

“Addicts, Crooks, and Drunks”:

Reimagining Vancouver’s Skid Road through the Photography of Fred Herzog, 1957–70

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Abstract

“Addicts, Crooks, and Drunks”:
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This thesis explores how Canadian artist Fred Herzog’s (b. 1930) empathetic photographs of unattached, white, working-class men living on Vancouver’s Skid Road in the 1950s and 1960s contest dominant newspaper representations. Herzog’s art practice is framed as a sociologically-oriented form of *flânerie* yielding original, nuanced, and critical images that transcend the stereotypes of the drunk, the criminal, the old-age pensioner, and the sexual deviant on Skid Road. I apply Critical Discourse Analysis to newspaper articles published in the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province* between 1950 and 1970 to uncover how newspaper discourse produced and reproduced the socioeconomic marginalization of men on Skid Road. Through a comparative analysis, this thesis shows how Herzog’s photographs challenge dominant newspaper discourse in the following ways: by expanding the Skid Road discourse to allow the possibility of positive subject-positions; by demonstrating a dialectical rather than causal relationship between masculinity and space; and by exposing the ways in which the supposedly deviant sexual practices of men on Skid Road in fact stemmed from the hegemonic capitalist and patriarchal structures of Western society. Drawing on feminist, social, and Neo-Marxian class theories, this study not only deconstructs dominant perspectives but also gives visibility to alternative ones, thereby underscoring working-class subjectivities and uncovering the ways in which working-class masculinity on Skid Road both defied and conformed to hegemonic masculinity in the postwar period.

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Introduction

Canadian artist Fred Herzog (b. 1930) began photographing the streets and residents of downtown Vancouver in 1957.¹ His archive of more than 100,000 images has been described by Vancouver-based curator Bill Jeffries as “the single greatest Vancouver photographic document.”² In the late 1950s and 1960s, Herzog spent much of his spare time recording the city’s working-class neighbourhoods, which today are situated in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.³ He explains his attraction to these communities thusly: “The people whose living room is the street are far more expressive to me, and far more uninhibited ... than the businesspeople in the grey suits who try to express an authority that they may or may not have.”⁴ Beyond an interest in recording those who infused the city with its unique energy and character, Herzog’s documentation of working-class lives was motivated by a sense of social justice. He has said: “I’m still a bit of a missionary. ... I’m carrying all this into my picture-taking, and that includes my sense of a just society.”⁵

Although Herzog’s impressive historical record may offer significant insights into the social history of Vancouver, public access to his archive remains limited due to the fragility of his photographic slides.⁶ Nevertheless, a handful of recent publications offer a healthy number of

¹ Sarah Milroy, “Fred Herzog: Words and Pictures,” in *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011), 12.

² Bill Jeffries, “The Shock of the Old--The Street Photograph in Vancouver,” in *Unfinished Business: Photographing Vancouver Streets, 1955 to 1985*, ed. Bill Jeffries, Glen Lowry, and Jerry Zaslove (Burnaby: West Coast Line; North Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery, 2005), 24.

³ Over time Herzog became disinterested in photographing the same areas. He explains: “During the first three or four years I was very motivated, but when I revisited the same places maybe for the sixth or seventh time I thought, ‘What else could I do?’ Nobody wants to retrace his own steps too much. This is why I don’t do that much street photography now.” See Stephen Waddell, “Conversation: Fred Herzog in Conversation with Stephen Waddell, August 28, 2010,” in *Fred Herzog Photographs* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 181; Milroy, “Words,” 12.

⁴ Milroy, “Words,” 12.

⁵ “Shot on the Street,” *Georgia Straight*, January 9–18, 2003, 49.

⁶ Grant Arnold, “Interview with Fred Herzog,” last modified August 15, 2006, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.douglas-mcintyre.com/interview/19>. Herzog’s slides are slowly and selectively being made into prints by Equinox Gallery in Vancouver.

high-quality colour reproductions of Herzog's photographs.⁷ I first encountered his work in the book *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (2011), in which the judicious juxtaposition of pictures on each page stimulates a compelling dialogue.⁸ As I studied these images, I began to discern a narrative about the everyday life of the unattached, white, working-class man in postwar Vancouver⁹—a narrative that has not been studied by other art historians. This figure appears in Herzog's photographs roaming the streets, peering into the windows of secondhand shops, passing the time in cafés, perusing used books, and patronizing barbershops. Often middle-aged, this figure is sometimes wearing a “decent jacket and nice cap,”¹⁰ and at other times he is dressed in tattered and grimy clothing. As an unattached working-class man when he first arrived in Vancouver in 1953,¹¹ Herzog viewed other men like himself as a source of the “disorderly vitality” of the

⁷ For a list of public and private institutions that own works by Herzog, see “Fred Herzog,” Equinox Gallery, accessed April 11, 2016, <http://www.equinoxgallery.com/artists/bio/fred-herzog>.

⁸ Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

⁹ I use the term “unattached” to describe men who were not living with a partner, including bachelors, married men who were separated from their wives, divorcés, and widowers. It is difficult to establish the percentage of men in each category since this information is not available in published studies on Skid Road. Also, the boundaries of Skid Road vary from study to study. Relying on a 1951 census, Steiman states that there are 1,600 single men within a population of 4,500 (36%) on Skid Road (identified in Steiman's text as “Area A”). See Boris Steiman, “Community Organization for Social Welfare” (master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1955), 30, 33–34. A 1965 study on Skid Road and surrounding areas in the East End indicates that single men (fifteen years and over) comprised 27.9% of the population, while married men represented 38.0% of the population. See Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 14, 18.

¹⁰ Meeka Walsh and Robert Enright, “Colour His World: The Photography of Fred Herzog,” *Border Crossings* 30, no. 3 (September–November 2011).

¹¹ I would argue that Herzog belonged to and identified as a member of the working class in his early years in Canada, despite being born into a middle-class family in Germany and later working as a medical photographer and university instructor beginning in the late 1950s. As a teenager he was unable to complete his high school education because he had to support himself financially after the death of his parents in the mid-1940s. Herzog moved to Toronto in 1952, and by the end of his first day he was penniless. He moved to Vancouver in 1953, and was employed as a seaman for four years before becoming a medical photographer. Although class is traditionally defined by Marx according to one's position within the relations of production, Sally Munt distinguishes between class as an objective classification and as a subjective experience. Therefore, a person who was raised in a middle-class household but is categorized as a member of the working class based on his/her occupation may self-identify as either working-class or middle-class. As this thesis will demonstrate, Herzog's street photographs and commentary on his own work suggest that he possessed a worldview that was more closely aligned with those of the working class in the 1950s and 1960s. See Marsha Lederman, “The Collision: Fred Herzog, the Holocaust and Me,” *Globe and Mail*, May 5, 2012, R6; Sally R. Munt, introduction to *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change*, ed. Sally R. Munt (London; New York: Cassell, 2000), 2–3.

city,¹² and recorded their rituals, behaviours, social interactions, tastes, and social spaces.

Although these men enlivened the streets of the city, Herzog's photographs also reveal their profound solitude and alienation.¹³ Indeed, most of them lived in extreme poverty in a blighted area of downtown locally referred to as Skid Road.¹⁴

So while Herzog's photographs of downtown Vancouver in the 1950s and 1960s may satisfy collective nostalgia for the postwar period, they reveal more than a picturesque glimpse into the past: they also speak of ongoing class, gender, and racial divides in an era of rising middle-class prosperity and hegemony. The dominance of a social group is always unstable,¹⁵ and newspaper discourse reveals middle-class anxieties concerning the threat of Skid Road to social order. The *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province* (also called the *Vancouver Province*), the two major English-language daily newspapers with middle-class readerships in Vancouver, regularly reported on Skid Road throughout the late 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶ Coverage was heavily predicated on prevailing notions of deviance and normality with regards to masculinity, sexuality, and use of public urban space. Skid Road was often portrayed as a problem area that suffered from a

¹² Fred Herzog, "Exploring Vancouver in the Fifties and Sixties," in *Unfinished Business: Photographing Vancouver Streets, 1955 to 1985*, ed. Bill Jeffries, Glen Lowry, and Jerry Zaslove (Burnaby: West Coast Line; North Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery, 2005), 160.

¹³ Milroy, "Words," 18.

¹⁴ Vancouver was the first city in Canada to have a skid road. Coined at the turn of the twentieth century in the Pacific Northwest (possibly in Seattle), the term "skid road" originally referred to the road that loggers used to skid logs to the waterfront or to a railway track, where they would then be transported to a lumber mill. The term began to be used across the United States and Canada. By the 1930s the term "skid road" had morphed into the derogatory term "skid row" to describe the area at the end of a skid road where unemployed workers gathered and places catering to them developed, such as saloons and beer parlours, gambling joints, brothels, and cheap rooming houses and hotels. See Bill Casselman, "Skidrow and Other Neighbourhood Nicknames," *Canadian Geographic* (May/June 1998), accessed March 31, 2016, <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/magazine/mj98/tongue.asp>; James F. Rooney, "Societal Forces and the Unattached Male: An Historical Review," in *Disaffiliated Man: Essays and Bibliography on Skid Row, Vagrancy, and Outsiders*, ed. Howard M. Bahr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 16; Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 410.

¹⁵ John E. Richardson, *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 36.

¹⁶ Since 1957 the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province* have been owned by the same company, Pacific Press (now called the Pacific Newspaper Group). See Marc Edge, *Pacific Press: The Unauthorized Story of Vancouver's Newspaper Monopoly* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2001).

combination of physical deterioration and the moral degradation of alcoholics, drug addicts, criminals, “sex perverts,” derelicts, failures, and rebels.¹⁷ As Jeff Sommers has argued, newspapers asserted that the pathological masculinity of men on Skid Road was the cause of the area’s physical decay.¹⁸ In this thesis, I argue that Herzog’s photographs of unattached, white, working-class men on Skid Road contest dominant newspaper representations of this district in the 1950s and 1960s in the following ways: by expanding the Skid Road discourse to allow the possibility of positive subject-positions; by demonstrating a dialectical rather than causal relationship between masculinity and space; and by exposing the ways in which the supposedly deviant sexual practices of men on Skid Road in fact stemmed from the hegemonic capitalist and patriarchal structures of Western society.

Situated on traditional Stó:Lo territory,¹⁹ Skid Road was an area of the city’s East End that was dominated by a white, working-class, male population from the turn of the twentieth century until the early 1970s, when it was renamed the Downtown Eastside.²⁰ Although its boundaries changed over time, it generally bordered the central business district to the west, the industrial waterfront to the north, and the residential areas of Chinatown and Strathcona to the south and east (fig. 1).²¹

¹⁷ Bill Ryan, “Vancouver’s Shame ‘---The Lowest in Humanity,’” *Vancouver Province*, November 12, 1952, 1; Bill Ryan, “Vancouver’s Shame: ‘Skid Road - - Street of Lost Souls,’” *Vancouver Province*, November 8, 1952, 1.

