle in terms of economic and political clout by the late nineteenth century, “English attitudes to the country, and to the ideas of rural life, persisted with extraordinary power, so that even after the society was predominantly urban its literature, for a generation, was still predominantly rural.”<sup>21</sup> Intrigued by this relationship, Raymond Williams goes on to argue that as the environment of rural Britain became less personally familiar to urbanising people, England’s understanding of its past, through its feelings and literature, became so involved with the rural experience that it persisted and was strengthened to the point “that there is almost an inverse proportion between the relative importance of the working rural economy and the cultural importance of rural ideas.”<sup>22</sup> In Edwardian Britain, these ideas found an enthusiastic audience as a rural “reawakening” swept through the homes, offices, and minds of comfortable urbanites. Agricultural schools and colleges, committed to teaching Britain’s “educated” classes the practical science of farming in the Empire, vied for eager pupils.<sup>23</sup> Not to be outdone, colonial farmers advertised their willingness to teach Britons the “hands-on” skills of crop raising, allowing unscrupulous instructors to charge students for the opportunity to split wood and perform other menial chores.<sup>24</sup> Libraries and book vendors also became important in the efforts to reproduce ruralism, as astute authors published popular agricultural guides and manuals for prospective emigrants, promoting the financial and cultural benefits of fruit farming in British Columbia.<sup>25</sup>

Interwoven through the Okanagan landscape, other activities and institutions would be marshalled to nurture and sustain the rural idyll, highlighting its imperial connections. Although seemingly peripheral to the image of Eden, the incorporation of Kelowna as a city in 1904 helped to anchor the genteel orcharding community. Since European “British Columbians constructed the law as central to economic development” and “the making of a liberal order,”<sup>26</sup> incorporation

21 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York, 1973), 2.

22 Quoted in Brian Short, “Images and Realities in the English Rural Community: An Introduction,” in *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis*. Brian Short, ed. (Cambridge, 1992), 1.

23 British Columbia Archives and Records Service (BCARS), Add MSS 1584, A-1008, Pooley Family Papers; Nigel Pooley, “Story of the KLO Company,” 4.

24 *Ibid.*, 5.

25 Two such examples include J.T. Bealby, *Fruit Ranching in British Columbia* (London, 1911), and J.S. Redmayne, *Fruit Farming on the “Dry Belt” of British Columbia: the Why and Wherefore* (London, 1912). While Bealby sold fruit lots in the Kootenays, Redmayne managed a “BC Information Bureau and Agency” in London, England. Furthermore, Redmayne’s book was a particular favourite of the Times Book Club, going through four editions by 1912.

26 Tina Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia 1821-1871* (Toronto, 1995), 3.

validated the community for promoter and settler alike. Arriving in Kelowna as British emigrants to become local boosters, speculators, and fruit-farming promoters, men like Walter Pooley, Edward Maurice Carruthers, and T.W. Stirling were also capitalists who traded on Britishness and the rural ideal in the hopes of amassing a fortune.<sup>27</sup> Functioning in an imperial economy of images and finance, the establishment of an urban centre with its banks and financial houses was necessary to connect and market their ruralism to the wider imperial world.

Institutional development continued at the local level with the establishment of the Kelowna Board of Trade in 1906. The Board would serve as a significant instrument in the image of Eden with the production of pamphlets designed to attract the "appropriate sort" of settler. By 1907, the Board had already circulated pamphlets at the New Westminster Fair and placed ads in the *Manitoba Free Press*.<sup>28</sup> The following year, the Board organised an immensely successful exhibit at the Spokane Fair in Washington State, with Kelowna's delegation taking top honours in 15 different categories. In concert with sending this good news to the Agent-General for BC in London, England for publicity in the *Standard of the Empire*,<sup>29</sup> advertisements declaring the beauty and appeal of Kelowna also graced the pages of the *London Times* in 1909.<sup>30</sup> Six years after the first fruit lots were planted with seedlings, the information blitz continued as visits were paid to India in the hopes of enticing retired British officers with stories of refinement and comfort. And to further reach their desired clientele, the boosters opened a sales and information office in London, well-stocked with promotional material from the Board of Trade and other orchard companies to sell dreams of Paradise to a rurally conscious public.<sup>31</sup>

Aimed undeniably at selling, the promotional material carefully highlighted financial prosperity as a major benefit of fruit farming. It was not unusual for prospective immigrants to read that "by investing in ten acres of our land you are assured a splendid income for life. Can you earn \$3000 a year as

27 BCARS, Pooley Family Papers. See also Paul Koroscil, "Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914," *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 5 (1986): 73-105. During this period, Pooley, Carruthers, and Stirling continued to acquire land in the Kelowna area through their newly created or managed land companies. By 1914, the three men controlled or owned outright the Kelowna Land and Orchard (1904), Belgo-Canadian Fruit Land (1907), South Kelowna Land (1908), and Bankhead Orchard (1911) companies. The only other land company that operated in the area was Central Okanagan Lands, Ltd. (1906), founded by J.W. Jones of Grenfell, Saskatchewan. These would-be competitors were brought together under the Board of Trade, and had common interests that were articulated in a shared discourse of culture and empire.

28 Ursula Surtees, *Sunshine and Butterflies: A Short History of Early Fruit Ranching in Kelowna* (Kelowna, 1979), 24.

29 Sproule, "Polarization," 168.

30 Surtees, *Sunshine and Butterflies*, 26.

31 W.R. Carruthers, "Edward Maurice Carruthers, JP," *Okanagan Historical Society* 32 (1968): 63.

easily any other way?"<sup>32</sup> But to enjoy the fruits of Paradise, readers were warned of the need for a sizable financial base, since "a good start can scarcely be made with less than \$2000." Typically varying in size from five to ten acres, the orchard's initial purchase price could vary wildly: "for undeveloped lands, the price is \$50 to \$150 per acre; for developed lands, i.e., cleared and under irrigation, from \$200 to \$400; for bearing fruit orchards, \$600 to \$1500."<sup>33</sup> As the potential costs and hazards of an orchard remained prohibitive for the cautious immigrant, to be truly effective and convincing the promoters would have to do more than simply sell assurances of instant wealth. Indeed, a careful analysis of the literature reveals a broader framework to support and sustain such an endeavour in the form of a new rural society imbued with the wealth and bounty of enlightenment, gentility, and moral soundness. For according to Lord Grey, "families of refinement, culture, and distinction" were the true heirs of the fertile gardens of the Empire which offered "the opportunity of living under such ideal conditions as struggling humanity has only succeeded in reaching in one or two of the most favoured spots upon the earth."<sup>34</sup> In another way, the discourse of landscape, with its symbols, images, and utterances, would organise and legitimise a reactionary elitist community, forging an oppressive and exclusionary social order at the behest of both God and Nature.

