



## BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA: THE CASE OF THE MISSING SEQUOIAS

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In 1990, Harry Liang,<sup>1</sup> a new home owner in upper middle-class Kerrisdale, an established inner suburb of Vancouver, decided to remove two 30 m sequoia trees from his front lawn. As word passed along the street, a group of Anglo-Canadian neighbours asked him to reconsider his decision, for the trees were much admired in the neighbourhood and were a relatively rare species in the city. Mr Liang, however, did not relent, and in response a band of neighbours began a vain protest to preserve the sequoias, tying yellow ribbons around them, and joining in a human chain around their trunks.

Why bring such a parochial event of everyday life to wider attention? Because small facts can speak to larger issues, a sheep raid to a revolution, as Geertz put it in another context.<sup>2</sup> The removal of the trees became a *cause célèbre*, widely reported in the local media and beyond, including coverage in the *South China Morning Post*, the daily English-language newspaper in Hong Kong. The case of the missing sequoias expresses the meeting of the local with the global, the collision of the past with the present, the conjunction of hegemonic blocs with roots in Europe and Asia. What follows, then, is an interpretation of the engagement of two economic and cultural diasporas, with roots, ultimately, in Britain and China, examples perhaps of what James Clifford has described as travelling cultures. 'We are seeing', he writes, 'the emergence of new maps: borderland culture areas, populated by strong diasporic ethnicities unevenly assimilated to dominant nation states'.<sup>3</sup> The Pacific Rim city of Vancouver represents one such borderland, looking east in its historic traditions to Western Europe, and west in its economic future to East Asia. In this borderland, as so often in contemporary cultural politics, the geographical elements of place and landscape emerge as a central nexus. And imbricated in contrasting landscape tastes are broader lines of social stratification, such constituted differences as class, race and citizenship. My account will emphasize the ambivalent reception of a new élite by the old, and some consequences in everyday life from the destabilization of an established hegemony of Anglo-conformity.

### The first diaspora

The first diaspora is now familiar enough, the great movement of British colonial power overseas, a movement which has attracted so much scholarly attention in the

twilight of empire. We have been slower to note that imprint in the former dominions than in the colonies, in part, no doubt, because only now has the British hegemon in the dominions ceased to be taken for granted, thrown into profile by the rapid demise of the imperial centre and the competing strains of multiculturalism in the former British settler nations of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The assertion of British imperial rule over the Pacific Northwest came relatively late. The colony of British Columbia was not declared until 1858, and urban settlement was slow until the completion of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway, precipitating the founding of Vancouver in 1886. Thereafter, urban growth was rapid in the primate city of the region. By 1921 the population of Vancouver had reached 163 000, with over 80 per cent of residents identifying themselves as of British origin. A colonial replica society was assembled, with a reproduction of the cultural memories of home. Consider the iconography of the provincial flag, incorporating both a crown and the Union Jack, eloquent testimony to loyalties that were freely rendered during the European War of 1914–18, when, despite its geographical isolation, British Columbia proffered the highest share of volunteers of any province to the European front. Or consider the toponomy: *British Columbia*, marking a sharp geopolitical distinction with the American territories along the Columbia River to the south.<sup>4</sup> The capital cities, first New Westminster, then Victoria, promoted an imperial fealty, while Vancouver, by 1901 the major city, was named after the British captain who charted the regional coastline. The southern suburbs of Richmond, Surrey and Langley maintained the family name of suburbs around central London. On the west side of Vancouver, in its middle-class Anglo-Canadian neighbourhoods, British military successes – Waterloo, Trafalgar, Alma, Balaclava and others – were celebrated in a parade of street names.

The colonial state was constructed in the West Coast rain forest, a mysterious and alien landscape to European eyes, whose potent energies emerge so clearly in the interwar art of Emily Carr, daughter of English immigrants, and the province's most celebrated painter. In a number of her mature paintings, the forest is dense, engulfing, the terrain of unknown gods, resisting domestication.<sup>5</sup> But its mysteries and peoples were dispersed by a virile capitalism, a transplant of European economic liberalism to the frontier of settlement. The city of Vancouver was built around sawmills whose mission was the disenchantment of this forest in the plain talk of board feet and dollars and cents. Following near genocide from European diseases, the shrunken, seasonal camps and traditional territories of the First Nations were largely alienated for the use of settlers and landholders.

Land, like the forest and the fisheries, was in abundance and many a fortune was made in real estate. The ubiquitous Rudyard Kipling, that global emissary for John Bull, visited Vancouver briefly during the 1905–11 land boom, but tarried long enough to indulge in some speculation in the land market. It was, after all, difficult to avoid the realtors, for by 1911 there was one real estate agent for every 150 Vancouver residents.<sup>6</sup> The 'pecuniary nexus' seemed to represent the sum total of this Anglo-Canadian connection to the land. Their elite district of the West End had emerged as a landscape of eclectic and exuberant mansions in the 1890s, but in less than a generation it was being abandoned as the simultaneous construction of the new upper-class district of Shaughnessy by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the invasion of more intensive uses into the West End, led the elite away with no more senti-

ment than they would have held for any piece of depreciated cutover. By 1914 one-third of the elite households listed in 1908 had departed, barely 20 years after the West End had made its spectacular appearance. No institutional controls or cultural sentiment delayed the calculations of individual buyers and sellers, and when the City Council attempted to introduce a bylaw in the 1920s to slow the pace of redevelopment and preserve part of the district as an area of single-family dwellings, it was resisted by a petition signed by two-thirds of the affected owners.<sup>7</sup>

It was an elite with British roots that relocated in the upper-class subdivision of Shaughnessy and its middle-class neighbour, Kerrisdale. During the city's first generation, from 1886 to 1915 almost three out of four foreign-born members of the elite were from the United Kingdom, and of the Canadian-born, perhaps half were the children of British immigrants.<sup>8</sup> These dominion linkages among the upper middle-class were sustained through the ensuing decades although the rest of the city became more diverse in response to later immigrant waves. In 1971 when the British origin population of the city of Vancouver had fallen to 53 per cent, it remained as high as 69 per cent in Shaughnessy and 76 per cent in Kerrisdale. With few exceptions until the 1980s non-English speaking newcomers followed a well-worn immigrant corridor through the less costly districts in Vancouver's eastside, leaving the westside Anglo-Canadian districts stable and frozen in their memories.

Those memories of course were heavily British, and the domestication and settlement of the land created a cultural landscape strongly impressed by them. The visit of the Governor-General from Ottawa to the Point Grey municipal hall in suburban Kerrisdale was an occasion literally draped in English icons (Figure 1).<sup>9</sup> Here is an example of what one might call off-the-shelf empire, for this scene so redolent of Stratford or Chester in the long-settled English heartland, is in an area recently cleared of mature forest. Besides the flags, there is the instant Tudor, a symbolic repertoire of old English values, the dreamworld of home. It was a culture that was being reconstructed, not merely the crude necessities of shelter, as the imagined civility of English Tudor was brought against the perceived rudeness of the coastal rain forest.

The civilizing mission of Tudor was reflected in faithful replicas which approached the status of simulacrum in the elite districts. The memories of old-world country homes led to examples of undulating roof lines and curved eaves with shingle sometimes forced to simulate thatch. And so 'Its English ancestry and picturesque appearance made the half-timbered Tudor revival the favourite mode in Shaughnessy Heights' (Figure 2).<sup>10</sup> Simpler Tudor cottages, often adorned with elements of the English arts and crafts movement, represented a middle class version and were popular in Kerrisdale and elsewhere. The English precedent came close to a local vernacular, and with no sense of a contradiction local architects in 1927 described a 'Canadian home of charming character' in purely English terms as a 'splendid spacious home in



Figure 1 – Welcoming the Governor-General at the Point Grey Municipal Hall, Kerrisdale, 1927 (City of Vancouver Archives BU.P.472, N711).

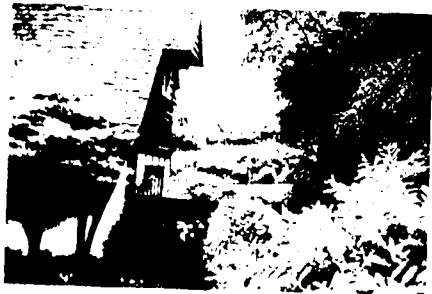


Figure 2 English picturesque, South Shaughnessy.

Elizabethan half-timbered design which possesses in full measure the comfortable homelike atmosphere of this style'.<sup>11</sup>

With a climate similar to the south of England, the young cities of Vancouver and Victoria were well located to give faithful expression to a variant of conservative English landscape taste in their upper middle-class gardens and streetscapes, a bucolic tableau of 'rural England as home, the countryside as the essential nation'.<sup>12</sup> This is the landscape described by Turner as elegant pastoral, a contrived romanticism consisting of a

picturesque green veil of English deciduous trees and shrubs, integrated by an historical penchant, a 'valuation of places according to their connections with a presumed or inferred history'.<sup>13</sup> It is variously an aristocratic or yeoman landscape model with considerable longevity and geographical reach across Canada.<sup>14</sup>

The landscape did not merely indicate, but helped to reproduce, a shared subculture amongst an Anglophile elite. Interviews in Shaughnessy homes in 1979 revealed that the traditional Tudor of their external appearance was matched by a similar conservatism of interior decoration, domestic styles learned from parents, often in the same district as their adult daughters were now living. Indeed, in a closely bonded social network, women commonly made use of the same interior designer when staging their homes.<sup>15</sup> Landscape and design had become constitutive elements of a local elite subculture. In Vancouver's local area planning programme, the opportunity to institutionalize this symbolic repertoire in the built environment was enthusiastically grasped in the 1970s by the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners' Association (SHPOA), an active and sophisticated community organization which dated its defence of Shaughnessy back to the 1930s. The inscription of a modulated English tradition into the community plan, and thereby into perpetuity, is an invention which might leave the outsider somewhat incredulous. Reviewing SHPOA's objectives, a sympathetic city councillor observed: 'The problem is you want to come up with design guidelines to make people imitate a 1920 imitation Tudor'.<sup>16</sup> But if sentiment and symbolism appear implausible to the outsider, this does not make them any less real to the intersubjective world of the insider. Place and identity are joined in a common task, in mutual confirmation. In 1982, the City Council approved a neighbourhood plan for First Shaughnessy, the northern and oldest third of the district, which had as its principal objective the preservation of the landscape of Anglophilia. Its design controls forbade new structures which did not adhere to the model of 'the English picturesque landscape tradition'.<sup>17</sup>