¹⁸ Jeff Sommers, “Men at the Margin: Masculinity and Space in Downtown Vancouver, 1950–1986,” *Urban Geography* 19, no. 4 (1998): 287.

¹⁹ Jodi Newnham, “An Overview of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside for UBC Learning Exchange Trek Program Participants,” last modified January 2005, <http://www.learningexchange.ubc.ca/files/2010/11/overviewdtes2016.pdf>.

²⁰ Jo-Ann Canning Dew, ed., *Hastings and Main: Stories from an Inner City Neighbourhood* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1987), 14.

²¹ Sommers, “Men,” 293.

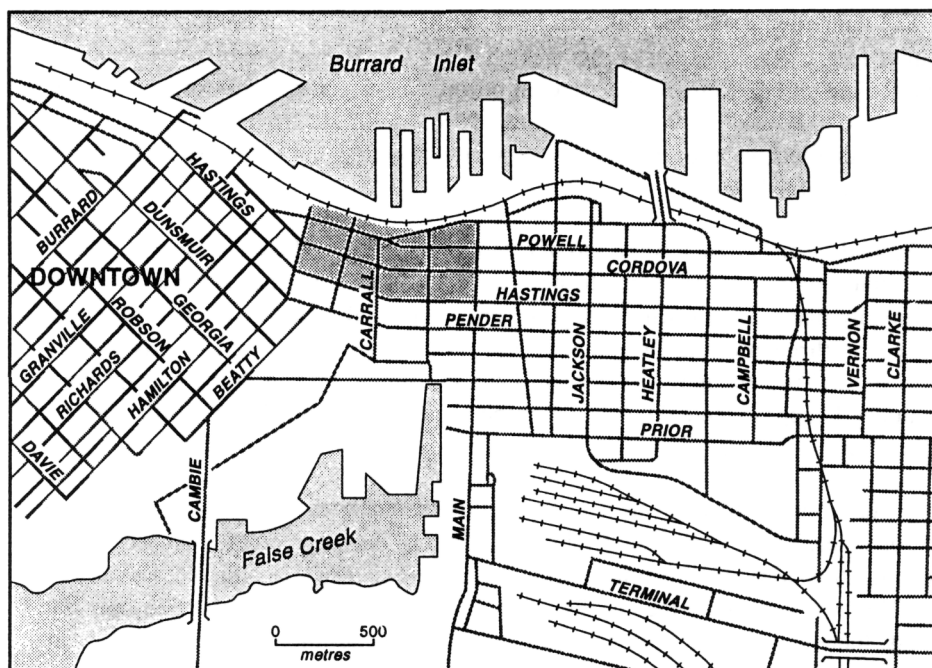


Fig. 1. “The area (darker pattern) that civic officials called skid row in the late 1950s and early 1960s.” Reproduced from Jeff Sommers, “Men at the Margin: Masculinity and Space in Downtown Vancouver, 1950–1986,” *Urban Geography* 19, no. 4 (1998): 293.

When Herzog began photographing the area in the late 1950s, Skid Road was, as Jeffries describes it, “tough but livable,”²² yet it had once been “the fashionable heart of the city.”²³ Following the incorporation of Vancouver as a city in 1886, the main commercial centre of the city developed on Cordova Street between Cambie and Carrall Streets.²⁴ The residential and recreational spaces of this area served the distinct population of white men employed in the diverse industries on the Burrard Inlet and False Creek waterfronts,²⁵ and included rooming houses, hotels, cafés, beer parlours, secondhand shops, barbershops, and employment agencies.²⁶

As development moved westward, the West End became home to middle-class residents, while

²² Jeffries, “Shock,” 25.

²³ W.E. Graham, *Downtown – Eastside: A Preliminary Study* (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1965), 19.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Jeff Sommers and Nick Blomley, “The Worst Block in Vancouver,” in *Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings*, ed. Reid Shier (Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery/Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002), 31.

²⁶ Sommers, “Men,” 290; Emil Gutman, “Housing: A Problem in Skid Row Rehabilitation” (master’s thesis, University of British Columbia, 1972), 3.

the East End remained a working-class area.²⁷ Middle-class elites denounced the recreational activities associated with the bachelor subculture of Skid Road in the East End, spearheading one moral campaign after another in order to curb drinking, the sex trade, and gambling.²⁸ Furthermore, neglect by city officials and the accelerated migration of middle-class residents from the downtown area to the suburbs in the 1940s and 1950s caused Skid Road to acquire a negative image of physical and moral decay.²⁹ Its population also changed: postwar developments such as the forming of unions,³⁰ the settling of migrant labourers into family life, and the diminishing need for transient workers due to technological advancements meant that Skid Road was no longer dominated by men employed as seasonal labourers,³¹ but by unemployed, sick, disabled, and aging men who were drawn to the cheap rent and social services available in the area.³² Similar to skid rows elsewhere in North America, Vancouver's Skid Road was characterized by a population of predominantly unattached white men who, for various reasons, lived in dire poverty.³³

Although there is no record of Herzog mentioning Skid Road specifically, in a recent reflection on his early work he claims he sought to expose the disjunction between everyday reality and ideology: "I wanted to show the drama, the tension between the reality of how our world presents itself and what we want it to be, which could also be said to be what we pretend it to be."³⁴ Given Herzog's concern for social justice, this comment suggests that he aimed to show

²⁷ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 19–20.

²⁸ Diane Purvey and John Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir, 1930–1960* (Vancouver: Anvil Press, 2011), 38.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 47; Reid Shier, introduction to *Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings*, ed. Reid Shier (Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery/Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002), 13.

³⁰ Sommers and Blomley, "The Worst Block," 31.

³¹ Robert McDonald, "Working," in *Working Lives: Vancouver 1886–1986*, ed. Elaine Bernard (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1985), 31.

³² Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 21.

³³ Sommers, "Men," 287.

³⁴ Fred Herzog, "Notes Regarding My Approach to Photography" (unpublished notes, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, undated).

the disconnect between what he read in newspapers about Skid Road and his lived experiences. Taking into account the intersectionality of class, gender, race, and sexuality, my comparative investigation of postwar representations of Skid Road by Herzog and in news coverage addresses the following questions: What was the relationship of straight, white, working-class masculinity to other existing masculinities? How did the relations of production affect the construction of masculinities? How were gender relations between white working-class men and women characterized? How was the relationship between masculinity and urban space represented?

Before examining how Herzog's photographs contest dominant newspaper representations of Skid Road in the postwar period, it is first necessary to analyze the dominant discourse, and at this time, newspaper representations in particular, because of their tremendous influence on society. As Richardson writes,

Journalism has social effects: through its power to shape issue agendas and public discourse, it can reinforce beliefs; it can shape people's opinions not only of the world but also of their *place* and *role* in the world; or, if not shape your opinions on a particular matter, it can at the very least influence *what* you have opinions on; in sum, it can help shape social reality by shaping our *views* of social reality.³⁵

My study is informed by nearly forty newspaper articles on Skid Road, dating from 1952 to 1970, and primarily from the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province*.³⁶ These newspaper articles frequently described Skid Road as a problem that needed to be "cleaned up."³⁷ Journalists, police, social workers, and religious and political officials condemned Skid Road as a dangerous area populated by people who, because they disregarded behavioural norms and values associated with the middle class, posed a threat to social stability. The representation of marginalized men as deviants in the local newspapers would have had a powerful impact on

³⁵ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 13.

³⁶ Most of these newspaper articles are available at the Vancouver Public Library in a newspaper clipping file labelled "Skid Road." Additional articles are listed in the bibliography of Sommers, "Men."

³⁷ Bud Elsie, "Skidroad Cleanup Made City Target: Shocking Reports," *Province*, May 14, 1965, 1; Bill Ryan, "Vancouver's Shame: City Has No Plan for Skid Road Cleanup," *Province*, November 13, 1952, 1; "Council Goaded, Acts on Skid Road," *Vancouver Sun*, May 14, 1965.

public perceptions. For most middle-class residents, knowledge of Skid Road was based primarily on the predominantly negative depictions of it in the media. In the postwar period, most middle-class residents of the West End and suburbs rarely, if ever, visited the East End.³⁸ Reflecting on his childhood in the West End, Dan Francis confesses, “I hardly knew the eastside existed. ... My city ended at Cambie Street.”³⁹ The area east of Cambie Street constituted the heart of Skid Road. Since working-class values were similar to those of the middle class, including “the fulfillment of interpersonal obligations, self-improvement, staying out of trouble, and a rising standard of living,” many working-class residents, too, would have trusted such representations.⁴⁰ The power of newspaper discourse to shape opinions is clearly demonstrated by the fact that Vancouver residents generally opposed the elimination of Skid Road because of the possibility that its inhabitants would resettle in their neighbourhood.⁴¹

Drawing on Richardson’s text *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, I investigate newspaper discourse on Skid Road in the 1950s and 1960s using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is a theory and a method that analyzes “social problems, and especially the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination.”⁴² Richardson defines “news discourse” as “the system (and the values upon which it is based) whereby news organizations select and organize the possible statements on a

³⁸ Didactic panel in *1950s: The 50’s Gallery* exhibition, Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, 2015. The exhibition states that “[d]owntown belonged to everyone, but the city split in two at Main St.” Purvey and Belshaw claim that the West End and East End “were two solitudes, separated by social class, location, and race.” However, according to the 1965 *Downtown – Eastside* report, some middle-class individuals did visit the East End: “Hastings Street continues to draw shoppers,—attracted by lower prices,—from the entire city. ... Shoppers and workers who mingle with local residents during the day, leave the area at night to those who live there and those attracted to the neon glitter of East Hastings Street.” Moreover, Becki Ross states that some West Enders frequented clubs in the East End. See Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 66; Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 21–22; Becki Ross, *Burlesque West: Showgirls, Sex, and Sin in Postwar Vancouver* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto, 2009), 61.

³⁹ Didactic panel in *1950s: The 50’s Gallery* exhibition, Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, 2015.

⁴⁰ Theodore Caplow, “The Sociologist and the Homeless Man,” in *Disaffiliated Man: Essays and Bibliography on Skid Row, Vagrancy, and Outsiders*, ed. Howard M. Bahr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 10.

⁴¹ Laura Huey, *Negotiating Demands: The Politics of Skid Row Policing in Edinburgh, San Francisco, and Vancouver* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 13.

⁴² Teun A. van Dijk, quoted in Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 1.

particular subject.”⁴³ He argues that “the analysis of how newspapers may (re)produce iniquitous social relations needs to be focused at three levels: on the material realities of society in general; on the practices of journalism; and on the character and function of journalistic language more specifically.”⁴⁴ In other words, to elucidate how newspaper discourse perpetuated the marginalization and oppression of men on Skid Road in the postwar era, it is important to analyze not only article content and social practices, but also the processes of journalistic production and consumption of newspapers during that period in Vancouver. What we find—in words, not pictures—is a pattern of oscillation between invisibility and hypervisibility.