Between 1908 and 1918, the promotional literature circulated in Britain and throughout Canada was a combination of vision and practical information. Not surprisingly, the Biblical connotations of fruit farming take forms both subtle and obvious. In many instances, the myth of Eden was often introduced informally, such as where the prospective immigrant was told that "only the skillful hand of the producer is needed to make the land a continuous garden."<sup>35</sup> In a more forthright mood, another author declared, "Instead of the 'Lost Garden of Eden,' as [BC] has been termed, it is a newly-found earthly paradise. Nature's offering to the man who wants to really know life." And within this "earthly paradise," it is Kelowna that is "the garden spot" and "natural centre of beauty."<sup>36</sup> As the Eden reference makes plain, the natural landscape is divinely ordained, grounded in the act and purpose of Creation itself. In this way, the appeal of a rural occupation to a good Christian mind becomes more pronounced and desirable.

The vocation of fruit farming, complete with perfumed flowers and garden spots, also betrays a highly feminised landscape, embodying a significant sexual element in its invitation for men to tend the fertile earth. Indeed, the femi-

32 KCM, Central Okanagan Land & Orchard Co., "Okanagan Fruit Valley Lands," (1907), 27.

33 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, "Kelowna, British Columbia: the Orchard City of the Okanagan," (1908), 5.

34 Redmayne, *Fruit Farming on the "Dry Belt"*, 10.

35 KCM, Central Okanagan Land, (1911?), 7.

36 KCM, Central Okanagan Land, (1912?), 14.

nine land is further illustrated by numerous photographs depicting young girls and women in white summer dresses among the neat rows of orchard trees. More than family or bliss, the young girls personify the womanly blossoming of the land, and the sexualised exchange between man and Nature. Marked by order and control, we can see how the land embodied a heterosexual union between earth and farmer, man and woman as the ideal of the new community. In tandem with a middle-class value system which cast woman as the “passive” antithesis of the “active” man, farming should be left in the charge of men, thereby maintaining the sexual “balance” of Eden.<sup>37</sup>

Ironically, the association of the Okanagan Valley and Kelowna with Eden is given validation in several instances through the “testimony” of the Okanagan Nation. Although isolated on reserves, effectively barred from interacting with colonial society, Okanagan peoples were nonetheless used to promote British settlement. According to the Kelowna Board of Trade, the natural benefits of the region “made it, years before any white man’s foot trod in the valley, famous among the aboriginal Indians as a garden of Eden.”<sup>38</sup> Another brochure remarked that due to the region’s clear spring and summer skies, it was named “the Land of Fruit and Sunshine” by the local Indians,<sup>39</sup> although fruit farming and the required irrigation to make it feasible were introduced by the British colonisers.

The appropriation of the Okanagan Nation by land promoters did not mean that natives were included in the new community. Rather, the Okanagans were used as a marketing device; as “first” inhabitants, their purpose was to promote and legitimise a British-inspired history and no more. The British view of Nature held a concern for ethnicity, but the place of natives remained limited within it. To the imperial imagination, the “noble savage” was simply a “feature” of the natural landscape amongst the foliage and fauna. In other words, the Okanagans were not residents of Eden but only a facet of its scenery, used to historicise the apple orchard and British claims to it. Unable to narrate their own experiences to the European, the Okanagans would be caste as bookends in a library written by British authors.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Notions of “Nature” are typically gendered female, and fruit farming is no exception. Indeed, this relationship is also echoed in my current research involving orchard communities in the Pacific Northwest. As Henry E. Dosch, one-time secretary of the Oregon State Horticultural Commission remarked, “The poet who watched and raved over the development of a beautiful girl baby into maiden and ultimately womanhood, will find its counterpart in an Oregon orchard. To stand and watch in early Spring the quickening of the tree, the gradual development of leaf and bud, and the gentle, timid opening of its bewitching blossoms, filling the air with intoxicating fragrance, and finally the fruitage of the magnificent apples and pears...is a poem in itself.” Library of Congress, Medford Commercial Club, “Medford, Oregon: Rogue River Valley,” (1909), 50.

38 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, (1908), 17.

39 KCM, Central Okanagan Land, (1911), 1.

40 For further reading on images of First Nations, see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: the Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver, 1992).

In a related manner, the invocation of Eden had far-reaching consequences for legitimising British claims to the rural Empire. The history of Britain is intimately connected to the land since, in the traditional organisation of its own hierarchical society, aristocratic privilege and status is deeply rooted in the soil. More than a source of income and financial mastery, claims to the land became part of saga of aristocratic families, legitimising their domination. Confronted with a landscape that had no legitimate “history” in European eyes, but was nonetheless occupied, the image of Eden gave a basis for the new settler society. Seen by Britons as the very beginning of time and history, Eden would achieve the dual purpose of historicising the land in a language familiar to potential emigrants, while simultaneously forming the immutable basis and precedence of British legitimacy in claiming the landscape as their own. In this way, the Okanaganans could be disenfranchised and restricted to reserves while not offending or contradicting Britain’s imperial sense of moral righteousness and justice.

The association of the “garden” with “perfection” were ideas that found further resonance in an English rural imagination that associated Nature and Christianity with a distinctly privileged station and background. As one British contemporary remarked with satisfaction, a Canadian “of the same class” as a Briton “with rare exceptions, does not touch farming, but goes into business or the professions to make money” for he “cannot in the least understand a preference for country life, except in the summer vacation.”<sup>41</sup> While valued as members of the Empire, Canadians were not held as kindred spirits by many Britons, especially in terms of a refined cultural outlook. Aristocratic enthusiasm for fruit farming would only further reinforce this exclusive association. Thus, the fruit-laden landscape tapped into an elevated class and ethnic position within a hierarchy of orderly relations sanctified by Nature and a Christian mythology, which framed it as the purest state of being for humankind.

The refrain of Nature’s carefully balanced order continues in the 1912 Kelowna Board of Trade pamphlet with an important discussion of the climate:

The springs open early and are mild and balmy; the summers are warm and dry; and the long genial autumns form a delightful transition to the clear, mild winters. The heat of the summer is never oppressive, for the lake breezes moderate the noon-day temperature, while cool, refreshing evenings follow the warmest days. The vicinity of the lake also minimizes the danger of spring and autumn frosts, and prevents extremes of temperature.<sup>42</sup>

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41 Jean Barman, *Growing up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private School* (Vancouver, 1984), 21.

42 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, (1912), 11.

Interestingly, this scene is devoid of any climatic extremes. In the Okanagan, each facet of the natural world is balanced against the other to moderate any potential excesses. The result is a natural world perfectly ordered and at harmony with its surroundings. However, the depiction of this natural symbiosis offers the reader more than the simple prospect of pleasant weather. The crucial implication is that the natural order of Nature would, by association, help establish a pleasing social order. In another way, Nature's design would provide the foundation for a carefully balanced social ordering.