That zoning gain left other parts of Shaughnessy and the adjacent district of Kerrisdale unprotected. In the early 1980s the threat of change to these districts appeared slight, and there was no basis for mobilization. But the sentiment for English landscape taste, as subsequent events were to prove, extended far beyond First Shaughnessy. Indeed even in new construction that taste culture continues to shape the built environment. Hampton Place is a large new subdivision on

Vancouver's westside, built in the forest surrounding the University of British Columbia. It has been carefully targeted for a discriminating middle-class market, including empty nest households vacating their English-style home but wishing to retain its cultural associations. The subdivision's first three enclaves, Thames Court, West Hampstead and St James House, are built to sustain such cultural identities. Thames Court is described as 'a charming Tudoresque complex with formal gardens, fountains and courtyards'. Under the by-line 'English class comes to campus', a real estate writer observes that 'All three schemes draw loosely on classical, urban English landscape design and include old-fashioned street lamps, cobblestone courtyards, boxwood hedges, wrought-iron gates and low stone or brick walls'.<sup>18</sup>

Like the Point Grey municipal hall built 85 years earlier, the subdivision is hewn out of the rain forest, and represents a culturing of virgin territory with distant English memories. But there is also a difference: Thames Court has been constructed by a Hong Kong development company.

## The second diaspora

The British diaspora could still inscribe its will on the Shaughnessy landscape in the early 1980s, its modulated English theming and preservationist ethos scarcely contested. But in 1994 Hampton Place is a landscape for a niche market in an ever more complex Canadian society. The single dominant voice of Vancouver's first century has become resolutely polyvocal in the past decade, and now in a newly invented Canada, an alternative elite, a second diaspora of wealthy overseas Chinese, is pressing its claims in Toronto and above all Vancouver. Collectively its members exude the creative destruction Schumpeter saw as the inner logic of the free market. As the local agency of the Pacific century, this group knows no modest aims. Bob Lee, President of Prospero International Realty, became the first non-Caucasian member of the elite Vancouver Club in the late 1970s. He sees a future of progress, development, creative destruction. 'Ten years from now', he remarks, 'you won't even recognise Vancouver'.<sup>19</sup>

Ethnic Chinese in Canada include only some 600,000 in a diaspora of close to 30 million in the nations of the Pacific Rim.<sup>20</sup> Their members have orchestrated the astonishing growth rates of 6–10 per cent per annum in the countries of East and Southeast Asia (excluding Japan and Korea) since 1970. Their liquid assets, including the resources of Hong Kong and Taiwan, have been estimated at US\$1.5–2 trillion, benefiting from unusually high levels of saving. They account for some 80 per cent of direct investment in China, the fastest growing national economy.

In the past decade the economic power of the Pacific Rim has become the dominant element of the British Columbia economy. In the early 1990s, exports across the Pacific surpassed, for the first time, exports to the United States. Trade between Canada and Hong Kong, for example, was worth Cdn\$2.6 billion in 1991, an increase, during a period of national recession, of 15 per cent over the previous year; during the first five months of 1992 trade figures climbed a further 29 per cent.<sup>21</sup> An established and welcoming business infrastructure includes the Hong Kong–Canada Business Association (the city's biggest bilateral trading association), the government-sponsored Asia Pacific Initiative, and Vancouver's designated status as an International Financial Centre, all these initiatives dating from the mid- or late 1980s.

Economic integration has included not only trade, but also direct investment. The largest and most influential acquisition was the purchase by Li Ka-Shing of the vast site of Expo 86, the World's Fair on the edge of downtown Vancouver, and the initial development of the Cdn\$2 billion Pacific Place project. Li is Hong Kong's most successful entrepreneur, whose family-run holding company has a market value of US\$22 billion, and his purchase precipitated other investors to follow suit.<sup>22</sup> His son, Victor Li, became a Canadian citizen to manage the Canadian branch of the family's corporate empire, which besides real estate includes a 95 per cent stake of Husky Oil in Calgary, and a 9 per cent share of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, one of the big five chartered banks.

But of more significance for the present discussion is Victor Li's adoption of Canadian citizenship, for since the mid-1980s a significant movement of ethnic Chinese to Canada has taken the form of business-directed immigration. A Chinese-origin minority has existed in British Columbia since the declaration of colonial status during the gold rush of the late 1850s. It was Chinese labourers who later toiled at great cost to themselves on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Rocky Mountains, with perhaps 600 fatalities as the teams blasted their way through treacherous terrain. But their status in the province was persistently one of minimal entitlement.<sup>23</sup> A head tax of Cdn\$500 for each immigrant was merely one of a repertoire of racially motivated institutions designed to keep the ethnic Chinese a stigmatized and marginalized minority. As a result, the Chinese-Canadian population in Vancouver is far from homogeneous, and includes a substantial population who remain poor, and whose numbers have been inflated by recent refugees from Southeast Asia, as well as successful middle-class Canadians of the second, third and fourth generations. A third grouping are the new, and wealthy, business immigrants, the subject of this paper.<sup>24</sup>

For immigration revisions in the late 1960s began to erode rapidly the old cultural hegemony which had existed since Confederation. In 1966, at the end of this period, the United Kingdom continued to account for a third of all immigrants to Canada; and Europe plus the United States totalled 85 per cent (Figure 3). Twenty years later this figure had fallen to 30 per cent, and was exceeded by immigrants originating in

Asia. These trends were amplified on the West Coast where in the first half of 1993, 74 per cent of immigrants to British Columbia stated national origins in Asia, only 13 per cent in Europe.<sup>25</sup> Canadian immigration targets for the 1990s, set at a net rate of some 250,000 entrants per year, are double the level for 1986-91, and almost four times the rate for the early 1980s. With increasing numbers and the current pattern of immigrant source areas, the face (and the faces) of major Canadian cities, the overwhelming destination of immi-

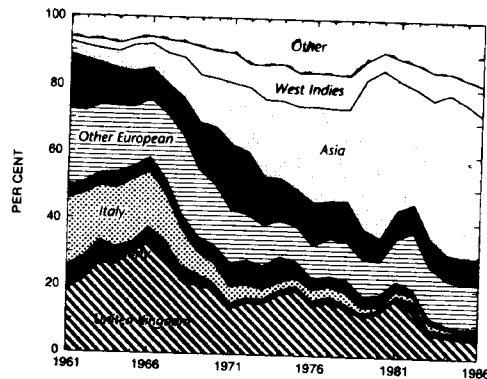


Figure 3 ~ Regions of origin of immigrants to Canada, 1961-86.

grants, are experiencing rapid transformation. One demographic projection expects visible minorities to grow from 21 per cent of the population of Metro Toronto in 1986 to 45 per cent in 2001, while the Vancouver share would also more than double, from 17 to 39 per cent.<sup>26</sup>

Immigrants fall into different classes including family reunification, refugees, and business categories. The business immigrant programmes, begun in 1978 and expanded in 1986, have proven successful in attracting overseas Chinese, particularly wealthy residents of Hong Kong anxious to find a safe haven for their investments before repatriation with the Peoples's Republic of China occurs in 1997. In 1992 half the entrepreneur and investor immigrants entering Canada originated in Hong Kong, with Taiwan in second position; the United Kingdom and the United States, sources of a quarter of business immigrants in 1981, accounted for less than 5 per cent in 1990. Vancouver was the most popular destination in 1992, receiving 30 per cent of all business immigrants entering Canada in these two principal categories.<sup>27</sup> Among all immigration categories, the single largest national source of arrivals landing in Vancouver since 1987 has been Hong Kong, a number which rose from barely a thousand in 1986 to 8,664 in 1992.

The economic power of this migration is substantial, though impossible to chart accurately.<sup>28</sup> Business immigrants are a major source of new capital; investors on average declared funds of Cdn\$2 million in 1992, and entrepreneurs funds of almost Cdn\$1 million. As a result, business immigrants to British Columbia represented wealth of over Cdn\$3 billion in 1991 and over Cdn\$4 billion in 1992.<sup>29</sup> The scale of this investment has helped to maintain economic activity in Greater Vancouver during a period of national recession between 1989 and 1992.<sup>30</sup> Vancouver house prices are the highest in Canada, and in recent years the metropolitan growth rate has been exceeded by only three cities in the United States. A new set of intermediaries has arisen to service the new market. The largest Taiwanese real estate company made its Canadian landfall in Kerrisdale; Chinese-origin business people have established a string of real estate firms catering to the new immigrants, while existing firms have hired Mandarin- and Cantonese-speaking agents. Numbers are particularly high in new franchise agencies; half the 200 agents operating out of the largest franchise outlet on Vancouver's westside are ethnic Chinese. Some purchases are made by absentee buyers to diversify a portfolio or in anticipation of future migration. In the peak month of October 1988, it is estimated that offshore Hong Kong buyers purchased 25 per cent of all dwelling units sold in Vancouver.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly the new Transpacific immigrants are very different from earlier waves of visible minorities entering Canada.<sup>32</sup> Their economic resources and attention to investment opportunities have led many of them away from the traditional lower-cost immigrant corridor, and into prime real estate territory, notably the old Anglo-Canadian upper-class and upper middle-class neighbourhoods of Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale. They have bought into a new landscape aesthetic that accompanies their economic vigour. This group favours new, large houses on a cleared lot, usually more than 4,000 square feet in area. The newness of the house, access to light through large windows unimpeded by vegetation, the alignment of doors, and other details of internal design, are inspired in part by the traditional metaphysic of *feng shui*. Properties on T-junctions are avoided, while traditional lucky numbers, three and eight, are much in demand, with addresses normally changed by builders to incorpo-

rate a three and/or an eight and to remove an unlucky four.<sup>33</sup> Taking no chances, the Taiwanese development company, President Asian Enterprises, has an office address of suite 8-3888.<sup>34</sup>

But traditional design elements arguably make only a minority contribution to the iconography of home. Wealthy residents of Hong Kong or Taiwan sustain interest in traditional cultural forms like *feng shui*, and, far more actively, the centrality of the family unit, but they also eagerly embrace the modern world and the capitalist urge for creative destruction. In identity formation, traditional culture is often subordinate to modernity's fascination for the new. Two Chinese-Canadian home owners in South Shaughnessy made their view of new residential forms as progressive evident in letters to City Council: 'We must grow out of the toys and clothing of our youth. We must allow some things to die before we can have a new life. . . . We are undergoing change and change itself will provide the new forms and new concepts of beauty in the future'.<sup>35</sup> Condemning 'antique' ideas, another correspondent claimed 'Vancouver is a modern progressive city. The world is changing all the time, so will this city'.<sup>36</sup> The home is an important opportunity to demonstrate one's appropriation of progress, one's purchase upon modernity. Business people are also challenging the bylaw-enforced *chinoiserie* of the city's historic Chinatown as an archaic representation of the modern Chinese entrepreneur which they contrast unfavourably with the *laissez-faire* modernism of Asian-built malls in the suburbs.<sup>37</sup> So too in their expansive homes these immigrants wish to project a successful, forward-looking, modern identity. The house, then, becomes a hybrid form, retaining certain traditional values but also proclaiming the restless modern commitment to growth and change.