To fully grasp the discursive practices of journalism, it is important to keep in mind that 1) news sources are often associated with powerful social groups; 2) the news is always tailored to a specific audience; and 3) there is a dialectical relationship between the prejudice and social inequalities of our society and journalism.⁴⁵ Because social groups have differential access to the news, the values and beliefs of more powerful groups and institutions, such as the government, police, and scientific experts, are more heavily represented in the news.⁴⁶ These groups struggle to maintain their position as the ruling, or hegemonic, class, without recourse to violent persuasion.⁴⁷ Journalists support the dominant class by constantly reproducing its ideas and values in the news and thus naturalizing the inequalities of capitalism. Meanwhile, newspapers exclude the voices of those who belong to subordinated groups and who thus pose a threat to the hegemony of the ruling class—such as the urban poor on Skid Road.⁴⁸ However, these choices

⁴³ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 76.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴⁷ Richardson elaborates: “Hegemony may be described as the process in which a ruling class persuades all other classes to accept its rule and their subordination [without applied force] ... Hegemony is maintained by the ruling class teaching their ideas and their values to the general public, particularly their central claim to political legitimacy.” See Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 35.

⁴⁸ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 6.

are not based on the personal biases of journalists but are journalistic practices that are reflective of the overall class structure of society.⁴⁹ The working classes often remain invisible in newspapers with middle-class readerships, but whenever they are a subject of discussion, they are given hypervisibility. As Dreama Moon and Garry Rolison explain:

Institutionalized classism functions to make lower valences class groups *invisible*, and thus unworthy of recognition (e.g., “nonpersons” such as janitors and maids), or *hyper visible* and marked as symbols of ridicule (e.g., “rednecks,” poor “White trash”), disdain (e.g., welfare recipients), and/or fear (e.g., the underclass, gangs). Rather than a dichotomy, invisibility and hypervisibility are simply inverted strategies of the same type in that they objectify dominated class subjects.⁵⁰

One of the ways journalists give hypervisibility to the working class is by disseminating knowledge about them that has been obtained by the police, social workers, and welfare professionals through “an injunction to tell.”⁵¹ These forms of knowledge are shaped by the biases, assumptions, and values of such authorities, and represent a “middle-class idea of working-class difference.”⁵² Indeed, the middle class invented the category of the working class in order to define itself against distinctive “others” and to establish its own identity.⁵³ The power of the middle class to produce knowledge about the working class not only affects how members of the working class are treated, but also influences how they perceive themselves.⁵⁴ This process has often enabled the middle class to blame the working class for society’s ills, thereby maintaining the hegemony of the middle class and the oppression of the working class. Moon and Rolison state: “First, we can attribute a dysfunctional culture to low-valenced groups. Second, we can personalize the ‘failings’ of group members. Third, based on the personal

⁴⁹ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁰ Dreama Moon and Garry Rolison, “Communication of Classism,” in *Communicating Prejudice*, ed. M.L. Hecht (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998), 128.

⁵¹ Chris Haylett, “‘This is About Us, This is Our Film!’: Personal and Popular Discourses of ‘Underclass’,” in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change*, ed. Sally R. Munt (London; New York: Cassell, 2000), 74.

⁵² Ibid., 73.

⁵³ Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 4.

⁵⁴ Moon and Rolison, “Classism,” 130.

responsibility of their condition, we can attribute dependence to the group. Finally, we can blame the group for the failings of society as a whole.”⁵⁵ Poverty, for instance, is a problem that the middle class traces to undesirable personality traits—traits that counter those that members of the middle class ascribe to themselves, including self-discipline and the ability to plan ahead and achieve established goals. Thus, poverty is deemed “a mere symptom in [*sic*] the ‘real’ problem—some intrinsic lack located within the lower class.”⁵⁶

Undermining the power of dominant representations entails not only their deconstruction, but also attention to alternative perspectives.⁵⁷ In *Outlaw Culture*, bell hooks states: “To change the face of poverty so that it becomes once again, a site for the formation of values, of dignity and integrity, as any other class positionality in this society, we would need to intervene in existing systems of representation.”⁵⁸ However, Chris Haylett warns that it is unproductive to try to substitute prevailing representations of the working class with “more truthful” ones.⁵⁹ Instead, she proposes “an epistemology based on personal and popular experiences that are both real and imagined.”⁶⁰ Haylett advocates a particular understanding of ethnography as “a reflexive method of creatively constructing reality,” in which “intertextual, plurivocal and interpretative forms and methods of practice take over from the scientific authorial voice.”⁶¹ Although Haylett states that non-traditional ethnographic forms such as poetry, novels, and films are best suited to this purpose, I posit that Herzog’s work—despite the fact that photography is a traditional ethnographic medium—similarly allows for the possibility of new ways of knowing the working

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Sally Robinson, “Pedagogy of the Opaque: Teaching Masculinity Studies,” in *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions*, ed. Judith Kegan Gardiner (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 147.

⁵⁸ bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 169–71.

⁵⁹ Haylett, “Underclass,” 70.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 74.

class.⁶² In its exploration of the everyday lives of the working class, Herzog's artistic practice embraces unexpected details and meanings,⁶³ generating in his photographs what Haylett wants from ethnography: a "fullness of meaning" and "complexity which refuses both the viewer and the [creator] absolute control over the subject's story."⁶⁴ Herzog describes his work in comparable terms: "The viewer is given the opportunity to discover elements and links—some of which may be unknown even to the maker of the image—in presences and implications which may be understated or random. Ambiguities would be in the scene rather than in the interpretation, thus making the act post-modern."⁶⁵

Haylett's conception of ethnography resonates with the activity of *flânerie*, which is commonly associated with street photographers and has particular relevance to Herzog's study of Skid Road.⁶⁶ His *flânerie* reflects the importance of walking to his working-class subjects. In the postwar period, as cars became more popular and less people walked around downtown, men on Skid Road continued to populate the sidewalks.⁶⁷ *Flânerie* also captures what the city feels like on one's feet, reflecting the slow pace of everyday life on Skid Road. Whereas there is a sense of distance between the photographer and the subject when the photographer is cocooned within a vehicle,⁶⁸ a sense of intimacy arises between the artist-*flâneur* and others on the street. The physical proximity between Herzog and his subjects produces in his works a sense of intimacy

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Walsh and Enright, "Colour His World."

⁶⁴ Haylett, "Underclass," 74.

⁶⁵ Fred Herzog, "Cognitive Documentary Photography" (unpublished notes, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, February 2005), 2.

⁶⁶ Grant Arnold, "Fred Herzog's Vancouver Photographs," in *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007), 9.

⁶⁷ Didactic panel in *1950s: The 50's Gallery* exhibition, Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, 2015.

⁶⁸ Vancouver-based street photographers Dick Bellamy (1938–2009) and Jack Dale (b. 1928) took pictures from the inside of their cars. See Jeffries, "Shock," 28.

that challenges the politics of fear at the heart of newspaper discourse on Skid Road.⁶⁹ I have also chosen to examine Herzog's practice as a form of *flânerie* because of its connections to journalism. Walter Benjamin asserts that "the social foundation of *flânerie* is journalism."⁷⁰ Elaborating on this statement, David Frisby writes: "The *flâneur* wishes to sell his images of the metropolis, to sell his socially necessary labour time spent on the boulevards, traversing the signifiers of modernity."⁷¹ Where Herzog's *flânerie* departs from that of the mainstream reporter is in the degree to which profit was a motive. Since Herzog was employed full-time as a medical photographer, his street photography served as a serious pastime rather than as a primary source of income.⁷² As a form of *flânerie* that is not driven primarily by sales and is critical of capitalist ideology, Herzog's street photography arguably transcends mainstream journalism in its capacity to interrogate social inequalities and hegemonic ideologies.

In Chapter One, I examine Herzog's photographic investigation of men on Skid Road as a sociologically-oriented form of *flânerie*. The chapter begins by looking at how Herzog's works were influenced by his experiences as an orphaned, working-class adolescent in Germany and later as a blue-collar worker in Canada in the early 1950s. I then conceptualize Herzog's street photography as a form of *flânerie*, drawing on David Frisby's development of the practice based on the writings of Walter Benjamin. According to Frisby, who detects similarities between *flânerie* and "the sociologist's investigation of the social world,"⁷³ *flânerie* entails looking at the people of a city; reading the city and its population; reading written texts of and about the city;

⁶⁹ For instance, one writer for the *Vancouver Province* wrote in 1952: "Most of us are so horrified when we see even a little corner of this world of viciousness that we turn our eyes away and try to forget it." See "We Can't Shrug it Off," *Vancouver Province*, November 12, 1952.

⁷⁰ David Frisby, "The *Flâneur* in Social Theory," in *The Flâneur*, ed. Keith Tester (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 95.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Gochmann, "In Colour," 25–7.

⁷³ Frisby, "The *Flâneur*," 89.

and producing alternative texts that may take the form of photographs.⁷⁴ Examining Herzog's artistic practice according to the four aspects of *flânerie* allows us to better understand the intentions and methods behind his images.

Chapter Two provides a comparative analysis of representations of men and masculinity on Skid Road in newspaper discourse and in Herzog's work. His photographs contest dominant portrayals of men on Skid Road as drunks, criminals, and old-age pensioners by exploring the identities of these individuals through their everyday practices and consumption of urban spaces. Herzog's images of men on Skid Road visiting secondhand stores, patronizing barbershops, reading newspapers and literature, and observing the activity of the neighbourhood not only allow the possibility of positive subject-positions, but they also uncover the dialectical—as opposed to causal—relationship between men and space on Skid Road.

Chapter Three explores the connection between sexuality and masculinity in newspaper representations of men on Skid Road. Adhering to prevailing definitions of normative sexuality—that is, heterosexual reproduction within the context of marriage—journalists of the day asserted that men on Skid Road were sexual deviants because they engaged in extramarital sex in the form of prostitution. This chapter examines the ways in which Herzog's works draw parallels between prostitution on Skid Road and the hypersexualized culture of the postwar period. In addition, the prevalent practice of displaying pinups in masculine spaces among both men on Skid Road and middle-class men demonstrates the ways in which working-class men on Skid Road were complicit in normative masculinity.

Throughout this thesis, my aim is to show how Herzog's photographs of Skid Road challenge the discursive construction of deviant subjects on Skid Road by drawing attention to the economic, social, and institutional structures that shaped masculinity on Skid Road, while at

⁷⁴ Ibid., 83.

the same time employing various techniques that expose their status as representations. Rather than depicting Skid Road as a problem area that needed to be “cleaned up,” Herzog’s work—as creative ethnography—reimagines Skid Road as a vibrant place steeped in the history of the unattached, white, working-class men who helped build the foundations of the city.