The importance of Nature as a source of order is carefully dissected in the 1908 Board of Trade material. In discussing the benefits of Kelowna, "the city desirable," the author warns "mark well the word 'desirable.' The American continent is covered with cities, but how many of them are 'desirable?'" Dividing cities into two classes of 100,000 and 10,000 citizens, the author continues:

It may be said that all cities of 100,000 inhabitants do not come into the "desirable" class. Heavy burdens of indebtedness and taxation, natural location such as water supply, drainage, liability to floods and storms, insanitary and unhealthy surroundings mitigate against some cities.<sup>43</sup>

Clearly, the effects of the Industrial Revolution are criticised, but with a conservative interpretation. Becoming enormous and unwieldy, the great American cities are chaotic. Too large for the natural vicinity to anchor effectively, the cities spiral into both physical and social disorder. Through storms and natural disasters, the promoters of Kelowna portray nature's displeasure at the excesses of the large community. In analysing the promotional material further, the impending social dysfunction of the large city is not only indicated through the "heavy burdens" of taxation to fund poor houses and other forms of social relief, but also under the guise of "insanitary and unhealthy surroundings." In coded terms, the author alludes to the ethnically diverse and class-stratified populations of large centres which, in turn, were seen by middle- to upper-class citizens as "dirty" and "unhealthy," physically and morally.

Through the distinction of the two classes of cities, we begin to see how the orchard promoters imagined the rural landscape and its relationship to the city. Should the urban community become too large, it would invariably impede the effects of Nature as a means of establishing order, resulting in a dysfunctional and corrupt social environment, since "the farther we wander from the guidance of Dame Nature, the farther we are from perfection; the more we

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43 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, (1908), 3.

deviate from *her* ways, the more precarious our progress.”<sup>44</sup> Conversely, should the settlement be smaller, such as Kelowna, it would avoid the ugly excesses found elsewhere since the bracing and mitigating influence of Nature would still be felt in all areas of life. Thus, the tension between the rural and the urban is qualified in much the same way as the “country village” emerged in rural literature as a more harmonious collection of humanity than London, since Nature’s effect would thrive in the former and be choked out of the latter. Indeed, comparisons to the congenial country village were not lost in the promotional literature where it was described that “a fruit country is a continuous village.”<sup>45</sup>

The notion of fusing or blending the elements of ruralism with urban industry was a widespread and popular topic. While working as a British parliamentary recorder, Sir Ebenezer Howard first broached the idea in an 1898 pamphlet entitled *Tomorrow, A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*.<sup>46</sup> In his evaluation of British society, Howard’s principal concern was with over-crowded cities, which he blamed on migration from the country districts, which in turn left rural areas underpopulated and impoverished. Arguing that town and country enjoyed both benefits and weaknesses, he proposed that the positive elements of both could be balanced in the form of a garden city, where “all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country, may be secured in perfect combination.”<sup>47</sup> His popularisation of the “garden city” soon spawned a publishing industry of “garden city” treatises which were consumed eagerly by a rurally infatuated public.

However, enthusiasm for the “garden city” was not restricted to Britain alone. Soon, ideas of ruralism found a favourable reception in the cities and capitals of North America. On Capitol Hill, the US Senate authorised the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry to investigate the benefits of the concept, since “the garden city and garden suburb movement in Europe has made wonderful progress during the first eight years of its existence.”<sup>48</sup> On Parliament Hill, Thomas Adams analysed the “garden city” in a report to the Commission of Conservation, concluding “it is by this means [the garden city] that the welfare of rural and urban industries can be promoted and that the economic distribution of the people can be secured, instead of having them crowded in large cities on the one hand or doomed to unhealthy isolation on the

44 A.R. Sennett, *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice: Volume One* (London, 1905), 2.

45 KCM, Central Okanagan Land, (1907), 26.

46 In subsequent editions, the pamphlet was renamed *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*.

47 Sir Ebenezer Howard, *Tomorrow, A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London, 1898), 46; quoted in Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal*, 160.

48 Senate Resolution 305; quoted from Thomas Adams, *Rural Planning and Development: A Study of Rural Conditions and Problems in Canada* (Ottawa: Commission of Conservation, 1917), 246.

other hand.”<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, while the promoters of British Columbia fruit farming were undoubtedly influenced by the ideas of the “garden city,” their aversion to promoting industrial development in conjunction with agricultural pursuits betrays a significant departure. The orcharding landscape was less about the need to achieve a well-balanced ordering of the classes than it was an invitation for the “cultured” and “educated” to finally achieve a truly perfect and homogeneous communion with Nature.

The association of Nature and social order finds further clarification with the Grand Pacific Land Company’s 1911 brochure. Stressing the importance of a temperate climate for human existence, the author makes a telling connection between the natural landscape and ethnicity:

The climate of British Columbia presents as a whole all the conditions which are met with in European countries lying within the temperate zone, the cradle of the greatest nations of the world, and is therefore the climate best adapted to the development of the human race.<sup>50</sup>

Not only is the climate of British Columbia comfortably similar to that of Europe, its similarity would not cause the “degeneration” of the settler community but would rather allow it to thrive and excel. Such considerations were not without widespread currency at this time. Emily Murphy, a celebrated first-wave Canadian feminist, believed that northern Europeans were inherently superior because of “the proximity of the magnetic pole.” Elaborating, Murphy explained that “the best peoples of the world have come out of the north, and the longer they are away from the boreal regions in such proportion do they degenerate.”<sup>51</sup> Since travels to the torrid zones of the Empire may have conjured unspeakable desires and behaviours, the northern garden would keep passions in check, and civilisation intact. Indeed, while the southern reaches of Britain’s empire held the danger of destroying all that was deemed good and proper, the same discourses of sexuality, class, and race were appropriately and safely woven throughout the blossoming orchard.<sup>52</sup>

Equally important, the stern climate of Canada was also believed to keep away the weaker races, functioning in Darwinian terms as “a persistent process

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49 Ibid., 172.

50 KCM, Grand Pacific Land Company, “Kelowna, British Columbia,” (1911), 3.

51 Mariana Valverde, “‘When the Mother of the Race is Free’: Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism,” in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women’s History*. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds. (Toronto, 1992), 15.

52 For further exploration of the South and its dangers to Victorian sensibilities, please consult Darian-Smith, *Text*.



of natural selection.”<sup>53</sup> Nature itself would ensure that large, unwieldy cities with their mixed populations and dubious morality would remain an American phenomenon, demonstrating for one academic of the time “a fundamental political and social advantage which the Dominion enjoys over the United States.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the harmony of Nature’s realm would possess further political advantages for conservative Britons in terms of sexual stability. More specifically, a rejection of the excesses of the urban environment included the social disruption and confusion blamed on the suffrage movement. While mock parliaments held by Nellie McClung parodied the warped logic of the male anti-suffrage politicians, Emmeline Pankhurst and fellow “suffragettes” in Britain conducted a more militant campaign by “heckling politicians, chaining themselves to fences, breaking shop windows, and resorting to arson.”<sup>55</sup> Throughout the struggle, everything from “natural difference” to “national emasculation” was marshalled as reason to reject women’s voting rights.<sup>56</sup> During this period when the conservative social order was under attack, the “natural” gender hierarchy represented by the orchard may have held a particular attraction and appeal for the well-to-do British settler. Much like the Phillippses in Windermere,<sup>57</sup> the true ideal would remain, framing home and hearth as “a woman’s world,” while the business of the orchard prevailed as the gentlemanly pursuit of men, echoing Adam’s role as caretaker of the Biblical garden. Thus, a broader connection is established between a “natural” order and social, sexual, and racial stability.