Builders, small firms with East European or more recently, Chinese principals, have accommodated this market by purchasing and demolishing old single-family dwellings, clearing the lot, and erecting a house to the maximum area permitted by city bylaws. These dimensions are accommodated by large two-and-a-half storey, square or rectangular structures, with minimal facade articulation, and lightly sloping roofs (Figure 4). Symbols of success often include Greek columns, a spiral staircase, and a towering cathedral entry hall. With large windows and minimal vegetation screening the cleared lot, the opulence of these buildings is clearly visible.

This house form began to be evident in the mid-1980s, at first in the middle-class Oakridge district, immediately east of Kerrisdale. Oakridge has been an area with a Jewish minority presence and a preponderance of 1950s ranch-style homes, but the ageing of the community created vacancies that were already being occupied by Canadian-born professional and managerial workers of Chinese ethnic origin by the early 1980s. A second feature of Oakridge made it a sought-after destination for new immigrants. Its high school, named after Sir Winston Churchill, is the only one in the city which offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme, permitting successful graduates



Figure 4 ~ Newly constructed large house, South Shaughnessy, 1993.

to study either at Canadian or international universities. The global citizenship offered by the IB programme has proven particularly attractive to Asian-origin immigrants, and stories abound in real estate circles of potential home buyers arriving from Hong Kong in the mid-1980s with two names written on a sheet of paper 'Oakridge - Churchill'. The marked place specificity of this long-range migration points to a meticulous spatial screening process by a transnational élite. It points also to aspirations for opportunities with a global reach, as high school (and college) education are strategically selected for the international networking they offer.<sup>38</sup>

By 1986, several enumeration areas in Oakridge registered over 40 per cent ethnic Chinese. That figure has increased substantially in the period since, and as the population has grown it has edged westwards into Kerrisdale and Shaughnessy. These districts, too, consist of an ageing Caucasian population, and thus contain the potential for considerable household turnover. However, inflating house prices have thwarted the entry of all but the wealthiest Caucasian families into these desirable Anglo-Canadian districts, and the dominant market has become prosperous immigrants. Several estimates from city and real estate sources indicate that 80 per cent or more of new large houses in these districts are occupied by Asian-origin families, almost all from Hong Kong or Taiwan.<sup>39</sup> In Oakridge, demolition of 1950s ranch-style properties evoked no discernible reaction. However, as the reshaping of the cultural landscape has entered traditional districts of English landscape taste, a much more vigorous reception has been registered.

### Border crossings

The new landscape has not been well received by many longer-established residents, for the pace and extent of change have overwhelmed tolerance thresholds and unleashed little less than a moral panic. City Council and local newspapers have been overwhelmed by letters of complaint. At first, institutional sympathies were with the protesters, as reflected in the widespread use of the epithet 'the monster house' to describe the new building form, and bold newspaper headlines like 'Monster mash', 'Monster mishmash' and 'How we saved Shaughnessy from monsters'.<sup>40</sup> While the value judgements carried by news stories have become less partisan, reporters continue to be Caucasian and may still employ the vocabulary of the monster house.<sup>41</sup> City Council has also been drawn to response, with an unusual initial consensus among councillors, normally sharply divided between the right and the left of the political spectrum. The right supported a measure of controls on development because Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale represent its electoral heartland, the left because they endorse neighbourhood self-determination. As a result housing-design bylaws were revised on three separate occasions between 1986 and 1990, but still failed to stem the tide of unwelcome neighbourhood change.<sup>42</sup>

The 'monster house' issue crystallized out of an earlier citywide concern about the bulk of 'the Vancouver Special', a square and massive form designed in the 1960s to maximize house size under existing bylaws, and to include flexible space for either an (illegal) rental suite or else for extended family members. Typically, these dwellings were built on the standard 33-foot city lot, and letters received by the Council up to March 1986 showed a strong emphasis for complaints to be registered in eastside districts, with only a third coming from the westside.<sup>43</sup> Grievances were directed at the

'unneighbourly' nature of the new houses, the increase of densities in single-family districts through the inclusion of rental suites, intrusion upon the existing views, privacy and sunlight of adjacent properties, and the destruction of traditional streetscapes through unsympathetic redevelopment. At this time there was no consistent ethnic identity associated with new large houses; a small Council survey suggested that 'the cultural background of about half the large house occupants is European'.<sup>44</sup>

However, one of the intervenors at a public hearing at the end of 1985 was SHPOA, indicating that the problem was beginning to affect larger lots on the city's westside as well as the smaller eastside lots. Following its success in orchestrating the preservation-oriented Local Area Plan for First Shaughnessy between 1976 and 1982, SHPOA turned its attention to Second and Third, or South, Shaughnessy, a large irregularly shaped district extending 16 blocks south from First Shaughnessy to 41st Avenue and up to a maximum of 12 blocks east-west (Figure 5). The intent from the beginning was to extend the planning gains in First Shaughnessy southwards and thereby ensure preservation 'in a manner compatible with the existing amenity of design, streetscape and development'.<sup>45</sup> In 1984 SHPOA commissioned a design report (a preliminary step earlier undertaken in First Shaughnessy) that made the

first reference to the construction of new 'oversize' houses in the district, with negative implications for the 'squandering' of heritage and the 'unravelling' of the planned grace of the area.<sup>46</sup> Whereas the old houses were 'interesting without being overpoweringly busy in appearance', with roof lines 'always logical in relation to house form', the new house facades were 'thin and flat', with an 'overabundance of materials and colours'.<sup>47</sup> The pressure for such development even began to threaten the preserved landscape of First Shaughnessy. In May 1988 an internal memorandum from the Director of Planning alluded to 'a new force' in First Shaughnessy, the purchase of large properties, not with the purpose of lot subdivision (the fear behind the 1982 plan), but rather with the intent to demolish existing properties and replace them with large and expensive homes. This force, the memo continued, would compromise a district 'which we have been able to protect to date', a statement indicative not only of a new trend, but also of its perception from City Hall.<sup>48</sup>

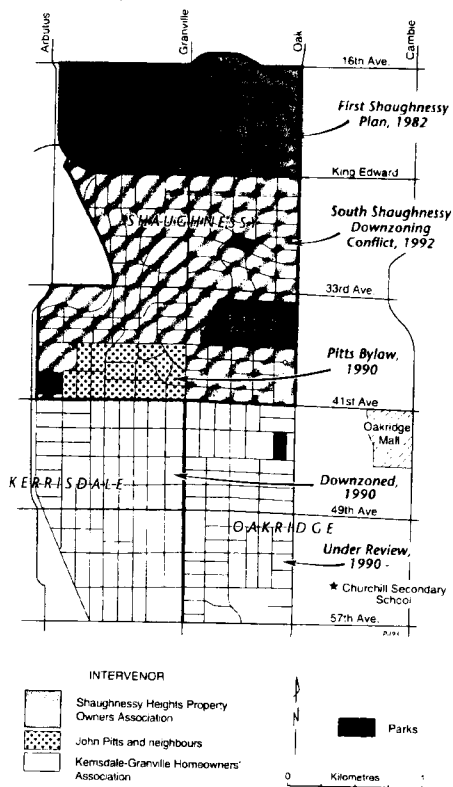


Figure 5 ~ Contested terrain in Vancouver's elite districts.

After 1986 vigorous correspondence with the Council was undertaken by westside residents in particular. More than a third of letters came from a single postal district covering part of South Shaughnessy and adjacent portions of Kerrisdale; 91 per cent of residents were opposed to the new large houses. All but four letters were sent by households with European family names; 75 per cent of all family names were of British origin.

The apparent locus of concern, and the continuing level of unrest despite a second attempt at design amendments in 1988, led the Council to work with SHPOA towards a more thorough resolution of the issue in South Shaughnessy. But the creation of the preservationist Kerrisdale/Granville Homeowners' Association in November 1988, to defend the area immediately south of Third Shaughnessy, encouraged Council to look still further afield, and in January 1990 it approved a study of area-specific zoning and design guidelines to cover a much larger area of 4,600 single-family properties incorporating a solid block of upper middle-class neighbourhoods, adding eastern Kerrisdale and western Oakridge to the existing core of South Shaughnessy (Figure 5).