Chapter 1: Fred Herzog: Actor and *Flâneur*

When Herzog began photographing the streets of Vancouver in 1953,⁷⁵ he possessed the fresh perspective of a young *émigré* from Germany.⁷⁶ Employed as a seaman, Herzog spent his initial years in Vancouver on the waterfront and in the downtown core.⁷⁷ These areas were dominated by unattached, white, working-class men, who became Herzog's regular subjects. His life in the 1950s was similar to theirs—the men he would later photograph—and it is evident from those images that he identified with their tastes, values, and customs, as well as their alienation and marginalization. Yet as an *émigré* with a keen investigative eye, Herzog retained a critical and detached perspective which allowed him to capture not only a subjective experience of Skid Road, but also its history, socioeconomic conditions, and its fraught relationship with the rest of Vancouver. For instance, the close-up view of an elderly man enjoying the bustle of the waterfront in *Waterfront Flâneur* (1959)—which will be examined more closely in Chapter Two—speaks not only to Herzog's appreciation of working-class experiences, but also to the relegation of working-class spaces and people to the fringes of the city. Relying primarily on recent secondary sources, this chapter looks at the dominant narrative surrounding the development of Herzog's artistic practice, and then examines how, through the activities of *flânerie*, he came to produce photographs of Skid Road that depart from hegemonic representations in newspaper discourse.

⁷⁵ Jeffries, "Shock," 24.

⁷⁶ Arnold, "Vancouver Photographs," 7.

⁷⁷ Herzog, "Exploring Vancouver," 160. However, in an interview the following year Herzog implies that he spent most of his free time away from the city: "I worked on the boats, and when I came off the boats I rode away on my motorcycle." See Arnold, "Interview."

Herzog: A Biography

Born in Bad Friedrichshall, Germany, in 1930, Herzog was raised in a middle-class household in Stuttgart.⁷⁸ The deaths of his mother and father in 1941 and 1946, respectively, precipitated what Herzog has described as “a rough series of years” during his adolescence.⁷⁹ He was forced to support himself by working at a relative’s hardware store. It was during this time that he began to take photography seriously. Herzog immigrated to Canada in 1952 after hearing that a relative had been offered a job there. In Toronto, he worked for an importer of Czechoslovakian glassware, while spending his spare time photographing landscapes and portraits and learning medical photography from a friend named Ferro Marincowitz.⁸⁰

Finding Toronto “seedy and unattractive,” Herzog remained for only one year before moving to Vancouver in May 1953.⁸¹ He first learned about Vancouver when he was fourteen years old. In a 2006 interview with Grant Arnold, Herzog states: “In my high school geography book in Germany there was a picture of Vancouver that impressed me. I thought, ‘Gee, there’s a place that has mountains, it’s a nice city, it’s by the sea’—I loved harbours and ships.”⁸² The textbook’s description of Vancouver’s industries also appealed to Herzog, who recalls: “It was [about] lumber, fish, mining, the railroad terminal, the harbour and the shipping of grain.”⁸³

On the second day of his arrival, Herzog became a member of the Seaman’s International Union, and went on to work as a seaman for the next three years.⁸⁴ From 1957 to 1990, he worked as a medical photographer at Vancouver’s St. Paul’s Hospital.⁸⁵ The stability of

⁷⁸ Lederman, “Collision.”

⁷⁹ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

⁸⁰ Arnold, “Vancouver Photographs,” 7; Andrea Kunard, *Fred Herzog: Street Photography* (Ottawa: National Gallery, 2011).

⁸¹ Arnold, “Interview.”

⁸² Leah Sandals, “Shutter on the Streets,” *National Post*, May 24, 2011, 19.

⁸³ Arnold, “Interview.”

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Arnold, “Vancouver Photographs,” 7.

this position afforded him the leisure time to practice street photography regularly in the evenings and on weekends. Herzog photographed the city's diverse population as he walked along Robson, Hastings, Dunsmuir, and Pender Streets and made his way through Chinatown and Skid Road.⁸⁶ In 1961, he became the head of the Photo/Cine Division of the Department of Biomedical Communications at the University of British Columbia, managing a staff that grew from seven to sixty.⁸⁷ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Herzog also worked as a photography instructor in the art departments of the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.⁸⁸

Despite being born into a middle-class family, the financial and emotional difficulties of Herzog's teenage years moulded his worldview and seem to have instilled in him a sense of empathy towards others in similar circumstances.⁸⁹ Like the men he later photographed on Skid Road, Herzog lacked strong familial affiliations. Although he stayed with relatives after his parents died, they failed to provide the love and support one expects of kin. In a 2003 article in the *Georgia Straight*, he explains: "I was sort of at the mercy of teachers and not-so-kind relatives ... and that immediately puts you in touch with a realism which most people avoid until old age."⁹⁰ Herzog also may have identified with men on Skid Road because he, too, had experienced poverty and the concomitant judgment of others. He recalls, "One of the things that bothered me about having no family was the total lack of pocket money. My schoolmates thought I was stingy."⁹¹ Ultimately, it was the loss of his parents itself that most radically impacted Herzog's worldview. Speaking with Marsha Lederman in 2013, Herzog states: "What

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁷ Felix Hoffman and Stephen Waddell, "Biography: Fred Herzog," in *Fred Herzog Photographs* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 189.

⁸⁸ Kathleen Bartels, "Director's Foreword," in *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007), 4.

⁸⁹ "Shot on the Street."

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Arnold, "Interview."

has shaped me is growing up without parents who love me, more than anything else. ... That was what made me streetwise. Almost nothing else, not even the war, did that.”⁹² Lederman wonders whether the alienation of Herzog’s subjects reflects his own, stemming from a sense of guilt about openly grieving for his parents at a time when Germans were being rebuked for the Holocaust.⁹³

By the time Herzog began regularly practicing street photography, his lifestyle had diverged from that of his working-class subjects: he had a nine-to-five job, owned a motorcycle, and lived in the more affluent West End.⁹⁴ *West End from Burrard Bridge* (1957) (fig. 2) depicts his picturesque neighbourhood, comprised of large, wooden houses with manicured lawns neatly arranged in rows.⁹⁵



Fig. 2. Fred Herzog, *West End from Burrard Bridge*, 1957. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

⁹² Lederman, “Collision.”

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Gary Stephen Ross, “When We Were Young,” *Vancouver* 39, no. 11 (December 2006): 57.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

The elevated and distant perspective transforms the appearance of the houses into perfect, miniature models rather than actual dwelling spaces. This effect is heightened by the absence of people outdoors. Contrasting this ordered space is the wilderness surrounding it in the periphery of the photograph. To the bottom right there are wild bushes growing, while snow-capped mountains form a scenic background. The dichotomy between these two types of spaces underscores the banality of the neighbourhood. Interestingly, such a static environment represents the type of place Herzog was *not* interested in photographing. In 2005 he said: “My problem, as I see it, is that new, clean, safe, and honest neighbourhoods do not give rise to interesting pictures. The thing that street photographers hope to discover has to do with the disorderly vitality of the street; the street people of the corners and plazas, in billiard parlours, pubs and stores where shoppers, voyeurs and loiterers feel at home.”⁹⁶ A possible motivation for this photograph, then, may be that Herzog wished to openly position himself in relation to his subjects, and to thus make transparent the subjective nature of his representations of the working class.

Herzog’s Place within the History of Street Photography

Although Herzog has produced the most extensive photographic record of the history of Vancouver, it is only recently that his street photography has gained widespread scholarly and public attention. His work, presented in slideshows or as photographic prints, was included in a few group exhibitions in the 1960s, notably at the Vancouver Art Gallery, UBC Fine Arts Gallery, and National Gallery of Canada,⁹⁷ but he mostly showed them via narrated slideshows to smaller audiences at camera clubs, in his own home, and occasionally in the classes he taught

⁹⁶ Herzog, “Exploring Vancouver,” 160.

⁹⁷ Herzog’s street photography was featured in the 1966 exhibition *Vancouver Between the Eyes* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, *Intermedia Nights* at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1968, and the 1969 exhibition *Extensions* at UBC Fine Arts Gallery, which the National Gallery of Canada later hosted before launching it as a cross-country touring exhibition. See Hoffman and Waddell, “Biography: Fred Herzog,” 189.

at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.⁹⁸ The first print Herzog ever sold was to the Vancouver artist Jim Breukelman (b. 1941) in 1970—long after the period in which Herzog believes he produced his best pictures (between 1957 and 1963).⁹⁹ Since it was prohibitively expensive to produce prints, Herzog earned money from his slides by selling them to stock agencies and book publishers.¹⁰⁰ By the time the Still Photography Division of the National Film Board purchased twelve of his Ektacolor prints in 1976,¹⁰¹ the intensity of his street photography had waned.¹⁰²

The artist's first major solo exhibition, *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs*, was held at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2007. Since then, a handful of exhibition catalogues featuring his work have been produced, situating Herzog as a pioneer of colour street photography in the late 1950s.¹⁰³ While a few writers have noted Herzog's documentation of gender, class, and race relations in postwar Vancouver, in-depth analyses of these issues have yet to be written.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, this literature helpfully reveals the sociological impulse behind Herzog's work. Although Herzog has not explicitly framed his art practice as a sociological investigation, his recent reflections on his interest in sociology and his self-described role as a *flâneur* have led a few contemporary art historians to view his practice as such.¹⁰⁵ In "Transient Vancouver: A Difficult Typology," Rob Brownie and Annabel Vaughan contend that Herzog and other postwar

⁹⁸ Arnold, "Vancouver Photographs," 5.

⁹⁹ Arnold, "Interview."

¹⁰⁰ It is unclear when Herzog started selling his slides. He contributed images to Barry Broadfoot's book *The City of Vancouver* (1976). See Arnold, "Interview."

¹⁰¹ Martha Langford, "Book Reviews," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 29 (2008): 160.

¹⁰² Herzog states: "After 1975 I did not use people in pictures because it would be possible that some people would say, I don't want to be in this picture." See Tamara Letkeman, "Fred Herzog: 50 Years of Photography," *Magnum Opus Magazine* (April/May 2007): 28.

¹⁰³ Helga Pakasaar, "Free Observer," <http://cielvariablearchives.org/en/articles-and-portfolios-cv79/free-observer.html>.

¹⁰⁴ See Milroy, "Words," 12; Walsh and Enright, "Colour His World"; Dónal O'Donoghue, "The Promise of Intimacy as a Way of Learning and Performing Masculinities," in *Canadian Men and Masculinities*, ed. Christopher J. Greig and Wayne J. Martino (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2012), 314.

¹⁰⁵ Herzog, "Notes"; Grant Arnold, "An Interview with Fred Herzog," in *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007), 27.