In laying out the qualifications for settlement, the brochure continues by explaining that “intelligent, educated and cultured English and Canadians form the bulk of the population” at Kelowna.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, consideration of masculine intelligence is stressed repeatedly in the literature, borrowing from Lord Grey’s glowing commentary that “fruit farming in BC has acquired the distinction of being a beautiful art,” where “qualities of mind are necessary . . . which are not so essential to success in wheat growing or ordinary mixed farming.”<sup>59</sup> This association between occupation and cultured intelligence is also poetically echoed in a 1908 brochure:

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53 Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914* (Toronto, 1970), 131.

54 George R. Parkin, *The Great Dominion: Studies of Canada* (London, 1895), 215; Berger, *The Sense of Power*, 131.

55 Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto, 1988), 192-94.

56 *Ibid.*, 194.

57 Daisy Phillipps, *Letters from Windermere, 1912-1914*. R.C. Harris and E. Phillipps, eds. (Vancouver, 1984).

58 KCM, Central Okanagan Land (1907), 26.

59 KCM, Central Okanagan Land (1911), 3.

[Kelowna] has much to offer. To be among the orchards when the bloom is on the trees and the air heavy with perfume, one feels that life has its compensations. Among cultured people – because the fruit grower has time to read, and is not moiling and toiling half the year and stoking furnaces the other half – congenial surroundings, and healthy, bracing influences, life is raised to a higher sphere, and the true Elixir of Life is something more than phantasy or dream.<sup>60</sup>

While claims of wheat farming’s intellectual simplicity would have undoubtedly surprised the farmers struggling to clear the land, this condescending view was directed at the much-maligned East Europeans arriving in western Canada during the early twentieth century, graphically demonstrating the “superior” qualities represented by the practitioners of fruit farming.

In a similar vein, the description of the biblical Fall also highlighted an agricultural hierarchy based in the orcharding landscape. Originally, Adam was to dress and keep the garden in Eden. As punishment for eating from the Tree of Knowledge, “the Lord God sent [Adam] forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken.”<sup>61</sup> In this manner, a dichotomy is established: Adam’s role as a caretaker of the garden is a divinely inspired perfection popularly defined by health, bliss, and leisure, which is juxtaposed against the harsh labour required in cereal agriculture as a result of the Fall. Thus, we can better appreciate how the story of Creation structured the orchard’s presentation and reception. Fruit farming, like Eden’s garden, evoked a time of natural perfection. In contrast, the British promoters associated Prairie farming with the guilt and harsh labour of God’s punishment. Conveniently, the large non-British population that made up the farming community in the territories would further reinforce the inferiority of cereal agriculture already represented in the Bible along lines of ethnicity and class. Consequently, the notion that wheat farming was a “peasant” activity served to heighten the intellectual and hence cultural appeal of orcharding for the respectable British settler, an appeal set in relief against the “moilers and toilers” taking up homesteads on the Canadian Prairies.

To highlight the bounty of the orcharding landscape, promoters emphasised the associated attributes of leisure and social activities for the continued refinement of the cultured settler, since “life in Kelowna is by no means a continuous round of toil.”<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the opportunity for leisure was a defining characteristic of the community as “fruit growing only requires continuous labour during a certain portion of the year.”<sup>63</sup> In this manner, the apparently separate

60 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade (1908), 28.

61 *Holy Bible*, King James Version, Genesis, 3:20.

62 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade (1911-1918), 2.

63 *Ibid.*, 2.

activities of leisure and work were interwoven through the blossoming orchard – to perform one was to affirm the other, all within the discourse of the rural landscape. Indeed, while the middle class feared that leisure in the hands of the working classes could lead to a plethora of social ills, such as drinking and prostitution, leisure in the hands of the “finest class on earth” signified sophistication and culture.

While leisure offered fruit growers the “time to read,” other venues were offered for its constructive use. Depicted as a healthy and robust people, Britons would desire a wide range of sporting activities such as English football, tennis, cricket, and rowing. The selection was only natural for the promoters since they believed that the “pleasant spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanlike feeling . . . is so precious a heritage of the British race.”<sup>64</sup> For evening pleasure, the promotional material proudly described the plays and operas produced by the Kelowna Musical and Dramatic Society for the enjoyment of its citizens in its “splendid opera house.”<sup>65</sup> Numerous other social functions, such as dances and balls, would also provide distractions from the day-to-day concerns of women and men, and act as further incentive for the prospective immigrant that fruit farming was “something more than phantasy or dream.”

Between 1891 and 1921, nearly 175,000 Britons emigrated either from the Old Country or other colonial possessions to British Columbia. By 1911, British-born emigrants formed one-third of British Columbia’s population, as opposed to one-fifth of the Prairies. Of the total amount, it is estimated that nearly 24,000 male and female emigrants were from middle- to upper-class backgrounds.<sup>66</sup> However, empirical data cannot tell the entire story. British emigration records and Canada census reports neglect to discern how many people aspired to middle-class ideals, or even embodied them in orientation and outlook given the absence of a concretely middle- or upper-class vocation. In the case of Kelowna, the population was heterogeneous to begin with. Okanagan, French, Japanese and Chinese existed in the physical space that invited anglophiles and Britons of a similar class and means. But the promotional literature offered a different landscape for the aspiring fruit farmer.<sup>67</sup>

Certainly, in terms of the British community established at Kelowna, landscape played an equally critical role as public schools and government legislation in asserting and sustaining their much-desired “exclusive” society. In several tangible ways, success could be counted on many fronts. While the population of the Kelowna district was approximately 600 in 1905, it reached 2,200

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64 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade (1908), 13.

65 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade (1911-1918), 17.