As part of the study programme the Planning Department mailed a questionnaire to all property owners in June 1992 presenting them with four different zoning scenarios. Ranging from option D (the status quo), owners were presented with three steadily more restrictive zoning protocols. More than a third of property owners (36 per cent) returned completed questionnaires. A quarter preferred option A, the most restrictive proposal, which would have reduced the floor area permitted outright in new houses by 40 per cent, a massive intervention in the building market intended to discourage redevelopment (Table 1). This option was favoured by a third of respondents in South Shaughnessy. Option B with a 25 per cent reduction in outright space, permitted modest redevelopment, and (as in option A) the building envelope could be enlarged if designs for the new structure were compatible with the neighbourhood.<sup>49</sup> Only 20 per cent of respondents endorsed the existing zoning, a figure that was highest in Oakridge and lowest in South Shaughnessy. This variation between districts was inversely related to the actual pattern of demolition and redevelopment. In Oakridge, the initial destination of wealthy Asian immigrants in the 1980s, houses were being demolished at the rate of just over 3 per cent per annum during 1991-92, ahead of the rate in Kerrisdale (1.8 per cent) and double the rate of South Shaughnessy (1.5 per cent).<sup>50</sup>

It is worth underscoring this geography of response. South Shaughnessy is located adjacent to First Shaughnessy, where the model of English landscape taste and a

Table 1 ~ Resident response to rezoning options 1992 (n = 1364)

	A	Downzone B	C	No change D
South Shaughnessy	34%	40%	13%	13%
Kerrisdale	16	52	12	21
Oakridge	22	41	10	28
All residents	24	44	12	20

Source: 'South Shaughnessy/Granville area zoning; Director of Planning to Vancouver City Council, 27 July 1992.

strong preservation ethos had been inscribed into the 1982 plan, *prior* to the onset of the mega-house conflict. In its response to the 1992 survey, South Shaughnessy showed the closest fidelity to that model among the three districts. It had a sophisticated neighbourhood organization (SHPOA) mobilized to press its claims, and also displayed a remarkable example of articulate self-management, when under the leadership of a local home owner, John Pitts, a portion of the district prepared and paid for its own rezoning bylaw that it then forced through an embarrassed council who had been unable to come up with acceptable amendments themselves (Figure 5).<sup>51</sup> Kerrisdale, with a slightly higher level of demolition, did not have a community organization in place until 1988. While the group secured a downzoning for part of the area to match the Pitts bylaw, residents in the survey were less prepared to follow a purely preservationist strategy (option A), though they did endorse downzoning for new development compatible with existing forms. Finally, in Oakridge, furthest from the cultural heartland of First Shaughnessy, there was no organized opposition to landscape change in a district of more varied housing types, including postwar bungalows and ranch-style homes, and a more culturally diverse population. In Oakridge, despite the newest existing housing in the three districts, demolition rates were the highest and acceptance of the status quo was the most marked.

### The battle for Shaughnessy

This partnership exercise was, however, disrupted even as the survey results were being assessed. Alarmed letters to Council by Second Shaughnessy residents in July 1992 itemized a serious upturn in demolitions in the blocks adjacent to their homes.<sup>52</sup> Moving with uncharacteristic haste, Council called a public hearing for mid-September at which two options for downzoning South Shaughnessy would be presented.<sup>53</sup>

In one of the longest public hearings in the city's history, Council found itself before television cameras and an agitated audience of up to 500 for six nights, as 97 separate briefs were presented. The hearings saw the appearance of a new and unanticipated political subject – Chinese-Canadian immigrants. Positions were sharply polarized. The SHPOA, voice of the Anglo-Canadian elite, and its allies argued for downzoning and preservation, with new, smaller houses built to be 'neighbourly' in their relation to the district. Small builders continued to denounce angrily any limits on their freedom to build. But a new development was the emergence of an opposition group, the South Shaughnessy Property Owners' Rights Committee, hastily organized by residents of Chinese ethnic origin, who began a vigorous battle of lawn signs, canvassing for public support and, aided by some Anglo-Canadians who shared their views on property rights, resisting any further controls on redevelopment. Accompanying this stirring of a new political elite, the *South China Morning Post* closely followed what it called 'the battle for Shaughnessy'.<sup>54</sup>

The position urged by SHPOA was the one that Council had heard in petitions and letters for at least six years. This correspondence had a constant refrain: the need for public regulation to preserve a heritage landscape, the requirement that new buildings be 'neighbourly' in their design, an insistence that mature trees and landscaping be protected, and in some instances criticism of Council and the Planning Department for actions that were too little and too late. The prominence of

the 1992 public hearings led to a new intensity of letter-writing to Council and to local newspapers, together with widespread media coverage. Letters condemned the 'indelible blight' of 'hideous monsters'. 'My sense of beauty', declared one writer, 'is assaulted by those stark, tasteless monster houses, built right in the middle of our neighbourhoods, on clear cut lots without landscaping'.<sup>55</sup> At the public hearing, SHPOA reaffirmed that 'We need guidelines. The unique characteristics of the neighbourhood require limits. Are we talking about each man living on an island? Properties, our homes, are not commodities or poker chips. We cannot develop without consideration of others'. The message is one of limits, regulated by the state, a social ontology of the neighbourhood.

The argument proffered by SHPOA continued the case they had made for the preservation of First Shaughnessy in the late 1970s, an argument that incorporated the home *plus* the neighbourhood as an integral unit. For in the upper middle-class districts owners were generally purchasing not just a lot but a neighbourhood, a set of social and environmental amenities beyond their own property which they were prepared to defend before proposed land-use changes.<sup>56</sup> The theme of protecting symbolic or use value against the intrusion of exchange value is persistent in their interventions:

We've raised our family here, sent our children to the neighbourhood schools, participated in all kinds of community events over the years. Now many of the people who own homes in the area don't live here. The homes are empty. These homes are investments, perhaps one of many. You feel differently about a place when you live there, form friends there, become part of the neighbourhood and the community. . . .

We don't mind change but we want to see it fit into the neighbourhood. We don't like to see good homes with years of liveability in them destroyed if something not appropriate is put up in their place. We want the area to remain a liveable and lovely neighbourhood for the families that live here now and will live here in the future. *We want to stress that this is a place to live not just a place to make money out of.*<sup>57</sup>

Residents upheld their role as neighbourhood guardians against the perceived aggression of economic power. Shaughnessy was 'a community of character and maturity' threatened by 'unbridled greed'. A defence must be made for posterity: 'We in this generation must make a stand in support of higher values, or we will leave to the future a city raped by the interests of profit'. These were serious matters: 'Feelings are running high in Shaughnessy. It's unpleasant'.<sup>58</sup>

Some critics of landscape change, a minority, placed the conflict in a wider context of class, nation, and citizenship rights:

The wail of the chain saw yesterday prompted me to write to you. I spent several sleepless hours thinking about our home, our neighbourhood and our city. . . .

I have come to accept the fact that these huge and generally unattractive houses are a reality. However, I will not sit back and watch every tree being cut down in order to accommodate these monsters. . . .

The face of Vancouver is changing far too quickly. We – fairly reasonable people – fear the power that the Hong Kong money wields. We resent the fact that because they come here with pots of money they are able to mutilate the areas they choose to settle in. Our trees are part of our heritage. These people come – with no concern for our past – they have not been a part of the growth and development of our beautiful city – they have not been paying taxes for years. They have no right to devastate the residential areas.<sup>59</sup>

But before the law, citizenship rights do not depend upon length of tenure, a state of affairs made perfectly clear when the people of the First Nations were displaced from their seasonal villages and traditional lands around the Vancouver townsite by Anglo-Canadian settlers a century earlier. Ethnic Chinese immigrants began to assert their own citizenship rights, and not merely their economic power, before the threat of the downzoning hearings in autumn 1992. Although no letters had been received from private citizens of Chinese origin to offset the protest of Anglo-Canadians up to the summer of 1992, over a quarter of the correspondence received by Council relating to the proposed downzoning of South Shaughnessy later in the year came from this source (Table 2). At the public hearings the South Shaughnessy Property Owners' Rights Committee acted as a well-organized block, seated together in a large group and waving small flags in unison when one of their number presented a brief. In mobilization they out-performed SHPOA, and when Council tallied up the presentations after six boisterous nights of public hearings, they found that almost half the speakers were of Chinese origin, and with some allies among Anglo-Canadians concerned at the erosion of their property rights, that 61 of the 97 briefs had rejected the downzoning proposed by Council and endorsed by SHPOA (Table 2). In the public process that followed the autumn hearings, SHPOA found itself in a minority on a citizens' advisory group that also included the Property Owners' Rights Committee and local contractors. By early summer of 1993 Council was inclining to more modest rezoning than SHPOA had requested, or indeed expected.<sup>60</sup>

The ideology of many recent Chinese-origin immigrants indicates a strong grouping of values around nineteenth-century economic liberalism. Those who are business immigrants are by definition both entrepreneurial and wealthy, from a society of minimal government regulation where everything has its price. In an ironic echo of the turn-of-the-century head tax, their Canadian passport has, after all, cost them at least Cdn\$250,000 in a requisite business investment. Their views toward real estate are related to this ideology. At the public hearing and in letters to Council their arguments were fixed around a discourse of democracy, freedom, individual property rights, the exchange value of property, the family as the social unit, and the dream-world of the immigrant for a mansion of one's own.

In their letters to Council, a dominant theme was the exchange value of property and the political rights accompanying property ownership. One Shaughnessy resi-

Table 2 ~ Assessments of 'monster' houses, 1987-92

	% Critical	% Participants	
		Anglo names	Chinese names
Letters* to Council, 1987 to summer 1992 (n = 184)	91	75	2
Survey**, summer 1992 (A-C, Table 1)	80	NA	NA
Letters* to Council, autumn 1992 (n = 209)	53	57	29
Briefs† at public hearing, autumn 1992 (n = 97)	37	30	45

Sources: \* Various files at the City Clerk's Office, City of Vancouver.

\*\* See Table 1.

† City of Vancouver, Special Council Meeting (Public hearing), 17 September - 16 November 1992.

dent, a developer, sent eight letters to Council in a 10-week period, protesting the planned downzoning. After noting that his company's 'normal practice of building (is) to the maximum square footage allowed under the bylaws' he predicted a fall in property development if the downzoning passed and urged councillors to 'keep property values in mind, because ultimately, that is what matters to your voters'. After all, 'the present City Council was not elected with a mandate to devalue people's property'.<sup>61</sup> An absentee landlord wrote from a garment factory in Chinatown that land investment would go elsewhere, leaving Shaughnessy 'a run down neighbourhood'. An emigration lawyer wrote from Hong Kong warning that rezoning would mean a fall in business immigrants and their investment in Vancouver.<sup>62</sup> This theme was evident at the public hearings.