Vancouver street photographers “assume the investigative gaze of ethnographers as they expose the rituals, gestures and the rules that tend to order our behaviour on the street.”¹⁰⁶ Interpreting Herzog’s practice as a form of *flânerie*, Helga Pakasaar writes, “Often revisiting the same neighbourhoods and street corners over many years, [Herzog] has observed urban life through methodical investigations—what Walter Benjamin called ‘botanizing the asphalt’.”¹⁰⁷ While these writers understand Herzog’s street photography as a sociological investigation of urban life, it is important to remember that their interpretations have been shaped by contemporary concerns, and that Herzog’s reflections on his work, too, are influenced by such concerns as well as by hindsight.

Herzog recalls that there was great interest in his street photography beginning in the 1960s among local curators and other artists, including Claude Breeze (b. 1938), Roy Kiyooka (1926–1994), Michael Morris (b. 1942), Jack Shadbolt (1909–1998), and Gordon Smith (b. 1919), though they were more intrigued by his formalistic use of colour than by the social content of his work.¹⁰⁸ Herzog explains: “The pictures they liked were actually the more formal compositions, using colour in a distinctive and self-conscious way. They also liked my pictures of people, but they preferred the more formal sort of thing. They were not so interested in my pictures of the harbor, and they were not interested in my pictures of motorcars and things like that.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Rob Brownie and Annabel Vaughan, “Transient Vancouver: A Difficult Typology,” in *Unfinished Business: Photographing Vancouver Streets, 1955 to 1985*, ed. Bill Jeffries, Glen Lowry, and Jerry Zaslove (Burnaby: West Coast Line; North Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery, 2005), 36.

¹⁰⁷ Pakasaar, “Free Observer.”

¹⁰⁸ Herzog became acquainted with these artists at social gatherings at the home of Victor and Audrey Doray, whom Herzog met in 1960. Victor Doray was a co-founder of *Intermedia*, a medical illustrator, and Herzog’s department head at the University of British Columbia’s Department of Biomedical Communications. See Arnold, “Interview”; Kunard, *Fred Herzog*.

¹⁰⁹ Arnold, “Interview.”

The genre of street photography, although well-established internationally,¹¹⁰ was being practiced by only a handful of Vancouver artists in the late 1950s and 1960s, including Greg Girard (b. 1955), Curt Lang (1937–1998), and Robbert Flick (b. 1939).¹¹¹ Unlike Herzog, most of them focused on the physical cityscape rather than its inhabitants.¹¹² The few who recorded the city’s people tended to photograph the middle class and the upwardly mobile with the intention of selling portraits.¹¹³ Foncie Pulice (1914–2003), a man named “Movie Flash,” and many others snapped men and women in the West End who were decked out in their finest for a night on the town.¹¹⁴ The otherwise minimal interest in street photography in Vancouver was perhaps either a symptom or cause of the lack of institutional support for street photography in the small city in the early years of Herzog’s practice.¹¹⁵ Another possible reason is the modest size of the city at the time and the relatively few areas with interesting subjects. Herzog explains: “In Vancouver there were maybe six or eight venues where I could get good pictures.”¹¹⁶ Although Herzog reflects that he was unsuccessful in showing his work in art galleries,¹¹⁷ the absence of external pressures from curators and art dealers gave him the freedom to record the working-class places, people, and objects that other street photographers in Vancouver overlooked.

¹¹⁰ See Colin Westerbeck and Joel Meyerowitz, *Bystander: A History of Street Photography* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994); Deborah Klochko and Andy Grundberg, *Streetwise: Masters of 60s Photography* (San Francisco: Modernbook Editions, 2010).

¹¹¹ Brownie and Vaughan, “Transient Vancouver,” 36.

¹¹² Bill Jeffries, Glen Lowry, and Jerry Zaslove, introduction to *Unfinished Business: Photographing Vancouver Streets, 1955 to 1985*, ed. Bill Jeffries, Glen Lowry, and Jerry Zaslove (Burnaby: West Coast Line; North Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery, 2005), 8.

¹¹³ Economic prosperity combined with a great increase in the number of people pursuing postsecondary studies contributed to the expansion of the middle class after the war. See Dominique Clément, *Canada’s Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937–82* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 200; Peter Neary, “Canadian Universities and Canadian Veterans of World War II,” in *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada*, ed. Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), 110–148.

¹¹⁴ Didactic panel in *1950s: The 50’s Gallery* exhibition, Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, 2015.

¹¹⁵ The exhibition was titled *Unfinished Business: Photographing Vancouver Streets, 1955–1985*. See Jeffries, Zaslove, and Lowry, introduction to *Unfinished Business*, 8.

¹¹⁶ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

¹¹⁷ Sandals, “Shutter,” 19.

Herzog's work not only diverged from that of fellow Vancouver street photographers, but it also departed in some ways from postwar trends in American street photography. Social documentary reigned in the decades leading up to the Second World War, but the emphasis of capitalist ideology on the individual during the Cold War gave rise to a new type of street photography that replaced social documentary.¹¹⁸ Patricia Vettel-Becker, drawing on the works of American photographers such as Weegee (Arthur Fellig) (1899–1968) and William Klein (b. 1928), argues that the content of street photography in the postwar period became merely the means through which the male photographer constructed his masculine identity as “the existentialist,” whose aesthetic was “highly individualized, stripped of political ideology, experiential.”¹¹⁹ In contrast to the photographers whose work Vettel-Becker examines, Herzog aimed at once to imbue his work with an embodied vision and a certain degree of objectivity that is characteristic of realist art and literature.¹²⁰ In other words, his photographs announce their status as subjective representations, but also generate unintended meanings and connections through an abundance of detail.¹²¹ Herzog describes his work as “cognitive documentary photography”: “Documentary photography by its very name implies objectively seen and rendered subject matter. ... I would move to use the term ‘cognitive’ documentation as it implies a less willful attitude by the photographer while acknowledging the presence of idiosyncrasies of being, perceiving, and acting.”¹²² Although Herzog did not make his artistic intentions publicly known in the postwar years,¹²³ his recent interviews disclose a concern with social justice that is also apparent in the photography of such American artists as Robert Frank (b. 1924), Bruce

¹¹⁸ Patricia Vettel-Becker, *Shooting from the Hip: Photography, Masculinity, and Postwar America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 65.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹²⁰ Arnold, “Vancouver Photographs,” 8–9.

¹²¹ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World”; Arnold, “Vancouver Photographs,” 8.

¹²² Herzog, “Cognitive Documentary Photography.”

¹²³ Pakasaar, “Free Observer.”

Davidson (b. 1933), and Gordon Parks (1912–2006).¹²⁴ Meeka Walsh asserts that “[Herzog’s] concern for social justice is evident in his gentle depiction of the people his eye selects -- a little down at heel, a bit worn and short on luck, but persevering.”¹²⁵

Herzog’s photography shares greater affinities with twentieth-century German realist photography. In the late 1950s Herzog met Rudi Abraham, a photographer and critic from Berlin who supplied him with magazines that introduced him to *total fotografie*, the “socio-psychologically engaged photo-journalism” that was then popular in Germany.¹²⁶ These magazines also promoted European Realism, “a somewhat formal kind of photography based on realism in daily life.”¹²⁷ This genre strongly influenced the way Herzog observed and captured the city in his photographs; he became convinced that “camera work which does not deal with daily aspects of the human condition tends to lack expressiveness and relevance of the higher orders.”¹²⁸ An earlier German-born Jewish American artist whose street photography bears resemblances to Herzog’s photographs is John Gutmann (1905–1998), who fled to San Francisco from Nazi Germany in 1933.¹²⁹ Like Vancouver, San Francisco is a port city and is home to people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and, similar to Herzog, Gutmann was drawn to photographing cars, magazines, signs, advertisements, girlie magazines, and people of different ethnicities.¹³⁰ The photographs of both artists emanate a sense of “deep loneliness, displacement, and alienation,” which Sarah Milroy attributes to an *émigré* sensibility.¹³¹ Importantly, both artists shared a fascination with the figure of the *flâneur*; however, unlike Herzog’s elegant *flâneurs*, in Gutmann’s photographs “degraded and fugitive *flâneur[s]*” appear as “furtive,

¹²⁴ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World”; “Shot on the Street.”

¹²⁵ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

¹²⁶ Fred Herzog, “Art...Conceptual Beginnings” (unpublished notes, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, undated).

¹²⁷ Arnold, “Interview.”

¹²⁸ Fred Herzog, “Art...Conceptual Beginnings.”

¹²⁹ Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, *Bystander*, 325.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 326.

¹³¹ Milroy, “Words,” 18.

scurrying figures.”¹³² Colin Westerbeck and Joel Meyerowitz link Gutmann’s interest in the *flâneur* to street movies—a genre specific to Germany originating in the 1920s—which captured the drama of chance encounters between strangers in the street.¹³³ Gutmann and the directors of these movies were part of the early-twentieth-century culture of Berlin, which was a city of *flâneurs* during the Weimar Republic (1919–1933).¹³⁴ Notably, this was also the city in which Benjamin developed an appreciation of *flânerie*—“the art of walking through the city”—and commenced his study of its significance in nineteenth-century Paris.¹³⁵

Herzog’s Street Photography as *Flânerie*

The *flâneur* may exist not only in front of the camera but also behind it; indeed, street photographers have often been described as personifications of this archetype.¹³⁶ The figure of the *flâneur*, engaged in “the activity of strolling and looking,” first emerged in the nineteenth century as an observer of the sociological effects of modernity on urban life in Paris.¹³⁷ The *flâneur* has since transcended his origins, often appearing in literature, sociology, and art investigating the nature of modernity and postmodernity.¹³⁸ The observant eye of the *flâneur* may belong not only to the artist, but also to the detective, the journalist, and “certain types of urban sociologist.”¹³⁹ Herzog’s perception of himself as a *flâneur*-artist is apt given that he began photographing the streets of Vancouver during the city’s evolution from a resource-extraction-

¹³² Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, *Bystander*, 329.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Gutmann moved to Berlin in 1927. He was a painter in Germany but turned to photography after moving to the United States. See Margaret Loke, “John Gutmann, 93, Painter Who Became a Photographer,” *New York Times*, June 17, 1998, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/17/arts/john-gutmann-93-painter-who-became-a-photographer.html>.

¹³⁵ Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, *Bystander*, 329.

¹³⁶ Arnold, “Vancouver Photographs,” 9.

¹³⁷ Keith Tester, *The Flâneur*, ed. Keith Tester (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 1.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 92.

based village to a modern city.¹⁴⁰ In a 2006 interview he explains: “As early as 1956, I saw the city’s many manifestations in icons, archetypes and bipolar contrasts. I was both actor and *flâneur*, because I wanted to know what the city feels like.”¹⁴¹ Herzog captured the tension between the old and the modern, recording the faces and spaces of working-class people who sustained the industrial economy of the city but were being neglected or discarded in favour of modern and middle-class tastes and values. Theorizing Herzog’s artistic practice as *flânerie* allows us to consider his practice as a sociological investigation of the city that is based on self-reflexive, creative representation rather than passive spectatorship or scientific objectivity.