66 Barman, *Growing Up British*, 16, 198-99.

67 Of the many important works on textual space, land, and the imagination, two notable references include Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993), and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983).

by 1912.<sup>68</sup> As a result, the values, aspirations, and cultural pulse of the area was most heavily influenced by the sensibilities of the privileged Briton. According to Duane Thomson, “the newly arrived immigrants were mainly from Britain; even those who arrived from the Prairies were predominantly British.”<sup>69</sup> T.L. Gillespie, writing on the Kelowna orchardists in 1911, observed that “most of the [fruit] ranchers were young bachelors from England, Ireland, and Scotland belonging to the public school class.”<sup>70</sup> Even the Kelowna Board of Trade bragged in 1918 that the population of the district was “chiefly English and Canadians of British descent.”<sup>71</sup>

The appropriateness of the Kelowna orcharding community for “cultured” English bachelors also caused a great influx of “remittance men” to the small city and throughout the Okanagan Valley. As sons of wealthy British families, they were often sent to the Okanagan in the hopes that they would finally find a suitable occupation, which many did with fruit farming. Sometimes receiving \$300 to \$400 a month in remittance, “Kelowna was a rendezvous for remittance men by the hundreds, and they spent it left, right, and centre.”<sup>72</sup> Dorothea Walker, an early Kelowna settler, remarked that her English husband was originally educated for the church. When he declared his refusal to don the cloth, his father said, “‘Well, it’ll have to be the colonies.’ They didn’t know anybody, except they had a lot of relations out in India, but they were all in the Army.” Like the English experiences of “mudpups” found throughout western Canada, Walker’s husband “was sent out here as a pupil to learn farming at \$500 a year. He arrived in September in a tweed Norfolk coat and knickerbockers, you know, and woolen stockings, and a tweed cap.”<sup>73</sup>

Interestingly, the privileged background of these recent arrivals prompted a crisis of masculinity in the eyes of their more humble colonial brothers. Principle among the “queerest people you ever met in your life” were the great number of “wealthy boys and remittance men.” While often viewed derisively as privileged loafers, one Okanagan resident carefully stressed that, although these emigrants had hunted in Africa and India, they also possessed practical “experience,” and “were real men. They really were.”<sup>74</sup> As many Britons discovered in various regions of the Dominion, imperial notions of masculine activity that were encouraged and celebrated among the middle- to upper

68 BCARS, GR 519, Commission on Municipal Government (1912), 55.

69 Thomson, “A History of the Okanagan,” 326.

70 BCARS, Add MSS 1695, Thomas Leslie Gillespie, Unpublished papers, 5.

71 KCM, Kelowna Board of Trade, (1918), 14.

72 BCARS, David Mitchell and Dennis Duffy, eds., *Bright Sunshine and a Brand New Country: Recollections of the Okanagan Valley*. Sound Heritage 8, No. 3 (1979), 34.

73 Ibid., 32. For more on the experiences of “mudpups,” an excellent source is Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants*.

74 Ibid., 31.

classes did not necessarily gain the same respect from men of lesser means. More apt to be seen as frivolous men lacking proper experience and training to be of any good use, Britons learned through campaigns of “No Englishman Need Apply”<sup>75</sup> in western Canada that an imperially rooted and class-based vision of diverging masculinities fueled the backlash. However, this was not the case in the fruit districts of British Columbia. Embodied in and supported by the orcharding landscape, the middle-class ideals of education, culture, and order formed the dominant discourse of social identity.

In keeping with the leisure and bounty of Eden, the lives of many English emigrants were varied and relaxing. In addition to days spent playing rugby, football, cricket, tennis at the country club, and “polo on Sunday morning,” social events included “plenty of dances and riding parties.”<sup>76</sup> So important was fox hunting to the recent arrivals that one man brought over two fox hounds from his father’s English estate, “but they took to sheep killing, so that was the end of the real fox hounds.”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, fox hunting was a serious affair, replete with an English hunting horn and afternoon tea. Appearances at such engagements were equally important: “In those days everybody was properly groomed. I mean, there was no such thing as the shabby way they ride today with a pair of overalls and a slouchy hat. You rode in well tailored riding habits, proper bowler hats, with proper riding boots.”<sup>78</sup> The emphasis on appearance clearly had class overtones, highlighting the importance of social order in the genteel community. Horse riding, an event of great dignity for the aspiring middle class, could become sullied if it became associated with “undesirables.”

The importance of “appearances” in the orcharding community was not lost on Elaine Cameron, who arrived from Scotland in 1911 on the advice of a cousin already living in Kelowna. Appearing at the Aquatic Club dance, she noticed that the “very nice young man in working clothes” who had delivered her luggage from the CPR wharf a few nights earlier was also there “in white tie and tails. And I thought it was so extraordinary, because the people that were doing the work at the time were all English boys and Scotch boys.” For Cameron, the juxtaposition between the working man and the cultured man in the same person struck her “as being very amusing. And that was the thing that an Old Country person noticed most, coming here.”<sup>79</sup>

While wealthy remittance men made their way to Kelowna to take up leisure and orcharding, people of modest means were also attracted by the promise of a rural society. One such family was that of Nan Harris, who emi-

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75 Moyles and Owsram, *Imperial Dreams*, 136.

76 Mitchell and Duffy, eds., *Bright Sunshine*, 44.

77 *Ibid.*, 45.

78 *Ibid.*, 46.

79 *Ibid.*, 21.

grated to Kelowna with her mother and two brothers in 1913. Born at old Craigie, just outside Braehead, Scotland, Nan Thomlinson was nearly five years old when she made the voyage to Canada. Appropriately, her first memory is of the trans-Atlantic voyage with “apples and oranges rolling to the table’s raised edges, where they were safely ‘fielded.’”<sup>80</sup> The year before, her father and eldest brother had made the trip to Kelowna and had sent word back to Scotland for the rest to follow. Although Nan never learned the reasons for her father’s decision to emigrate, she deduced that a significant factor was his occupation of master saddler. “[H]e thought of the West as the land of the horse, and therefore opportunity. Besides, many Scots families were going out west at that period.”<sup>81</sup> It appears his faith was not misplaced as the local paper, the *Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, contained advertisements such as, “Wanted: a gentlemen’s English saddle – Apply, A. Cather, Kel.”<sup>82</sup> Arriving in Kelowna, they moved into the unfinished house that her father and brother had built. In retrospect, Nan began to appreciate her parents’ subtle but different expectations about the move: “Father had written [for us to come], of course, but man-like, had no idea of what the change would mean to Mother. She had left a comfortably furnished house, with modern sanitation . . . now, in the new land she had everything to learn, and all must be learned simultaneously.”<sup>83</sup>

Predictably, Nan’s parents sought the company of fellow Scots and people from England or Wales who reminisced and longed for the Old Country, preserving former styles and habits. The family had a typical Scottish passion for reading and exchanged Old Country newspapers and amassed a respectable library with the works of authors such as Dickens, Scott, and Thackeray. In contrast to the “cultured” activities of the English settlers, Nan and her family forsook the polo club for the more simple pleasures of the occasional lakeside picnic or afternoon visits with acquaintances. While Nan attended school as her older brothers took part-time work, she made friends with girls of all classes, from Mariana Muir “who lived in a shack near the sawmill,” to Ivy Lawes whose “father was an orchard manager.”<sup>84</sup> Although not everyone could become a cultured orchardist, the pervasiveness of the rural landscape remained largely unchallenged. “To live, as Ivy did,” recalled Nan, “in a white house in the middle of an orchard seemed to me the height of bliss.”<sup>85</sup>

This is not to say that tensions did not exist in the Orchard City. The exclusive “Englishness” of the orchardists left deep impressions on Canadian-born

80 Nan Harris, *Nan: A Child’s Eye View of Early Okanagan Settlement*. Ursula Surtees, ed. (Kelowna, 1990), 5.

81 *Ibid.*, 6.