We have large lots and nice houses can be built on these lots. Land value is dropping and there is a reduction of deals. There is evidence investors are scared away. We have to attract more investors. We should do our best to maintain land values and all parts of the community will profit and the country will grow prosperous.<sup>63</sup>

A second woman, also speaking through an interpreter, entered Canada with her family in 1988 'in pursuit of democracy and freedom and to build a happy family home. But this new proposal has shattered our dreams. . . . So how do you say this is freedom? We are concerned about a drop in land values. I really hope our dream can be realised'. Or again: 'These rezonings have caused a lot of worry to investors. Taxpayers' money should be making jobs not scaring people away. I'm for freedom, what people need for themselves'. Democracy to these citizens implies the absence of limits, the empowerment of property rights, the withdrawal of government. Another woman speaking through an interpreter made the case efficiently:

I live in Shaughnessy and we built a house very much to my liking. The new zoning would not allow enough space for me . . . I strongly oppose this new proposal. Why do I have to be inconvenienced by so many regulations? This infringes my freedom. Canada is a democratic country and democracy should be returned to the people.

The language of family, and the house as a family project, was in sharp contrast to the social ontology of SHPOA that privileged neighbourhood obligations:

I oppose (the) changes. Is it right to deny the rights of these people? Is it right for government to force rights? Canada is a free country. We decided to build our own dream house for our own family needs. It was a family project. Everyone was excited by our new house. Now the children will have to sleep in the basement.

Government regulation appears as an unfair and costly affront to the democratic process, as a tyrant blocking legitimate family aspirations.

## The rhetoric of race and the politics of explanation

In a controversy that pitted long-standing residents primarily of Anglo-Canadian origin against mainly recent immigrants of Chinese origin, it was inevitable that more was at stake, or perhaps imagined to be at stake, than landscape aesthetics or political philosophy. At a public hearing about oversize houses in suburban Burnaby, a journalist noted: 'The hearing adjourns and one has a feeling of incompleteness, of miss-

ing information. There is more here than an issue of housing sizes. On the surface the old and young quarrel over lifestyles, while underneath the silent stream of discrimination cuts between races and cultures, between generations'.<sup>64</sup>

So when Mayor Campbell insisted at the public hearing that 'This is not an issue divided along racial lines' his remark carried limited conviction for many hearers. The issue of race rarely appeared in the briefs and letters of Anglo-Canadians, but the relations made explicit in the following letter were understood in their absence by others:

The house across the lane was bought by Orientals. Soon after they moved in, two 200 year old Douglas firs were cut down. *It felt to me like one of my children was dying...* The English family who originally built the house and had lived there for 50 years had asked me especially to protect those trees, the tallest in the whole neighbourhood.... Our neighbour's house at ... has recently sold to Hong Kong owners.... I am very certain that the evergreens will be chopped down.<sup>65</sup>

The contrast between us and them occurred more overtly in communications from Chinese-Canadians and their allies as they challenged the categorization of the 'monster house' as arbitrary and culturally specific. The proposed reduction in house-size and design guidelines led to a protest that 'Council has *not* been racist in the past. Please do not bow to the pressure of racists now!' The writer claimed that the attempt to limit house-size would penalize Asian multigenerational families, while the specification of preferred designs in an English idiom privileged 'styles disliked by Asians'. The outcome would be to deny entry to 'Asians' wishing to buy their 'dream home'.<sup>66</sup> The charge of racism directed against their neighbours was also employed by some Anglo-Canadians who resisted downzoning because of their concern over land values and property rights.

The most publicized charge of racism was made by the spokesman for the West Side Builders Association, representing small contractors who were the principal beneficiaries of the new market for large houses. A letter, repeated in a widely reported brief, declared that the proposed rezoning changes were 'discriminatory, racist and unfair.... If these new building by-laws are brought into effect, it will be akin to returning to the early 1900s where some of our land titles specifically excluded people of certain origins from owning land'.<sup>67</sup> This allegation of racism was reported in the *South China Morning Post* under the headline 'Vancouver planning law fuels racist fire'.<sup>68</sup> The same charge was levelled by a number of business interests and free-market commentators to chastise critics of neighbourhood change, including left-wing city politicians who favoured regulation as part of their commitment to the policy of neighbourhood discretion over zoning.<sup>69</sup>

There can be no doubt that this charge was employed ideologically by free-market interests, and it was keenly resisted. Downzoning was 'not an issue of "race" but of "greed"' insisted the leader of the Kerrisdale-Granville Homeowners' Association, deflecting the discourse from race to class concerns;<sup>70</sup> a similar interpretation has been reached by others.<sup>71</sup> But race and class were not the only possible motives for intervention: 'This issue has absolutely nothing to do whatsoever with race... I have Oriental neighbours who recently bought the house next door, intending to live in it long term and retain it. I am most happy they are my neighbours. The issue is solely one of preserving the basic design character of our area'.<sup>72</sup> Some Anglo-Canadians

launched a counter-offensive: 'Discrimination is a widely and loosely used word these days. I would like to use it for myself for a change. In my family's situation I feel we are being discriminated against as well as harassed and would like to receive the same consideration (so abundantly given by us Canadians to others)'.<sup>73</sup> At the public hearing this counter-attack was summarized by an Indo-Canadian: 'While it's true pockets of racism can rear their ugly head during times of tension, for anyone in a position of clout to imply that racism is at the base of this issue or that such pockets are the sole monopoly of one specific group, is *in itself* racist and an affront to us *all*'. This citizen concluded that 'Shaughnessy's homes of yesteryear *aren't* liabilities: they are part and parcel of Canadiana and the roots and memories of many a Vancouverite'.<sup>74</sup> It was a conclusion matched in an influential intervention by the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, David Lam, himself a Hong Kong immigrant from an earlier period: 'When a Canadian is concerned about his own way of living', he declared, 'This concern is not racism'.<sup>75</sup>

In addition to the rhetoric of racism, economic élites employed a second strategy in preparing citizens for Vancouver's Pacific Rim destiny. In 1989 The Laurier Institute was incorporated as 'a national non-profit, non-advocacy research and education organization dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of information concerning economic and social implications of cultural diversity. *It has no political or business affiliations*'.<sup>76</sup> In fact the Institute has corporate sponsors that include major players in Transpacific finance, real estate, trade and transportation. Indeed, a promotional brochure identifies the economic advantage of sponsorship, for 'Membership in The Laurier Institute offers assistance in terms of both recognizing the (marketplace) potential and implementing programs which will develop that advantage'.<sup>77</sup> Alert to the economic costs of cultural conflict in the land market, the Institute, with somewhat indelicate haste, commissioned a six-part research project to examine 'factors affecting residential real estate prices in the Greater Vancouver area' to disabuse 'controversial suggestions that a particular cultural group – the Chinese – were the cause of increased real estate prices'.<sup>78</sup> The research was entrusted to conservative land economists at the Canadian Real Estate Research Bureau.

The results of the first phase of the research were announced a month after The Laurier Institute was incorporated. Findings were released at a breakfast meeting of invited political and business leaders; the press release promised the launch of findings from the second phase at a second breakfast meeting a month later. This research on an instalment plan offered no embarrassment to the Institute, for the findings lined up squarely with its view of the world. Investment capital from outside Canada was absolved as a significant factor in the local land market, but local government was targeted as a culprit in a later report for its development fees which ranged from Cdn\$1,500 to a high of Cdn\$12,000 in one municipality.<sup>79</sup> Even within the development industry there was some incredulity among realtors at these findings; laughter greeted the presentation of one report, while a second was dismissed by a prominent realtor as 'naive'.<sup>80</sup> This has not prevented their continued ideological use. Although the first report used migration data which ended in 1986, *prior* to the rapid upturn of business immigrants from Asia, the city's *Real Estate Weekly*, repeating The Laurier Institute's press release, used the results to refute 'complaints that high immigration to Greater Vancouver was the root cause of soaring home prices'.<sup>81</sup> A prominent local educator, closely associated with Transpacific linkages and with the

land economists who completed the studies, has referred honorifically to The Laurier Institute reports, asserting that 'certain neighbourhoods have received the bulk of recent immigrants as well as Asian investment. There is no verifiable evidence, however, to show that this action has had any systematic effect on house prices'.<sup>82</sup>

### Conclusion: who killed the sequoias?

We may now return to our point of departure, the missing sequoias, with this local incident set against the broader context of place and identity in a globalizing society, a borderland between two diasporas. These events are not of course unique to one neighbourhood, or one city, but are indicative of a widespread 'culture-play of diaspora, [where] familiar lines between "here" and "there", center and periphery, colony and metropole become blurred'.<sup>83</sup> But, as the authors go on to point out, 'as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient'. These constructed places are a projection of imagined communities, memories of a distant past or anticipations of a proximate future. The borderland is neither exotic, nor even unusual; indeed, some commentators see it as the ' "normal" locale of the post-modern subject'.<sup>84</sup>

From its initial biculturalism, Canada has moved through a period when multiculturalism was rather superficially celebrated, to a more serious encounter with multiculturalism's structural implications.<sup>85</sup> The missing sequoias mark some of those entanglements. Mr Liang, who felled the trees, could not understand why controversy should break out. It was simply a matter of private property rights: 'That's my private property. Why do you bother me? First, I don't want publicity, I have my own private rights. It is none of their business'.<sup>86</sup> The ontology is that of the individual, of private property rights. There is no more to be said: 'Why do you bother me?'

But among neighbours there was a great deal more to be said, as politicians and media were inundated by angry protests. Among the torrent of disapproval, I will cite just one letter, from the former owner of the house with the sequoias, whose words indicate the depth of the meaning of this landscape for some long-term residents:

as an owner one is mostly a custodian or guardian of a property. Men live short and transient lives; the lucky may pass on their property to children to act as the next generation's custodians.

Houses that are cared for have very long lives. My family home in England is over a thousand years old.

Trees have very long lives in comparison to men and, like men, are living things. Yet their greatest enemy is man.

The two trees in question were mere children and would have lived for several hundred years had they survived. They were extraordinarily beautiful, standing like sentinels on each side of the portico, giving it protection and solidity. . . .

People would stop and admire their magnificence. I always felt so lucky to live in a beautiful area in an elegant house and have the guardianship of those trees, a reminder of a more primeval landscape and a remnant of our heritage.

My decision to sell the house was precipitated by impending retirement. It was taken with a strong sense of foreboding, given the recent fate of similar houses and trees in our city.

Part of me has died with the trees. I bitterly regret what has happened. The two amputated stumps remain as mute grave markers to what has been destroyed.