To examine more closely Herzog’s study of men on Skid Road as a sociologically-oriented form of *flânerie*, I turn to the explanation of *flânerie* offered by David Frisby:

Flânerie ... can be associated with a form of *looking*, observing (of people, social types, social contexts and constellations), a form of *reading the city* and its population (its spatial images, its architecture, its human configurations), and a form of *reading written texts* (in Benjamin’s case both of the city and the nineteenth century—as texts and of texts on the city. . . .). The *flâneur*, and the activity of *flânerie*, is also associated in Benjamin’s work not merely with observation and reading but also with *production*—the production of distinctive kinds of texts. The *flâneur* ... can ... be a producer, a producer of literary texts, a producer of illustrative texts (including painting), a producer of narratives and reports, a producer of journalistic texts, a producer of sociological texts.¹⁴²

First, Herzog’s *flânerie* involves the observation of people, social interactions, social spaces, and socio-spatial relations within the city.¹⁴³ The *flâneur* is theoretically able to freely access and observe all the spaces of the city.¹⁴⁴ In practice, Herzog’s gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality not only shaped his preferences for certain photographic subjects, but also delimited which parts of the city and its population he could access and record. A *flâneur* must blend in within the spaces he inhabits if he is to preserve his incognito—an essential component of

¹⁴⁰ Jeffries, “Shock,” 21.

¹⁴¹ Arnold, “An Interview,” 27.

¹⁴² Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 83.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Petra Watson, “The City, the *Flâneur* and the Man with the Camera,” *West Coast Line* 39, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 43.

*flânerie*¹⁴⁵—but different spaces in the city circumscribe the presence of “appropriate” bodies.¹⁴⁶

As Rob Shields states: “While *flânerie* is an individual practice, it is part of a social process of inhabiting and appropriating urban space.”¹⁴⁷ A closer look at how Herzog’s gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality shaped his photographic investigation of the city will uncover the nature of *flânerie* as representation rather than passive spectatorship.

The figure of the *flâneur* exposes the masculine privilege of the street photographer. For the *flâneur*, who is an exclusively male figure, “all is open; if certain places seem closed to him, it is because in his view they are not worth inspecting.”¹⁴⁸ Vettel-Becker argues that because the street is a masculine space, a female street photographer would never be able to roam as freely as a male street photographer.¹⁴⁹ Herzog’s masculine privilege permits him not only to freely wander the street but also to observe and enter other masculine spaces of the city.¹⁵⁰ As Shields writes: “*Flânerie* is more than strolling. It is a spatial practice of specific sites: the interior and exterior public spaces of the city.”¹⁵¹ A woman would not have been able to imitate Herzog’s approach to street photography; the artist explains: “I would find certain street corners where people gathered, or other public spaces, places I felt would have an atmosphere which suited anybody. That’s where I would hang out. And those were the kinds of places I would take pictures.”¹⁵² While a man idling on the street was simply seen as a loiterer (or possibly a john), a

¹⁴⁵ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 92.

¹⁴⁶ Phil Hubbard, *Cities and Sexualities* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), 34.

¹⁴⁷ Rob Shields, “Fancy Footwork: Walter Benjamin’s Notes on *Flânerie*,” in *The Flâneur*, ed. Keith Tester (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 65.

¹⁴⁸ Walter Benjamin, “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 4, 1938–1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 31–32.

¹⁴⁹ Vettel-Becker, *Shooting from the Hip*, 68.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁵¹ Shields, “Fancy Footwork,” 65.

¹⁵² Waddell, “Conversation,” 179.

woman risked being mistaken for a prostitute.¹⁵³ Herzog's subjects were oftentimes men because they were much more likely to loiter on the street, especially on Skid Road. In addition, as an unattached man, Herzog would not have been welcome—and certainly would not have blended in—within the feminine spaces of the city, such as millinery shops, beauty salons, and lesbian hangouts.¹⁵⁴ Herzog's work represents a masculine experience of the city, and his documentation of Skid Road was only possible because of his gender.

Herzog's working-class lifestyle in the early 1950s undoubtedly influenced his decision to focus on the spaces and people of the East End in his street photography. As a seaman, he became part of the bachelor subculture of the downtown core, and came to appreciate the working-class men whose sweat and tears built the city. Their everyday lives, often spent on the street, were for Herzog a source of the city's vitality, and that is ultimately what he sought to capture in his photography. His identification with the working class is evident in his comments on *Untitled (Hastings and Columbia Street, Vancouver)* (1958) (fig. 3), which shows crowds of people walking along Hastings Street in the heart of Skid Road. In a 1994 article in the *Vancouver Sun* Herzog explains: "This was a part of Vancouver that was truly alive then. These people are sailors off the ships. There are people out for a beer. People who are unemployed."¹⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that Herzog mentions sailors, as he himself had been one during his early years in the city.

¹⁵³ The existence of the *flâneuse* is subject to debate. See Susan Buck-Morss, "The *Flâneur*, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering," *New German Critique* no. 39 (Autumn 1986): 119; Aruna D'Souza and Tom McDonough, *The Invisible Flâneuse?: Gender, Public Space and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, "The *Flâneur* on and off the Streets of Paris," in *The Flâneur*, ed. Keith Tester (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 27–28; Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Suzanne Elizabeth Williams, "The *Flâneur* Goes Shopping: An Inquiry into the *Flâneuse* as Consumer" (master's thesis, McGill University, 2000).

¹⁵⁴ For a discussion of the lesbian community in Vancouver in the 1950s and 1960s, see Cameron Duder, *Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900–65* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 234.

¹⁵⁵ Peter Wilson, "Shutterbug," *Vancouver Sun*, May 10, 1994, C1.



Fig. 3. Fred Herzog, *Untitled (Hastings and Columbia Street, Vancouver)*, 1958, chromogenic print, 86.8 x 60.4 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

Herzog celebrated the lifestyle of the working class: “I photographed the old part of town because people were more relaxed, they were out on the street or working in their gardens and doing things that show that everybody has an idea about art.”¹⁵⁶ As an insider of this community of working-class men, he possessed a positive, though tempered, perspective of it, stating, “I wanted to show how the people looked without an ideology of good or bad.”¹⁵⁷ Herzog refrained from photographing people in vulnerable positions,¹⁵⁸ which is especially noteworthy given that

¹⁵⁶ Sandals, “Shutter.”

¹⁵⁷ Waddell, “Conversation,” 52.

¹⁵⁸ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

members of the working class are often exposed to scrutiny and sanctions by middle-class authorities such as social workers and welfare professionals.¹⁵⁹

In contrast to his positive views of the working class, Herzog was wary of the pretensions of the middle class. He found the newer, modern spaces that were oriented towards the middle class rather banal: “The modern parts of town at that time were already—well, I had a friend who called them tight-assed. There was compulsive lawn care; everything had to be perfect. Over time, the city became even more sterilized.”¹⁶⁰ Above all, Herzog rejected the hegemony of the middle class, aligning himself with artists and other intellectuals who possess what he calls “cognition”—that is, “the capacity for a humanistic appreciation of the value of an individual, an astute discernment of the class system and a distrust of conformity.”¹⁶¹ Conceived as a virtue, conformity was central to middle-class hegemony in the postwar period.¹⁶² Newspaper discourse, for instance, encouraged conformity by reproducing middle-class values.¹⁶³ Herzog’s resistance against normative values is apparent in his empathetic images of men on Skid Road.

Race is another factor that influenced Herzog’s *flânerie*, as being white enabled him to freely roam both the predominantly Anglo-Saxon West End and the ethnically diverse East End.¹⁶⁴ However, there are certain ethnic groups that seem to be missing in Herzog’s images, such as the black working-class community in and around Hogan’s Alley, located in the southwestern corner of Strathcona.¹⁶⁵ It is likely that Herzog would have been too conspicuous walking through a black neighbourhood to successfully remain unseen by potential photographic subjects. Most of the people Herzog photographed were either white or Chinese because Skid

¹⁵⁹ Haylett, “Underclass,” 74.

¹⁶⁰ Sandals, “Shutter.”

¹⁶¹ Milroy, “Words,” 8.

¹⁶² Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 23.

¹⁶³ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 32, 36.

¹⁶⁴ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 66.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

Road and Chinatown were adjacent to one another and their populations intermingled. Although Herzog's white privilege provided him with great freedom as a photographer, Michael Turner "wonder[s] how the young Herzog was received in a city that, as late as 1953, still regarded German accents with suspicion."¹⁶⁶ When asked by Marsha Lederman in a 2013 interview whether he experienced racism in postwar Toronto, Herzog replied that his Jewish acquaintances never failed to remind him of "relatives who were, you know, treated badly during the war and the so-called Holocaust."¹⁶⁷ Aside from his unsettling choice of words (which he subsequently retracted),¹⁶⁸ Herzog's response indicates that he was acutely aware of his ethnicity, which must have had some impact on his sense of liberty in exploring the various spaces of the city. Moreover, his perceptions of people of other races and ethnicities affected who he photographed and how he portrayed them. Despite his previous misunderstanding of the Holocaust, Norman Ravvin contends that Herzog's pictures offer valuable insight into the history of the Jewish population in downtown Vancouver.¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Sarah Milroy praises his images for embracing the multiculturalism of the city at a time when the Vancouver art world was "very white."¹⁷⁰

Herzog's sexuality also impacted his *flânerie*: as a heterosexual individual, he photographed heterosexual spaces of the city that were familiar to him.¹⁷¹ Although a few queer

¹⁶⁶ Michael Turner, "Fred and Ethel," in *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007), 148.

¹⁶⁷ Lederman, "Collision." On the experience of Germans in Canada after the Second World War, see Alexander Freund, "Multicultural Memories? Germans in Canada since the Second World War" (paper presented at the Immigration, Minorities and Multiculturalism in Democracies Conference, Montreal, QC, October 25–27, 2007), <http://www.queensu.ca/csd/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.csdwww/files/publications/wps/9-CFreundpaper.pdf>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Norman Ravvin, "Fred Herzog Photographed Vancouver's Jewish Streets," *Canadian Jewish News*, last modified May 29, 2012, accessed April 11, 2016, <http://www.cjnews.com/culture/books-and-authors/fred-herzog-photographed-vancouver-jewish-streets>.

¹⁷⁰ Milroy, "Words," 12.

¹⁷¹ Although Herzog has never explicitly identified as heterosexual, there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. *Self-Portrait* (1961) shows pinup images of women in his room, indicating an attraction to the opposite sex. He also has a wife and children. See Lederman, "Collision."

spaces existed in the city, such as the Hotel Castle on Granville Street for gay men,¹⁷² they seem to be absent in Herzog's photographs. While Skid Road is represented primarily as a heterosexual space in Herzog's images and in newspaper discourse, it is possible that other sexualities existed on Skid Road that were marginalized and denied visibility.