82 *Kelowna Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, 27 January 1910, p. 4.

83 Harris, *Nan*, 8.

84 *Ibid.*, 48.

85 *Ibid.*, 48.

locals, such as Vera Lawson-Wright when she recalled, “in the early days, Mill Creek was a natural dividing line in [Kelowna]. The ‘English kids’ lived across the creek and attended private schools.”<sup>86</sup> In much the same way, the privilege of young British bachelors created resentment among working-class Canadian men. The obvious demarcations of class and status dividing Canadian locals and “cultured” orchardists stood in contrast with the blissful harmony of the rural landscape. Nonetheless, there was little active resistance as class differences were not clear cut. As the case of Nan Harris illustrates, even for those who could not own a fruit lot, reading and leisure were important. Similarly, early labour movements in British Columbia had ties with the farming “yeoman” because many of the labour leaders came from rural backgrounds.<sup>87</sup> If labour activity had roots in the rural tradition, the elitist orientation of orcharding may have been less antagonistic to the working classes.

Landscape helped communicate and reproduce social identity in many ways. More than merely communicating news, the *Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist* fashioned the values represented by land and Empire on a number of levels. It reprinted minutes from the Board of Trade and Grower’s Exchange, allowing the wider community to keep abreast of the latest agricultural issues. More directly, numerous articles happily trumpeted the latest statistic on total British emigration, while other reports followed the progress of British settlers travelling across Canada to British Columbia.<sup>88</sup> Wherever possible, the local newspaper also printed news of fruit farming, declaring that “it is bound to be of great service in inducing a very desirable class of people to invest in Kelowna lands.”<sup>89</sup>

While providing information on pruning and long-term orchard care, the newspaper also functioned on a social level. The *Courier & Orchardist* affirmed imperial racial identity by printing many examples of the “other” in their midst.<sup>90</sup> Non-British immigrants were quietly attacked in, the local birth section, which was headlined, “This is better than immigration.”<sup>91</sup> Another example of journalistic excellence, “English of Sorts; Results of Heroic Struggles with Difficulties of Our Language,” consisted of citizen letters from the *Vancouver Sun* as “quaint examples of English composition by foreigners.”<sup>92</sup>

86 Vera Lawson-Wright, “Early Memories of Kelowna, 1907-1910,” *Okanagan Historical Society* 45 (1981): 122.

87 Mark Leier, *Red Flags and Red Tape: The Making of a Labour Bureaucracy* (Toronto, 1995), 99-100.

88 *Courier & Orchardist*, 28 September 1911, p. 3; 8 April 1920, p. 1.

89 *Courier & Orchardist*, 22 December 1910, p. 2.

90 Although the idea of the “other” in fashioning identity is now widely accepted, the canonical work on the subject is Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978).

91 *Courier & Orchardist*, 17 June 1915.

92 *Courier & Orchardist*, 27 May 1915.

Similarly, an article entitled “The Zanzibanis; Dense Stupidity and Amusing Blunders of the Natives,” discussed the release of Sir Henry M. Stanley’s autobiography where he smugly recounted examples of Africans who could not load guns or understand instructions.<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, the reading clubs and libraries which featured all the familiar publications of the Old Country, such as the *London Times* and *Punch*, served a broader purpose than simply providing a healthy variety of reading materials for a discriminating clientele. Indeed, the same can be argued for other cultural activities, such as the productions staged by the Kelowna Musical and Dramatic Society, or the all-important sporting activities which included polo, cricket, and fox hunting.<sup>94</sup> These activities all played a part in affirming landscape’s role in forging social identity. They cultural were not simply the superfluous products of orcharding, but were moments when the landscape found expression and purpose in the everyday. Ritualistic functions also served informally to dramatise the orcharding community and its imperial links. More importantly, they show how important landscape was in organising and legitimising the settler society.

The emphasis on reading and refinement was not an “escape” from the work of rural farming; rather, livelihood and lifestyle were interwoven as mutually inclusive expressions of social identity represented by the landscape. Harvesting fruit was less about laborious work than a forceful declaration of culture, leisure, and refinement. In the same manner, lounging in a leather chair at the Kelowna Club or playing a morning tennis match were an important part support of fruit farming and the attendant values of rural living. This relationship is especially important in recognising and underlining the hegemony of Empire and landscape. Rather than limiting our understanding of social identity and community formation to the development of states and legal codes, a reappraisal of landscape yields the possibility of expanding notions of power and order at the ground level. In other words, through their cultural practices, members of the community supported, reaffirmed, and reproduced the oppressive social system communicated through the orcharding landscape, and vigorously defended their Eden against potential “threats” to its hierarchy and order.

One such threat was the Okanagan Nation. Although the settlers did not acknowledge that the Okanagans had any grievances over the new image and use of the land, the Okanagans continued to resist. After the original Indian Reserve Commission in 1880, Native leaders persisted in entreating future commissions and government officials to reverse their unjust land allocation decisions. Receiving little more than rote denials, First Nation leaders organ-

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<sup>93</sup> *Courier & Orchardist*, 2 June 1910, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> For more on the importance of sport for Imperial Britain and its colonies, see J.A. Mangan, *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (Portland, OR, 1992).



ised a more direct effort. At the height of Kelowna's orcharding development, 96 chiefs and delegates converged on Victoria to meet with Premier McBride to whom they presented a request "for proprietary rights to all unsundered lands." In response, McBride complained bitterly that the delegates "had no claims to such lands," and that Natives of the province already had larger reserves than were needed. In a final effort to diminish Native resistance, he dismissed the meeting as "the pernicious activity of some whitemen, mainly churchmen."<sup>95</sup> Coincidentally, it was only two years after this confrontation that another Reserve Commission was struck to validate the current land use. At Kelowna, the Commission reviewed the status of the 55 acre "Mission Creek Indian Reserve No. 8," located in the heart of the orcharding community. After classifying the reserve as "unoccupied," it was decided that it would be, in the words of the Commission, "cut off."<sup>96</sup>

Another perceived threat to Paradise was the local Chinese community, which received ample attention, especially during the Chinese New Year. For the broader community, their presence threatened to uproot the carefully nurtured values embodied and sustained by the land. Not surprisingly, "certain clear-cut divisions" emerged in the community against Chinese residents, for "even the way in which they mixed flowers and vegetables in their always-thriving gardens seemed sinister!"<sup>97</sup> Described by a journalist as "the local Chinese colony," the use of language confirms their "otherness": "Chinese fire-works are characterised chiefly by noise, stink and smoke rather than by beauty of illumination, and the scene in front of the Oriental quarter resembled an Inferno," where they "indulged in the pastimes peculiar in their kind."<sup>98</sup> The characterisation of the Chinese population as a "colony" highlights their "foreign" and "alien" origins, casting the social and racial status of "their kind" as an intrusion upon the well-ordered nature of the rural community.