I am deeply sorry over the anger, grief, and deprivation that have been felt by my friends, neighbors, and those who care for the environmental fabric of our city.<sup>87</sup>

Here an extraordinary effusion of topophilia, love of place, stands bared. Its point of reference is an English hearth, a repose of caring stability, a narrative of protective custody. In a striking anthropomorphism, the trees become children, a lifeline, a path of succession from a valued past, through a protected present, to a promised future. The trees are an extension of the self, the social self, the confirmation of an identity shared with like-minded others. And so it is a collective *neighbourhood* loss that is announced in this arboreal obituary. But it is also deeply personal: 'part of me has died with the trees'. The promise that children bring, to continue a tradition, to carry a past into the future, is gone.

It is a story of death and grieving, the passing of an era. An elderly Scottish couple have lived in Shaughnessy for 35 years: 'We're old and we're going out. This is the end of an era. As soon as we leave, the house will be sold and knocked down and another box will go up in its place'.<sup>88</sup> It is, from this standpoint, the end of trees, houses, neighbourhoods, a way of life, an individual – perhaps a national – identity.

But what is a national identity in a globalizing society? Who is to say? Who has the right to say?<sup>89</sup> Moreover, is there not a strange sense of *déjà vu* in the reception of change among Anglo-Canadians? Before me I have a photograph of a land-claims demonstration by First Nations people on Vancouver Island. A placard held by a young woman reads: 'Money will come and go but the animals, food and country – if we lose them we lose ourselves'. Was not the country appropriated, the trees felled, the animals killed or dispersed, a culture assaulted, by Anglo-Canadians just over a century ago in exactly this place? And was not the act of naming – Kerrisdale, Shaughnessy, Vancouver – a confirmation not of continuity and preservation but of rupture and erasure? For the men of the Dominion displaced a way of life no less bound to the natural environment and the guardianship of the land, no less aware that people live short and transient lives, and that there is a longer river of being to which each generation stands accountable. The soaring guardians of the rain forest became commodities, reduced to the profit and loss entries of some portfolio headquartered thousands of miles away, even as Emily Carr began to see their spiritual power with the animistic eyes of the First Nations, manifesting 'a force beyond . . . one living, moving energy'.<sup>90</sup> And did not this same elite abandon their first neighbourhood, the West End, to the highest bidder, permit its obliteration with no thought of use or symbolic value?

But then again, are *these* Anglo-Canadians, today, responsible for the actions of predecessors with whom they happen to share a family name from a common national origin? Does a common ancestry disqualify a present claim? For now, like Emily Carr's anthropomorphism of 'the protective older tree',<sup>91</sup> the trees, the houses, have become an empowering symbol of meaning and identity, guardians of a tradition. This fundamental shift in valuing by members of the Anglo-Canadian elite means that in their reception of new entrepreneurial immigrants they are in conflict with their own *alter ego*, provoking a 'question of the otherness of the people-as-one', of a dissonance within a national identity of Anglo-conformity.<sup>92</sup> In an ironic shift of historic roles they are now the defenders of the (urban) forest, of a stable way of life against intruders from afar who, in the name of exchange value, are the new agents of creative destruction.

But, in a second ironic turn, though from widely separated origins, the two élites bear a close family resemblance, for both are children of a common empire. The 'return of the margin of the postcolonial migrant ... alienate(s) the holism of history' in laying bare a suppressed and discordant past; the nostalgic myth of a nurturing English tradition, transposed to a Vancouver of leafy streetscapes and Tudor mansions, is disrupted by 'a hybrid national narrative' which presents the double of Anglophilia, its *own other* history of economic liberalism, the chainsaw, and dispossession.<sup>93</sup> As elsewhere, the 'legacy of colonialism negates the possibility of a unitary, stable English identity'.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, that hybrid identity is present as well as past for the anglophile élite seeking government regulation and protection around their homes are free-market advocates at work, members of an economic élite of managers and professionals. Their electoral politics is overwhelmingly Conservative. How many are associated with the downtown corporate giant, MacMillan Bloedel, or at least sympathetic to its logging of the rain forest at Clayoquot Sound?

The missing sequoias are also markers of a grander divisiveness across the Canadian nation, as people from their own subject positions, inflected by language, ethnicity, class, gender, region, colonial status, and interest group, all employing the rhetoric of rights, make the practice of citizenship a jostling, competitive fracas. The fragmentation of identity politics, disclosed so clearly in the failed 1992 referendum on constitutional accord, has earned Canada the title of the first postmodern state in some quarters.<sup>95</sup> The cultural politics of the borderland are shifting and unstable, challenging to the limit the steering capacity of government, and making increasingly problematic any reference to a homogeneous national citizen.

### Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the skilled contribution of Anna Skeels as research assistant, and the criticisms of an earlier draft generously offered by Cole Harris, Audrey Kobayashi, Katharyne Mitchell and two anonymous referees. The research was supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Mr Liang's true identity is concealed by this pseudonym.
- <sup>2</sup> Clifford Geertz, 'Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture', in *The interpretation of cultures* (New York, Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3–30.
- <sup>3</sup> James Clifford, 'Travelling cultures', in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler, eds., *Cultural studies* (New York, Routledge, 1993), pp. 96–112.
- <sup>4</sup> For the somewhat idiosyncratic unfolding of this event, see Ged Martin, 'The naming of British Columbia' *Albion* 10 (1978), pp. 257–63.
- <sup>5</sup> Doris Shadbolt, *Emily Carr* (North Vancouver, J. J. Douglas, 1975), esp. pp. 30–41.
- <sup>6</sup> In 1887 when the city was one year old, 16 real estate firms had served its population of 3000 men, women and children: Graeme Wynn, 'The rise of Vancouver', in G. Wynn and

T. Oke, eds., *Vancouver and its region* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992), pp. 69–148.

- <sup>7</sup> Angus Robertson, 'The pursuit of power, profit and privacy: a study of Vancouver's West End élite, 1886–1914' (unpublished MA thesis, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, 1977), p. 270.
- <sup>8</sup> Robertson, *Pursuit of power*.
- <sup>9</sup> I am grateful to Niall Majury for this illustration: N. Majury, 'Identity, place, power and the "text": Kerry's Dale and the monster house' (unpublished MA thesis, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, 1990).
- <sup>10</sup> Harold Kalman and John Roach, *Exploring Vancouver* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1974), p. 136.
- <sup>11</sup> Deryck Holdsworth, 'House and home in Vancouver: images of West Coast urbanism, 1886–1929', in A. Artubise and G. Stelter, eds., *The Canadian city: essays in urban history* (Toronto, Macmillan, 1979), pp. 186–211; also Wynn, 'Rise of Vancouver'.
- <sup>12</sup> David Lowenthal and Hugh Prince, 'English landscape taste', *Geographical Review* 55 (1965), pp. 186–222.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> See James Duncan, 'Shaughnessy Heights: the protection of privilege', in Shlomo Hasson and David Ley, eds., *Neighbourhood organizations and the welfare state* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 58–82; James Duncan and Nancy Duncan, 'A cultural analysis of urban residential landscapes in North America: the case of the Anglophile élite', in John Agnew, John Mercer and David Sopher, eds., *The city in cultural context* (Boston, Allen and Unwin, 1984), pp. 255–76. For a more general review of Anglophilia among the old élite of urban Canada, see David Ley, 'Past élites and present gentry: neighbourhoods of privilege in the inner city', in Larry Bourne and David Ley, eds., *The changing social geography of Canadian cities* (Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1993), pp. 214–33.
- <sup>15</sup> Geraldine Pratt, 'The house as an expression of social worlds', in James Duncan, ed., *Housing and identity* (London, Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 135–80.
- <sup>16</sup> Duncan, 'Shaughnessy Heights'.
- <sup>17</sup> Duncan and Duncan, 'Anglophile élite'. These controls on design in First Shaughnessy are closely enforced. For their impact upon one (Caucasian) home owner, see Ian Gill, 'You say you want a devolution', *Vancouver Magazine* 26 (November 1993), pp. 48–54, 64–67 and 89.
- <sup>18</sup> Steve Whysall, 'English class comes to campus' *Vancouver Sun*, 31 October 1992, p. C-1. The fourth enclave, Sandringham, includes a wrought-iron fence and low granite wall bounding attached buildings with Tudor gables and brick facing. The style, we are told, is 'old Shaughnessy', while the buyers are 'Shaughnessy, Kerrisdale and Point Grey "empty nesters"'. Polygon Corporation, 'News from Sandringham' (advertising brochure), March 1994.
- <sup>19</sup> Gary Lamphier, 'Vancouver's new power élite', *Financial Times of Canada*, 1 June 1992, pp. 16–17.
- <sup>20</sup> 'The overseas Chinese: a driving force', *The Economist*, 18 July 1992, pp. 21–24.
- <sup>21</sup> 'HK–Canada bridge examined', *Vancouver Courier*, 11 October 1992, p. 26.
- <sup>22</sup> L. Kraar, 'The legend of Li Ka-Shing', *Asiaweek*, 17 July 1992, pp. 56–67. For more detailed discussion of Asian investment in British Columbia, see Donald Gutstein, *The new landlords: Asian investment in Canadian real estate* (Victoria, BC, Porcepic Books, 1990); Margaret Cannon, *China tide: the revealing story of the Hong Kong exodus to Canada* (Toronto, Harper Collins, 1989); John DeMont and Thomas Fennell, *Hong Kong money* (Toronto, Key Porter, 1989).
- <sup>23</sup> Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: racial discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1991). Among many other accounts, labour market concerns are prominent in B. Bolaria and Peter Li, *Racial oppression in Canada* (Toronto,