As an unattached, white, straight, working-class man when he first arrived in Vancouver, Herzog gravitated towards spaces that were oriented toward similar men, and in doing so he turned away from other spaces,¹⁷³ and this is reflected in his street photography. Sara Ahmed discusses in *Queer Phenomenology* the significant role that emotions play in affecting which spaces we turn toward and which ones we turn away from.

Emotions shape what bodies do in the present, or how they are moved by the objects they approach. The attribution of feeling toward an object (I feel afraid because you are fearsome) moves the subject away from the object, creating distance through the registering of proximity as a threat. Emotions involve such affective forms of (re)orientation. ... The orientations we have toward others shape the contours of space by affecting relations of proximity and distance between bodies.¹⁷⁴

Herzog acknowledges the affective dimension of his *flânerie*: "I was both actor and *flâneur*, because I wanted to know what the city *feels* like [emphasis added]."¹⁷⁵ Herzog's positioning within various social structures influenced his emotional reaction to other bodies, and thus his proximity to them. Whereas fear compelled members of the middle class to distance themselves from men on Skid Road, Herzog's familiarity with and empathy toward these men enabled him to observe the people of Skid Road through a softer, more nuanced lens.

¹⁷² Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 97.

¹⁷³ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 14–15.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

¹⁷⁵ Arnold, "An Interview," 27. By contrast, American street photographer Garry Winogrand (1928–1984) famously said, "I photograph to see what something will look like photographed." See Dennis Longwell, ed., "Collective Interview with Garry Winogrand," *Image 15*, no. 2 (July 1972): 4.

The Flâneur as an Observer

The *flâneur* is not merely a passive observer, but someone who is trained to detect and record images that will form a meaningful collection.¹⁷⁶ Quoting Benjamin, Frisby refers to the “‘phantasmagoria of the *flâneur*: reading off the occupation, the social origin, the character from the faces’ in the street and the crowd.”¹⁷⁷ In 1957 Herzog began an earnest investigation of the Vancouver East End.¹⁷⁸ To match his level of commitment to this project, he traded his Kodak Retina 1 for a Leica M3 camera—“the quintessential street photography camera.”¹⁷⁹ Herzog set out to record the appearances of people in postwar Vancouver—a project propelled by a sense of urgency. He explains: “After about a year of shooting I increasingly felt, ‘somebody has to do this’. Because otherwise people in the future would only be able to go to *People* magazine or *Look* or *Time* or *Life* or any of those to see how people looked at this time.”¹⁸⁰ In other words, Herzog recognized the inadequacy of mainstream media representations as sources of social history and sought to construct an alternative, local historical record of everyday life in Vancouver.

Similar to the interests of the *flâneur* in reading people, body language became a concern of Herzog’s as early as 1957.¹⁸¹ According to him, “Body language is how you move, how you gesture. Body language is also how you dress, what you carry with you, and body language is also perhaps the things you embed yourself in, like a motorcar.”¹⁸² Herzog considers the ability to discern meaningful body language to be of utmost importance: “To me, unposed people photographs are essential for the quasi science of kinesics—gesture, body language. Without it

¹⁷⁶ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 99.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁷⁸ Milroy, “Words,” 12.

¹⁷⁹ Kunard, *Fred Herzog*.

¹⁸⁰ Waddell, “Conversation,” 179.

¹⁸¹ Fred Herzog, “Art...Conceptual Beginnings.”

¹⁸² Letkeman, “50 Years,” 27.

we cannot document the true appearances of humans in our age.”¹⁸³ Like the *flâneur*, Herzog believes that reading people and their fleeting gestures is vital to the understanding of modernity. By 1960, body language had become a central preoccupation of Herzog’s: “[A]bove all, I had to study their body language and take the picture at the point where I felt I was capturing that body language.”¹⁸⁴

The *flâneur* observes not only individuals but also the streets and architecture of the city.¹⁸⁵ Frisby writes: “Not only does the *flâneur* gaze starry-eyed at space but ‘the “sensational phenomenon of space” is the fundamental experience of the *flâneur*’.”¹⁸⁶ While the *flâneur* of the nineteenth century was drawn to ostentatious *intérieurs*, Herzog was attracted to sensational sights of a different sort—those of an “engagingly seedy” city: “The photo-realist hopes to discover unseen treasures, picturesque disorder, over-the-top nasty disorder, naive art by housewives and gardeners, decay of all descriptions and the multicoloured results of misdemeanour; if not crime.”¹⁸⁷ Herzog’s definition of “sensational” refers not only to the rich history embedded in old architecture but also to the “disorderly vitality” of everyday life.¹⁸⁸

Quoting Benjamin, Frisby distinguishes “a stranger’s reading of a city that focuses on the exotic, the picturesque with one of its inhabitants: ‘to acquire an image of a city as a native requires other, deeper motives. Motives for which extend into the past instead of the distance’.”¹⁸⁹ According to Frisby, the city serves “as an aid to historical memory,” and it is through *flânerie* that this function is activated.¹⁹⁰ The difference between a reading of the city by a stranger and by a native is arguably analogous to the difference between newspaper articles on

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

¹⁸⁵ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 94.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Herzog, “Exploring Vancouver,” 160; Arnold, “An Interview,” 27–28.

¹⁸⁸ Herzog, “Exploring Vancouver,” 160.

¹⁸⁹ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 95.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Skid Road and Herzog's photographs. As outsiders to the Skid Road community, journalists tended to concentrate on its foreign aspects, the differences that separated men on Skid Road from the rest of society. Herzog, on the other hand, photographed the features of Skid Road that captured the history of the city and that were familiar to him—that is, “the street people of the corners and plazas, in billiard parlours, pubs and stores where shoppers, voyeurs and loiterers feel at home.”¹⁹¹ In his search for images that captured the spirit of the neighbourhood, Herzog embodied Benjamin's description of “[t]he *flâneur* [a]s the priest of the *genius loci*.”¹⁹² Gunila Jiven and Peter J. Larkham contend that an intimate familiarity with a place enables one to engage the “senses, memory, intellect, and imagination” in order to capture its spirit.¹⁹³ Herzog describes his artistic practice in similar terms: “All the garbage and all the good stuff, and all the memories and all the learning that you carry on in your brain constantly interact with what is outside. That's why I like to go for walks in the city.”¹⁹⁴

The Flâneur as a Reader

The *flâneur* not only strolls through the city collecting urban images, but he also reads written texts on the city and written texts *as* texts of the city.¹⁹⁵ Herzog's street photography was influenced by both non-fictional and fictional literature on the modern city. His interest in realism was inspired by books by modern European and North American authors such as Honoré de Balzac, John Dos Passos, Egon Friedell, Wolfgang Koeppen, and Lewis Mumford.¹⁹⁶ These writers shaped Herzog's understanding of the city as a manifestation of “icons, archetypes, and

¹⁹¹ Herzog, “Exploring Vancouver,” 160.

¹⁹² Frisby, 95–96.

¹⁹³ Gunila Jiven and Peter J. Larkham, “Sense of Place, Authenticity and Character: A Commentary,” *Journal of Urban Design* 8, no. 1 (February 2003): 70.

¹⁹⁴ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

¹⁹⁵ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 83.

¹⁹⁶ Arnold, “An Interview,” 27.

bipolar contrasts.”¹⁹⁷ Herzog has said that Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) “felt to me like a script for my pictures.”¹⁹⁸ Based on urban life in New York from the Gilded Age to the Jazz Age, *Manhattan Transfer* tells the stories of individuals of different genders, classes, and ethnicities whose lives intersect. The works of Dos Passos, Flaubert, and other realist writers shaped Herzog’s preference for objective description and detail rather than an explicitly personal vision.¹⁹⁹ Enhanced by colour, the abundance of detail in Herzog’s images produces complex and unexpected meanings—a strategy that Haylett values in creative ethnography. Herzog became interested in sociology after reading Geoffrey Gorer’s *The American People: A Study in National Character* (1948). This study encouraged Herzog to embark on his own investigation of North American values.²⁰⁰ Other subjects that informed his street photography include city design, architecture, psychology and history.²⁰¹

There are many other sources that shaped Herzog’s street photography, although they focus more on photography than on the city. However, since a *flâneur* must be trained in the art of observation, the photography magazines and works by other photographers that Herzog studied were crucial to his *flânerie*. Lacking formal training in photography,²⁰² Herzog regularly browsed popular photography magazines, including *Popular Photography*, *Modern Photography*, and *Camera 35*, and the German magazines *Leica Photography* and *Prisma*.²⁰³ These publications mainly addressed technical and compositional problems. *Popular Photography* and *Modern Photography* regularly discussed colour photography and the use of slide shows as a means of displaying colour photographs, undoubtedly influencing Herzog’s

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Walsh and Enright, “Colour My World.”

¹⁹⁹ Arnold, “Vancouver Photographs,” 8.

²⁰⁰ Arnold, “An Interview,” 27.

²⁰¹ Fred Herzog, “Notes.”

²⁰² Arnold, “Interview.”

²⁰³ Ibid.

exploration of colour photography and the presentation of his work in the form of slide shows accompanied by personal narration.²⁰⁴ It was also through photography magazines that he discovered the work of Harry Callahan (1912–1999), Lee Friedlander (b. 1934), Saul Leiter (1923–2013), Helen Levitt (1913–2009), W. Eugene Smith (1918–1978), Edward Steichen (1879–1973), Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946), Paul Strand (1890–1976), and Garry Winogrand (1928–1984).²⁰⁵ However, he was most strongly influenced by Robert Frank’s (b. 1924) *The Americans* (1958), which he first came across in 1960 or 1961 when he borrowed a copy from the Vancouver Public Library.²⁰⁶ Herzog shares Frank’s interest in social and political issues,²⁰⁷ as well as an astute eye for meaningful bodily gestures.²⁰⁸ Although Herzog’s photographs assume a more distant perspective than those of Frank’s—Herzog waits at a distance to capture the right moment—they both take advantage of contrasting elements to create meaningful juxtapositions, or complementary elements to underscore a certain point.²⁰⁹ Walker Evans (1903–1975) was another photographer whose documentary style Herzog greatly admired. He came across Evans’s work in 1962, at the home of medical photographer Cliff Freehe in Seattle, and was in awe: “The breadth of his vision is only rivaled by the precision with which he nails content and deep meaning.”²¹⁰ Evans’s historically-oriented project of documenting “the traditions of the common man” and the vernacular, including advertisements, cheap cafés, and

²⁰⁴ Jessica Bushey, “Archives and Photography: Exhibition Review: Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs,” *Archivaria* 65 (2008): 99.

²⁰⁵ Milroy, “Words,” 11.

²⁰⁶ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

²⁰⁷ Gochmann, “Fred Herzog,” 3.

²⁰⁸ Arnold, “Interview.”