While the depiction of the Chinese took on Dantesque overtones, their "peculiar" ways were also demonstrated through situations of "comedy" and "barbarism." A dangerous chimney fire that started in the early morning in the Chinese community was reported as "Fun in Chinatown . . . with lots of merriment for Caucasian spectators." Using the emergency as fodder for ethnic hostility, the journalist insisted "the scenes that were witnessed when an amateur Chinese fire brigade got to work would have made an excellent moving-picture 'comic.'" Describing the efforts to put out the fire by one man "who must have been a rear-admiral in his piratical days," the reporter surmises that the smell of

<sup>95</sup> *Courier & Orchardist*, 9 March 1911, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> BCARS, *Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia* (Victoria, 1916).

<sup>97</sup> Harris, *Nan*, 18.

<sup>98</sup> *Courier & Orchardist*, 2 February 1911.

smoke “must have renewed the scent of battle and stinkpots in his war-like nostrils.”<sup>99</sup> Such descriptions were more than passive reflections of bias and racism; they epitomised the continual reconstruction of the “imperial self” and primitive “other,” in contrast to the orcharding landscape and its racial superiority in its role of fashioning rural identity.

However, the greatest threat to the community lay within the very formulation of the landscape itself. From the beginning, the issue of labour and the inability to meet demands for it plagued the community. Indeed, labour needs dramatically increased in 1904, with the construction and preparation of orchards in the Kelowna area. As large tracts of semi-arid land had to be cleared, planted, and irrigated with a vast network of expensive flumes and pipes, local developers maintained that they were “loathe to import Orientals.”<sup>100</sup> While English remittance men and other desirable immigrants to the area fulfilled labour needs to some extent, “in general, agricultural labour was difficult to find, expensive to hire, and even harder to keep.”<sup>101</sup> Even after the fruit lots were sold and settled, the intensive labour required for maintaining fruit farms foreshadowed an on-going dilemma for farmers aspiring to Lord Grey’s lofty praise. Indeed, such labour seemed antithetical to the cultured tempo of late afternoon reading or an evening engagement at the opera. Maintaining the orchard through pruning, spraying, and careful irrigation would occupy more than enough time for a small family, let alone the arduous and time-consuming process of harvesting the fruit itself.

To make matters worse, by 1911 economic woes began to besiege the orcharding community, beginning with a downturn in the fruit market. While the year was a record one for fruit production, promoters failed to realise that by establishing such a large orcharding area, the increasing volume of marketable fruit would ultimately drive down the price orchardists could charge for their crop. Province wide, 7,430 acres of fruit land were under cultivation in 1901. Only four years later, 29,000 acres were planted, and nearly all the increase was a result of Okanagan promotion.<sup>102</sup> Consequently, orchardists’ original high returns began to tumble. A glut of American fruit that flooded the Prairie markets the same year depressed prices even further, hurting orchardists in the process.<sup>103</sup> In a report to the federal Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonisation, it was stated that while a box of apples could be shipped from

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<sup>99</sup> *Courier & Orchardist*, 11 February 1915, p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> *Courier & Orchardist*, 7 April 1910, p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> David DeMeritt, “Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 108, (Winter 1995-96): 38.

<sup>102</sup> David Dendy, “The Development of the Orchard Industry in the Okanagan Valley 1890-1914,” *Okanagan Historical Society* 38 (1974): 71.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

British Columbia to Calgary for \$1.20 (including all labour and processing costs), Washington State producers could send the same box to the Prairie market for \$1.18.<sup>104</sup>

Depressed prices, coupled with lower returns on their produce, made the prospect of hiring labourers and still securing a decent standard of living even more remote. Not surprisingly, stories of failure began to plague the “success” of the orcharding landscape. An Okanagan orchardist who gave up his farm and returned to England in 1911, remarked that:

It was impossible not to be struck with the obvious, shall I say, lack of riches everywhere. I met man after man, some of whom had been fifteen or twenty years in the country, but never a one of them had done much more than keep his head above water.<sup>105</sup>

In the end, unable to make a profit, and often unwilling to hire non-Europeans to harvest their fruit for fear of undermining their exclusive community, many farmers found themselves face-to-face with the harshness of their own ideals.

More than disrupting the cultured and educated position of the community, chronic labour shortages also threatened to disrupt the sexual ordering of the community by forcing middle-class women to do domestic chores that they would never have done in Britain.<sup>106</sup> In essence, forcing cultured women to do common household tasks demonstrated the fluidity of the supposed natural and immutable ordering of class and gender in their fledgling society. Consequently, demand for “proper” servants and farm labourers was a continual concern of the locals. In the monthly magazine of the British Women’s Emigration Association, the *Imperial Colonist*, the servant shortage in BC’s fruit districts received continual attention. There were numerous articles admonishing British women to take up the noble cause of “Imperial Emigration” to preserve the “loyal connection with Great Britain,” while stressing the advantages of working for the upstanding families of the Okanagan.<sup>107</sup> Unenthusiastic about the solution of hiring native women as domestics, by 1912 middle-class women in Kelowna turned to the Joyce Hostel Society, an English club sponsored and established by the BWEA to alleviate the domestic problem and to serve as a “home base” for emigrants seeking employment featured in

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104 BCARS, Pooley Papers, 17.

105 Quoted in Koroscil, “Boosterism and the Settlement Process,” 97.

106 Harris and Phillips, *Letters*, xvii.

107 *The Imperial Colonist* (XV) January 1917, pp. 9-11. Many thanks to Stephanie Oxendale of SUNY-Binghamton for sharing this source with me from her own dissertation tentatively entitled, “‘What Should They Know of England Who Only England Know’: Ideas of ‘England’ and ‘Empire’ in Organised Women’s Emigration, 1902-1927.”

the pages of the *Colonist*.<sup>108</sup> Not surprisingly, the notices stressed that “refined girls” who could “uphold the faith and traditions of the Motherland, and who possess an enthusiastic regard for the Empire” would be most agreeable to the cultivated communities of the fruit districts.<sup>109</sup>

Although there was a ready supply of labour among Native and Chinese residents, practical considerations of supply and demand were not considered among the perfumed trees of Eden. With the arrival of World War I, the general labour situation took a dramatic turn for the worse.<sup>110</sup> As hundreds of men from Kelowna enlisted to fight for King and Country, the labour crisis threatened to further erode the “natural” order of their paradise, providing an opportunity to view the interaction of gender, class, and ethnicity. By 1917, the situation became so urgent that fear of the “Asiatic” overtook fear of the “managing” woman. While labouring men from Washington State had been approved to work the Valley harvest “for the purpose of keeping labour ‘white,’”<sup>111</sup> such determination to keep labour both “white” and male could not be sustained. In their desperation to exclude Asian labour, the use of natives appeared more palatable to the local population, especially when the paper reported that “the Westbank Indians have expressed their willingness to assist . . . in meeting the labour shortage . . . at low and suitable wages.”<sup>112</sup> Since they would return to their reserve after the harvest, using Native labour would avert the necessity of using other forms of non-white labour. But even that solution still fell foul of many dedicated to protecting the sanctity of the orchard. As one intolerant reader observed, “let the half-idle farmer do for himself what his Chink, Jap, or his Hindo [sic] does for him. Let the employer do a little more actual work himself and let the women help . . . let the labour be white.”<sup>113</sup>