- Garamond, 1988); Vic Satzewich, 'Racisms: the reactions to Chinese migrants in Canada at the turn of the century', *International Sociology* 4 (1989), pp. 311-27; and Gillian Creese, 'Exclusion or solidarity? Vancouver workers confront the "Oriental problem"', *BC Studies* 80 (1988-89), pp. 24-51.
- <sup>24</sup> In addition, since early in this century there have been significant divisions within the community, based on conflicting positions on the internal politics of China. These internal divisions have been exacerbated in recent years, and were evident in the bitter struggle for control of the Chinese Cultural Centre in 1993 between the traditional Maintain slate, and a loose coalition of younger professionals, the Renewal slate: Alison Appelbe, 'Chinese community rife with change: differences played out in every organization', *Vancouver Courier*, 6 February 1994, p. 13.
- <sup>25</sup> For the first six months of 1993, Asian states (led by Hong Kong) filled the top five ranks in terms of immigrant origins: Moira Farrow, 'Most newcomers well-educated Asians', *Vancouver Sun*, 26 November 1993, p. B-4.
- <sup>26</sup> John Picton, 'Visible minority population soaring, study finds', *Toronto Star*, 30 May 1992, p. A-1; Wayne Lowrie, 'Immigrants putting new face on nation', *Vancouver Sun*, 30 May 1992, p. A-1.
- <sup>27</sup> Data from the Business Immigration Branch of the Department of Employment and Immigration, Government of Canada. Considerable interprovincial migration occurs once immigrants have landed in Canada. While 82 per cent of entrepreneur immigrants in 1990 proposed to make their landing in Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal, there is evidence of subsequent movement of as many as 40 per cent of original immigrants out of Quebec, resettling mainly in Toronto or Vancouver: see Alan Nash, 'Canada's business migration program', *Canadian Immigration Research Newsletter* 1 (1993), pp. 2-4. A survey of 7400 potential immigrants to Canada in Hong Kong indicated that Vancouver was the first choice of 49.8 per cent, with a further 22.6 per cent favouring Toronto: 'Hong Kong survey: Vancouver top choice' *Real Estate Weekly* 13, 30 April 1993, p. 1. In line with this survey, over half of the 1993 immigrant investors to Canada moved to British Columbia (principally Vancouver), although only 12 per cent of investments from this programme (1986-89) were placed in BC: David Baines, 'Price of investing in BC too high, immigrants find', *Vancouver Sun*, 14 May 1994, p. C-5. Thus, the importance of Vancouver as a destination exceeds the 30 per cent figure derived from the stated intention of an initial destination.
- <sup>28</sup> See, for example, Moira Farrow, 'Hong Kong money pouring in', *Vancouver Sun*, 21 August 1989, p. A-1. One estimate suggests that the investor programme, only 12 per cent of business immigrants to Canada in 1989, brought the equivalent of 10 per cent of direct foreign investment to the country that year: Lloyd Wong and Nancy Netting, 'Business immigration to Canada: social impact and racism', in Vic Satzewich, ed., *Deconstructing a nation: immigration, multiculturalism and racism in '90s Canada* (Halifax, NS, Fernwood Publishing, 1992), pp. 93-121.
- <sup>29</sup> Moira Farrow, 'Business immigrants expected to pour \$4 billion into BC this year', *Vancouver Sun*, 9 October 1992, p. A-1.
- <sup>30</sup> Roslyn Kunin, *The economic impact of business immigration into Canada* (Vancouver, Government of Canada, Department of Employment and Immigration, Regional Economic Services Branch, 1991) includes an (optimistic) estimate that the entrepreneur programme created 80,000 new jobs between 1986 and 1990. But there are no firm figures on job creation and most estimates are based on the business proposals of potential immigrants, where there would be evident pressures to inflate projected impacts. For a more cautious view of the economic impacts of business immigration see Nash, 'Canada's business'; and The Economic Council of Canada, *New faces in the crowd: economic and social impacts of immigration* (Ottawa, Department of Supply and Services, 1991). This caution appears amply justified from recent reports of inadequate monitoring of the business immigration

- programme, and the existence of a number of abuses. An Ernst and Young investigation revealed that government figures overestimated employment benefits from the business investor's programme by 30 per cent; investigative journalism revealed scams in the larger class of business immigration: Mark Hume, 'Immigrants find fast lane into the province', *Vancouver Sun*, 18 December 1993, p. A-1; and 'Fake entrepreneurs heading the system' *Vancouver Sun*, 20 December 1993, p. B-1; also the lead editorial, 'Paying to jump the immigration queue', *Vancouver Sun*, 21 December 1993, p. A-10. Concerns about investor compliance with the terms of the programme and its economic benefits to the province led Manitoba to suspend the Immigrant Investor Program in 1993: Anon., 'Moratorium on Immigrant Investor Program in Manitoba', *Canada and Hong Kong Update* 9 (Spring 1993), p. 9.
- <sup>31</sup> Gillian Shaw, 'The Hong Kong connection', *Vancouver Sun*, 18 February 1989, p. A-1.
- <sup>32</sup> Almost a quarter of immigrants over the age of 15 landing in British Columbia in the first half of 1993 held a university degree, a rate more than twice the level of BC residents; Farrow, 'Newcomers'.
- <sup>33</sup> These cultural proclivities have power of discrimination in the local land market. For example, adjacent medium-size older houses in Kerrisdale may have assessed values which differ by \$40,000, because the lower assessed property faces a T-junction, thereby depreciating its value to buyers with a disposition to *feng shui*. For an example of an earlier expression of *feng shui* in the siting of a Chinese cemetery in Victoria, see David Lai, 'A *feng shui* model as a location index', *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 64 (1974), pp. 506-13; also Sarah Rossbach, *Interior design with feng-shui* (New York, E. P. Dutton, 1987).
- <sup>34</sup> Lamphier, 'Power elite'.
- <sup>35</sup> Letter to Council from resident of South Shaughnessy, November 1992.
- <sup>36</sup> Letter to Council from South Shaughnessy resident, 5 October 1992.
- <sup>37</sup> Derek Cheng, Vice-Chair of the Chinatown Merchants' Association and Chair of the city's Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee, complains that city planners with rigid heritage zoning are 'trying to fit us into a Disneyland image' and that 'all of the Chinese people that you talk to ... are against this plan': Alison Appelbe, 'Chinatown and City Hall fight it out', *Vancouver Courier*, 6 February 1994, p. 15. Chinatown merchants are particularly anxious about competition from new Asian-themed malls in suburban Richmond, which in the words of project manager Patrick Wong, are 'bringing the modern style of Hong Kong and Asia to Canada': Daphne Bramham, 'Little Asia', *Vancouver Sun*, 9 March 1993, p. D-1.
- <sup>38</sup> Among the graduating IB class in geography at Churchill in 1992, over 95 per cent had Chinese family names. For examples of the strategic use of education to extend global social networks among the overseas Chinese from a base in Hong Kong, see Katharyne Mitchell, 'Multiculturalism, or the united colors of capitalism?', *Antipode* 25 (1993), pp. 263-94.
- <sup>39</sup> This estimate concurs with my own, derived from residence since 1979 in Kerrisdale.
- <sup>40</sup> Pamela Fayerman, 'Monster mash', *Vancouver Sun*, 15 February 1991, p. B1; Alison Appelbe, 'Monster mismash', *Vancouver Courier*, 28 March 1990, p. 1; Paul Ohannesian, 'How we saved Shaughnessy from monsters', *Vancouver Sun*, 23 June 1990, p. D10.
- <sup>41</sup> See, for example, Kevin Griffin, 'A monster problem in Shaughnessy', *Vancouver Sun*, 17 November 1992, p. B1; Elizabeth Aird, 'There's a 'monster problem' on the street where they live', *Vancouver Sun*, 2 October 1993, p. A3.
- <sup>42</sup> For a detailed chronicle of these land-use adjustments and the pressures driving them, see Barbara Pettit, 'Zoning the market, and the single family landscape: neighbourhood change in Vancouver, Canada' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1992).
- <sup>43</sup> W. T. Stanbury and John Todd, *The housing crisis: the effects of local government regulation* (Vancouver, The Laurier Institute, 1990), pp. 19-20.

- <sup>44</sup> Ann McAfee, 'Vancouver's single-family areas', *Quarterly Review* (City of Vancouver Planning Department) 13 (July 1986), pp. 3-6.
- <sup>45</sup> Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners' Association, *Design guidelines: South Shaughnessy district* (Vancouver, 1992), p. 3. Four of seven suggested designs for new houses in this document are English in origin, including Tudor revival and three variants of English arts and crafts.
- <sup>46</sup> Patricia French Ltd, *Second Shaughnessy zoning study for SHPOA* (Vancouver, 1985), p. 12.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- <sup>48</sup> Memo from Ray Spaxman, Director of Planning, to Planning Department, 18 May 1988.
- <sup>49</sup> Maximum conditional use varied according to lot size for the four options. For detailed specifications, see Director of Planning to Vancouver City Council, 'South Shaughnessy/Granville area zoning', 27 July 1992.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> Ohannesian, 'Monsters'.
- <sup>52</sup> Letter from 15 South Shaughnessy residents to Council, undated (July 1992); letter from Barbara Armstrong, Director of SHPOA, to Council, 21 July 1992.
- <sup>53</sup> The most important feature of these proposals concerned the permitted building area. One of these two options coincided with option B in Table 1, the most favoured response in the survey, reducing 25 per cent of the outright floor area on a typical lot, and the second proposed a more modest 10 per cent reduction, the same as that secured in the Pitts bylaw and in part of Kerrisdale in 1990 following the intervention of the Kerrisdale/Granville Homeowners' Association.
- <sup>54</sup> Quoted in Jack Moore, 'News of racist allegations bemuses thick-skinned Hong Kong', *Vancouver Courier*, 29 November 1992, p. 8. See also Jerry Collins, 'Paying for innocence', *South China Morning Post*, Saturday Review, 14 January 1989, p. 1; and *The Hong Kong connection*, a documentary by Radio-Television Hong Kong aired in November 1989 which presented 'Vancouver as a thoroughly racist society, warning Hong Kong people who intend to emigrate that they could be in for a rough ride': Jack Moore, 'Vancouver tagged racist' *Vancouver Courier*, 19 November 1989, p. 1. Of course the government-run television corporation might have reasons of its own for discouraging emigration, another variant on the role of racism in the politics of explanation.
- <sup>55</sup> Letter to the editor, *Vancouver Courier*, 11 October 1992, p. 7.
- <sup>56</sup> David Ley and John Mercer, 'Locational conflict and the politics of consumption', *Economic Geography* 56 (1980), pp. 89-109.
- <sup>57</sup> Letter to Council from a husband and wife in South Shaughnessy, 15 October 1992 (my emphasis). While these letters are public record, the names of correspondents are not disclosed here as a protection of privacy.
- <sup>58</sup> Letter to Council from South Shaughnessy residents, 3 October and 21 September 1992.
- <sup>59</sup> Letter to Council from a resident of South Shaughnessy, 5 August 1988.
- <sup>60</sup> From Director of Planning to Vancouver City Council, 'South Shaughnessy options: report back proposed rezoning', 10 May 1993.
- <sup>61</sup> Letters to Council from a South Shaughnessy resident, 5 and 18 September 1992.
- <sup>62</sup> Letters to Council, 16 September and 3 October 1992.
- <sup>63</sup> The five following testimonies were presented to the public hearing by Chinese-Canadian residents on 5 October 1992.
- <sup>64</sup> 'You can't stop progress with by laws', *Burnaby Now*, 6 May 1987. While the conflict has taken different forms in other municipalities, and has nowhere created such a sustained furore as in Shaughnessy-Kerrisdale, the oversize house has been a source of acute controversy in a number of Vancouver suburbs, including Burnaby, Richmond, North Vancouver and Surrey.
- <sup>65</sup> Letter to Council from a resident of South Shaughnessy, 9 January 1989 (my emphasis).

- <sup>66</sup> Letter to Council from a resident of South Shaughnessy, 1 December 1992.
- <sup>67</sup> Letter to Council from B. D. Hersh, West Side Builders Association of BC, 15 September 1992; also Moira Farrow, 'Monster homes: proposed changes to city bylaw called racist', *Vancouver Sun*, 19 September 1992, p. B1. This was far from the first such designation, but part of a longer strategic use by the builders of the charge of racism. See, for example, Michael Hennessey, 'Racism and the dilemma of changing neighbourhoods', brief to City Council by Allied Builders, 1986.
- <sup>68</sup> 'Vancouver planning law fuels racist fire', *South China Morning Post*, 4 October 1992; an 'ad hoc committee' in Shaughnessy had sent their account of the conflict to the newspaper (with an unsigned copy to Council); for an account from a Caucasian correspondent in Hong Kong see Moore, 'Racist allegations'. See also note 54.
- <sup>69</sup> See the four articles in the business magazine *Equity* under the theme title, 'Racism: will it kill investment billions?' *Equity* 7 (1989), pp. 20-35; see also the discussion in Mitchell 'Multiculturalism'.
- <sup>70</sup> Letter from Eric Watt to Council, 7 October 1992. Hersh's allegation was rebutted vigorously. See, for example, letter to the editor, 'Good taste not racist', *Vancouver Courier*, 11 October 1992, p. 7, which includes this paragraph: 'I am not racist. I tell myself this over and over to loosen the creeping fingers of intimidation that Mr Hersh and his developer friends are attempting to tighten around my voice box' (original emphasis).
- <sup>71</sup> 'Most of the apparent racism is in fact class antagonism wrapped in a racial envelope': Wong and Netting, 'Business immigration', citation on p. 121.
- <sup>72</sup> Letter to Council from South Shaughnessy resident, 5 October 1992.
- <sup>73</sup> Letter to Council from resident of Kerrisdale, 11 October 1988.
- <sup>74</sup> Brief presented to the City Council, 28 October 1992 (original emphasis).
- <sup>75</sup> Hon. David Lam, 'Lam advises Hong Kong on Canada', *Vancouver Sun*, 13 December 1989, cited in Pettit, 'Zoning', p. 107. The response of established segments of the Chinese-Canadian community shows in general sympathies split between ethnic solidarity on the one hand and on the other criticism of a lack of sensitivity by new immigrants to the cultural values they encounter: see remarks quoted in Pettit, 'Zoning', p. 162. While racism was likely a motive for some Anglo-Canadians in resisting redevelopment pressures, it should be remembered that SHPOA's actions in South Shaughnessy continued their earlier defence of heritage in First Shaughnessy, an intervention that was completed several years before the 'monster house' became a public issue. Racism of course can be implicit as well as explicit, concealed in undirected and taken-for-granted discourse and institutions. In this rendering, the appeal to an English (Tudor), Chinese (*feng shui*) or any national tradition, is culturally discriminatory. This argument, forcefully made by Paul Gilroy, leaves few sources untarnished, and in a recent essay Gilroy has inculpated the *English* cultural studies tradition itself: Paul Gilroy, 'Cultural studies and ethnic absolutism', in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler, eds., *Cultural studies* (New York, Routledge, 1992), pp. 187-98. Other scholars have imputed causality for racism to capitalism, or colonialism, or much older habits of thought and practice. For a critical discussion (that includes Gilroy's work), see Robert Miles, *Racism after 'race relations'* (London, Routledge, 1993).
- <sup>76</sup> The Laurier Institute, 'Fact sheet', November 1989 (my emphasis).
- <sup>77</sup> Cited in Mitchell, 'Multiculturalism'.
- <sup>78</sup> The Laurier Institute, 'Press release: Laurier Institute releases findings of UBC study into Vancouver real estate prices', 15 November 1989.
- <sup>79</sup> Even the maximum fee would have amounted to under 3 per cent of the cost of a new house. For more discussion of these reports, see Mitchell, 'Multiculturalism'; and Pettit, 'Zoning'.
- <sup>80</sup> Pettit, 'Zoning', p. 142, and pers. comm.
- <sup>81</sup> 'Blame "boomers" for boom', *Real Estate Weekly*, 24 November 1989, p. 1.

- <sup>82</sup> Michael Goldberg, 'Vancouver: a Pacific Rim city in the making', *UBC Alumni Chronicle* (Winter 1991), pp. 22, 24. The theoretical as well as empirical implications of this assessment are of course problematic. Compare the view, derived from Vancouver realtors, of pro-business *Forbes* magazine which has no local axes to grind – 'As a result of the Hong Kong invasion, residential real estate prices are booming': Ellen Paris, 'Yacht people' *Forbes*, 8 August 1988, pp. 48–49. Financial experts estimated that \$500 million were invested by Hong Kong investors in British Columbia real estate in 1988, primarily in Vancouver: Donald Gutstein, 'Hong Kong money', *Vancouver Sun* (December 1989), pp. 39–48, 141–44.
- <sup>83</sup> Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 'Beyond "culture": space, identity and the politics of difference', *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1992) pp. 6–23. Quotation is on p. 10.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>85</sup> Audrey Kobayashi, 'Multiculturalism: representing a Canadian institution', in James Duncan and David Ley, eds., *Place/culture/representation* (London, Routledge, 1993), pp. 205–31; and Satzewich, *Deconstructing a nation*. For an Australian version, see Stephen Castles, Mary Kalantzis, Bill Cope and Michael Morrissey, *Mistaken identity: Multiculturalism and the demise of nationalism in Australia* (Sydney, Pluto Press, 1988).
- <sup>86</sup> Elizabeth Godley, 'Neighbors protest tree-cutting', *Vancouver Sun*, 9 March 1990, p. B-1.
- <sup>87</sup> 'Part of me has died with the trees', letter to the editor, *Vancouver Sun*, 16 April 1990, p. A-9.
- <sup>88</sup> Kevin Griffin, 'A monster problem in Shaughnessy', *Vancouver Sun*, 17 November 1992, p. B-1.
- <sup>89</sup> For personally infused thoughts on the issue of identity, race and nation in England, see John Western, *A passage to England* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992). Compare Paul Gilroy, *There ain't no black in the Union Jack: the cultural politics of race and nation* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991). Gilroy's specification of the necessary relations between the politics of nation and race introduces an intonation on racism that there is not space to address here (but see note 75).
- <sup>90</sup> Shadbolt, *Emily Carr*, p. 55.
- <sup>91</sup> A repeated personification in her portraits of the rain forest: *ibid.*, p. 62.
- <sup>92</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern state', in *Nation and Narration* (London, Routledge, 1990), pp. 291–322. Quotation on p. 301.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.
- <sup>94</sup> Joanne Sharp, 'A topology of "post" nationality: (re)mapping identity in The Satanic Verses', *Ecumene* 1 (1994), pp. 65–76. Citation is on p. 67.
- <sup>95</sup> The title of a recent conference in England. See also Linda Hutcheon, *Splitting images: contemporary Canadian ironies* (Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1991); and the view of Australian multiculturalism that regards 'community without nation' as the best outcome possible from existing societal trends: Castles, 'Mistaken identity', pp. 139–48.



## 'THAT DANGEROUS FANTASY OF AUTHENTICITY': A REVIEW OF THE J. C. SLAUGHTER FALLS COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT, BRISBANE<sup>1</sup>

Jane M. Jacobs

On 3 June 1992 the High Court of Australia found in the case known as *Mabo vs. Queensland* that the Meriam people were entitled 'as against the whole of the world to the possession, occupation, use and enjoyment of (most of) the land of the Murray islands in the Torres Strait' which lies northeast of the Australian mainland.<sup>2</sup> The implication of the 1992 decision was that the common law in Australia must recognize Native Title to land and thereby reject the notion of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one) which, until that point in time, was the (increasingly mythological) founding myth of modern Australia. Acting on this decision the Federal government passed the Native Title Act (1993), which formally rejects the notion of *terra nullius* and provides for Aboriginal land claims (based on traditional associations), and compensation for loss of land. The Federal government had already embarked on what it calls a process of 'reconciliation' between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians and the *Mabo* decision and the Native Title Act provided early evidence of meaningful action. *Mabo* and Native Title are bold reconciliation gestures which reach across the nation and into the heart of the way Australia is seeking to reconstitute itself in the contemporary moment. In this brief commentary I would like to focus upon a far less grand act of reconciliation, a community art project. This case points to some of the limits and potentials of reconciliatory gestures in a nation which is as deeply marked by its colonial past as it is by its desire for a postcolonial future.

In mid-1993, artists Laurie Nilsen and Marshall Bell of Campfire Consultancy, an Aboriginal visual arts company, completed a community arts project commissioned by the Brisbane City Council.<sup>3</sup> The project was part of the Council's commitment to reconciliation in the International Year of Indigenous People. This gesture of reconciliation produced a 1.5 km walking trail at J. C. Slaughter Falls, Mt Coot-tha, some 10 minutes drive from the urban centre of Brisbane. The trail wends past a number of