In the face of increasing alarm over Asian labour, a temporary reconfiguration of gender roles was proposed with more frequency. At a mass meeting of the British Columbia Consumer’s League in Vancouver, delegates discussed ways of providing “help for the fruit growers of the province.” During the convention, it was decided that “there were already enough Orientals in the province” and that white women should undertake the field work themselves

108 “The Joyce Hostel,” *Okanagan Historical Society* 30 (1966): 114-15.

109 *The Imperial Colonist* (XV) January 1917, p. 11.

110 George Rose, editor of the *Kelowna Daily Courier & Okanagan Orchardist*, compiled a comparison of Kelowna’s per capita contribution to the War with that of “the Old Country.” Ranging from Scotland’s contribution of 237 per 1000 men to a low of West Ireland’s 32 per 1,000, Rose determined that the Kelowna district stood at 230 volunteers per 1,000 men. “No better evidence could be furnished,” gloated Rose, “of Kelowna’s devotion to the cause of Empire, and it is a matter of pride that our district is doing its share to help the greatest war of all time.” *Courier & Orchardist*, 11 March 1915, p. 5.

111 *Courier & Orchardist*, 26 April 1917.

112 *Courier & Orchardist*, 31 May 1917, p. 1.

113 *Courier & Orchardist*, 7 December 1916, p. 2.

“in an effort to keep further Asiatics from coming in and to prevent an excess of labour when the troops return from Europe.”<sup>114</sup> Shortly after, the Kelowna Women’s Institute issued a call for women volunteers to come to the defence of their community, and to show “the foreign population in our midst that they cannot ‘hold up’ the farmers for exorbitant wages.”<sup>115</sup> The call was met enthusiastically, and European women began to perform previously male tasks in harvesting, sorting, and packing fruit.

While female sexuality and fear of the Asian-orchestrated “white slave trade” provides a context to explore the interaction of ethnicity and gender,<sup>116</sup> the orcharding landscape was also important. Labour that was defined as masculine was superseded by concern over ethnicity, thereby allowing the temporary reconfiguration of white male work as white female work. A question of control emerged as the determining factor in the debate. Constructed as perpetual outsiders and threats to the “health” of the race both genetically and morally, Asian labour threatened to overwhelm the social order of the community. Far more comforting was the image of British women helping British men, preserving the pureness and virtue of imperial identity. However, these changes to the order of Paradise were only tolerated when seen as temporary. Since displacing Asian labour after the War could not be guaranteed, it was erroneously believed that women would happily leave the field for the hearth when their men returned, restoring society to the natural order of the orcharding landscape.

As the guns of Europe’s Great War faded into silence and memory, the rural Empire emerged irrevocably changed. Cut down in mud and barbed wire, scores of young men who had triumphantly marched into battle years before would never return to claim their place in Eden, destroyed by the same imperial ideal they had sought to defend in the form of spring blossoms and autumn harvests. Maimed with the bodies and minds of returning soldiers, the discourse of Empire, so intimately connected to the promise of a conservative Paradise, would begin a slow decline. Throughout the Okanagan Valley, the persistence of a “white” labour shortage after 1918 would force the permanent return of women to the orchards, foreshadowing the further erosion of the rural idyll. During this postwar period, women would also assert their rights of citizenship with renewed vigour as working people mobilised in unprecedented numbers

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114 *Courier & Orchardist*, 29 March 1917, p. 4.

115 *Courier & Orchardist*, 31 March 1917, p. 1.

116 Kay Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal, 1991), 97-99.

for social justice and political change. While many of these gains were uneven and often shortlived, struggle and change continued as the form and perception of the land began to shift once again.<sup>117</sup>

Carefully crafted in the pages of glowing brochures and painstakingly planted in the loosened earth, images and dreams of Paradise held powerful attraction and found provocative expression in the blossoming landscape of British Columbia. During the height of their industrial and imperial power, Britons sought to reclaim an imaginary past marked by green vistas and rustic locales. In the colonisation of the rural Empire, they found their answer in the advertisements of land promoters and the vivid praise of esteemed aristocrats. With echoes of Eden, these settlers were guided and animated by a newly fashioned landscape epitomised by perfumed trees and ripening fruit. More than simply another agricultural occupation, the practice of fruit farming highlighted a complex interaction between the discourses of ruralism and imperialism, with broad ramifications for not only Native land use and a changing natural environment, but for a new and exclusionary social order represented and buttressed by the landscape itself. In another way, notions of wealth, culture, and leisure, which lured thousands of immigrants to the orchards of British Columbia, were defining aspects of an elitist social system that found expression and purpose in their understanding of the land. Indeed, the orcharding landscape acted as the most tangible and recognisable source of identity in organising and legitimising their rural community.

Harkening to an imaginary Christian utopia based on the prescribed gender and social sensibilities of the British middle class, the parameters of identity were contested on a number of fronts. While the Okanagan Nation actively resisted their exclusion from a redefined landscape, the economic and social contribution of the local Chinese community threatened to disrupt the exclusively British imagination of the settlement. Far more destabilising, however, was the realisation that orcharding proved to be one of the most labour-intensive forms of agriculture imaginable. Eager to avoid the “evils” of the great urban centres, the orcharding promoters conceived of an Eden-like Paradise without the much-maligned working classes. In a sense, their rural imagination provided no space for the labourer. Such a conception of the landscape was not without precedent, for Brian Short argues that “the countryside was made by working people, but the rural idyll of pastoral from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, itself an urban product, has largely banished them from the

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117 The nature and impact of the Great War has sparked renewed interest among scholars. Of the many fine works on the subject, an especially noteworthy study is Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver, 1997). For a compelling examination of working-class mobilisation and political reform at war's end, please consult Dennis Pilon, “The Drive for Proportional Representation in British Columbia,” MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1996.

scene.”<sup>118</sup> Fought across lines of ethnicity, class, and gender, the values of the orcharding landscape were defended vigorously and actively, risking economic prosperity in the process. Whether visiting the reading club, playing in a polo match, enjoying the opera, or writing an angry letter to the newspaper about the danger of “Asiatic labour,” all these activities afforded members of the community the opportunity to actively participate in formulating and confirming their notions of hierarchy and order, inscribed into the very soil they stood upon and the bounty it sustained.

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118 Brian Short, “Images and Realities,” 3.