²⁰⁹ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

²¹⁰ Arnold, “Interview.”

the street, strongly resonated with Herzog,²¹¹ although he claims that his own artistic vision had already been established at the outset in 1957.²¹²

In addition to reading texts on the city, Herzog examines written and graphic texts of the city *as* texts in his photography. This aspect of his practice may have been influenced by Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*, wherein the author employs a collage technique to incorporate newspaper excerpts and autobiographical references into the narrative.²¹³ Herzog's street photographs frequently include newspapers and other ephemeral print media such as posters, tabloids, magazines, pictures, and advertisements. He explains the appeal of this technique: "The world is so full of interesting graphics, and fading and half-torn off posters, that you could go out in one day and take a hundred good abstracts of posters, and how the posters talk to each other, and how their content can be both similar and dissimilar."²¹⁴ He adds: "A photograph in a photograph assumes a magical meaning. ... When I see something like that I immediately pay attention."²¹⁵ If by "magical" Herzog means "removed from everyday life," then he is perhaps suggesting that the image within the photograph develops a meaning separate from its function in everyday life once it is captured in a photograph. In other words, it becomes possible to critically analyze the image within the photograph as a form of representation by studying its physical surroundings and the historical context in which the photograph was taken. In Herzog's photographs of people reading newspapers on the street, the newspaper represents a text of the city that he critically studies as a *flâneur*. These photographs urge the viewer to consider the tremendous influence of newspaper discourse on individual beliefs and actions. The negative

²¹¹ Department of Photographs, "Walker Evans (1903–1975)," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–), last modified October 2004, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/evan/hd_evan.htm.

²¹² Walsh and Enright, "Colour His World."

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid. Earlier photographers who deftly employed this technique include Eugène Atget (1857–1927) and Walker Evans (1903–1975).

representations of Skid Road in newspaper discourse undoubtedly had an impact on how Herzog portrayed Skid Road in his own work.

The Flâneur as a Producer

In addition to looking at and reading the city, the *flâneur* produces distinctive texts on the city. He brings together all the fragments he has gathered while wandering the metropolis in order to construct a meaningful whole.²¹⁶ Similarly, Herzog explains that “[w]hile the nature of my realism may not be evident in a single image, the sum total of a larger body of work will show clearly where I am coming from.”²¹⁷ According to Frisby, Benjamin asserts that the *flâneur* is “capable of grasping concrete historical experience (*Erfahrung*) and not merely subjective lived-out experience (*Erlebnis*).”²¹⁸ Whereas many other contemporary artists used street photography as a means of expressing their individual identity,²¹⁹ Herzog acknowledges both the subjective and documentary elements of his photography.²²⁰ He makes no effort to assert that his work constitutes an objective record of reality, and is instead emphatic that his personal experiences and knowledge have shaped his work. Herzog declares: “I saw pictures where nobody else saw pictures. And when you look at the pictures now, they are recognized as being worthwhile pictures, and that comes out of who I am. . . . It has to do with who you are, how much you know about history, how much you know about politics, how much you know about how people live together, how much you know about sociality.”²²¹ Herzog’s thoughts on his practice resonate with Bruce Mazlish’s contention that *flânerie* is not merely passive spectatorship but involves

²¹⁶ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 99.

²¹⁷ Arnold, “Interview.”

²¹⁸ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 95–96.

²¹⁹ Vettel-Becker, *Shooting from the Hip*, 68.

²²⁰ Herzog, “Cognitive Documentary Photography.”

²²¹ Letkeman, “Fred Herzog,” 27.

the active creation of representations.²²² In this sense, Herzog is both actor and *flâneur*—at once an observer and a participant actively involved in the construction of the scene. In other words, “everything proceeds from him and addresses itself to him.”²²³

At the same time, Herzog’s interest in pursuing a methodical investigation of the city that would capture “concrete historical experience” is evident when he says, “I pictured myself having to show what the city looked like to people fifty or a hundred years from now.”²²⁴ In Helga Pakasaar’s estimation, Herzog’s photographs contain socio-historical value: “[W]hile it is now entering the annals of the history of art photography, [Herzog’s] body of work also functions as a significant record, and perhaps the only extensive documentary one, of Vancouver over a long period, offering insights into a history that otherwise could be gleaned only from commercial, government, and news images.”²²⁵ Herzog’s street photographs thus present an idiosyncratic vision that nevertheless bears the social history of the city.

Herzog’s use of colour film imbues his street photography with a distinctiveness that is characteristic of the *flâneur*’s texts on the city. Herzog was one of the earliest street photographers internationally to shoot in colour in the late 1950s,²²⁶ when colour photography was associated with commercial photography and advertising rather than with fine art.²²⁷ The exclusion of colour photography from fine art photography was of no concern to Herzog, who learned street photography through popular photography magazines, books, and fellow amateur photographers. He admits that it was a sense of competitiveness with a fellow amateur photographer that encouraged him to delve into colour photography: “There was a fellow living

²²² Bruce Mazlish, “The *Flâneur*: From Spectator to Representation,” in *The Flâneur*, ed. Keith Tester (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 55.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Frisby, “The *Flâneur*,” 96; Waddell, “Conversation,” 181.

²²⁵ Pakasaar, “Free Observer.”

²²⁶ Milroy, “Words,” 17.

²²⁷ Bartels, “Foreword,” 3.

in the house where I rented my room. He took colour pictures with an Alpa, and I felt a little bit of competition all of a sudden.”²²⁸ Later, Herzog realized that colour best suited his realist style. He explains: “My chosen viewpoints revealed so much fine detail that—I learned this early—black and white did not produce the expected result.”²²⁹ Taking advantage of the “high resolution, natural and lifelike colours, and broad tonal range” of Kodachrome slide film,²³⁰ Herzog filled his photographs with ample detail so that they would properly convey the energy of downtown Vancouver. Herzog also discovered that only colour film could capture the *genius loci* of the city. He explains: “If you shoot in a city like this, colour comes out better. It adds instant recognizability.”²³¹ Indeed, Vancouver was a colourful city—especially at night when its 19,000 neon signs glowed all at once.²³² While others viewed colour photography as vulgar, Herzog deftly employed it to document the vitality and “engagingly seedy” character of the city.²³³

²²⁸ Waddell, “Conversation,” 177.

²²⁹ Arnold, “An Interview,” 29.

²³⁰ Gochmann, “In Colour,” 27.

²³¹ Letkeman, “Fred Herzog,” 27.

²³² Didactic panel in *1950s: The 50's Gallery* exhibition, Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, 2015.

²³³ Herzog, “Exploring Vancouver,” 160.

Chapter 2: The Drunk, the Criminal, and the Old-Age Pensioner

In the 1950s and 1960s, Skid Road increasingly concerned middle-class elites, who perceived the neighbourhood as a place of “vice and degradation” in an otherwise “fine and modern city.”²³⁴

The residents of Skid Road were primarily unattached, white, working-class men who took advantage of the area’s low rent and cheap food.²³⁵ Along with the small number of women who lived there,²³⁶ these men struggled with issues that either cause or are caused by long-term poverty, including “addiction, mental illness, victimization through violence, physical or sexual exploitation, rampant disease, physical waste from lack of nutrition and/or medical and self-care, impermanent shelter and/or substandard housing, lack of economic opportunities, a decrepit physical environment, and for many, a concomitant sense of hopelessness and despair.”²³⁷ The postwar shift from the regulation of all subjects by the state to a more directed focus on deviant individuals coincided with the emerging tendency of experts to individualize the issue of poverty so that it was traced to deficiencies in the individual rather than to the socioeconomic structures of society.²³⁸ Accordingly, newspaper discourse in postwar Vancouver asserted that men on Skid Road embodied a deviant form of masculinity.²³⁹ This chapter begins with an overview of hegemonic masculinity in the postwar period, and then shows how newspaper discourse situated men on Skid Road in opposition to hegemonic masculinity. Applying Critical Discourse Analysis to newspaper discourse, I examine the discursive construction of the drunk, the criminal, and the old-age pensioner on Skid Road. I argue that Herzog’s photographs of men

²³⁴ “We Can’t Shrug it Off.”

²³⁵ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 14.

²³⁶ Based on a 1951 census, Steiman states that there were 250 single women on Skid Road, comprising 0.06% of the population. See Steiman, “Community Organization,” 33. A 1965 study on Skid Road and surrounding areas in the East End reports that women constituted 20% of the population. See Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 18.

²³⁷ Huey, *Negotiating Demands*, 5.

²³⁸ Chris Dummit, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 155; Huey, *Negotiating Demands*, 13.

²³⁹ Sommers, “Men,” 288.

visiting secondhand stores, patronizing barbershops, reading newspapers and literature, and observing the activity of the neighbourhood counter these stereotypes by exploring how men on Skid Road constructed their identities through other popular forms of consumption. Herzog's work challenges dominant perspectives by reinterpreting existing images and creating new subject-positions within Skid Road discourse.

Hegemonic Masculinity

The postwar years in the United States and Canada boasted economic prosperity and emphasized the family as the basis of social organization and as the cornerstone of the economy.²⁴⁰ Whereas fifty percent of Canadians lived in poverty in the interwar years, the number decreased to twenty-five percent after the war.²⁴¹ The average Canadian's standard of living doubled from 1945 to 1972.²⁴² In the midst of this economic boom, many families in Vancouver enjoyed a comfortable standard of living.²⁴³ The family not only provided a source of stability after the stressful and unpredictable years of the Second World War, but it also played a fundamental role in gender relations, the economy, and politics. Within this context, hegemonic masculinity was characterized by the straight, white, middle-class family man.²⁴⁴

By the 1950s and 1960s, a number of psychiatric studies had been published asserting that in order to become a normally developed, mature man, one had to commit to marriage and to the role of the breadwinner.²⁴⁵ In 1953, in what would become a standard text for the next few decades, psychologist R.J. Havighurst identified eight "developmental tasks of early adulthood" to be achieved before entering mature adulthood: "1) selecting a mate, 2) learning to live with a

²⁴⁰ Adams, *Trouble*, 20.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Didactic panel in *1950s: The 50's Gallery* exhibition, Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, 2015.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Adams, *Trouble*, 20.

²⁴⁵ Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983), 15.

marriage partner, 3) starting a family, 4) rearing children, 5) managing a home, 6) getting started in an occupation, 7) taking on civic responsibilities, and 8) finding a congenial social group.”²⁴⁶

Havighurt’s list reinforced the notion that maturity could only be achieved by conforming to hegemonic masculinity. Conformity was thus desirable—“heroic,” even.²⁴⁷

The focus on family and home in the postwar period meant that fathers were expected to spend more time with their wives and children.²⁴⁸ The concept of masculine domesticity was first introduced by Margaret Marsh to describe the “adoption of family- and home-centered practices among fathers responding to suburbanization and among the expanded sectors of middle-class men in the wage economy.”²⁴⁹ Robert Rutherford lists three factors that enabled the rise of masculine domesticity: “family incomes sufficient for a middle-class standard of living, daily work schedules that permit fathers of companionate marriages to return home on a regular basis, and sufficient family living spaces that permit recreational space both inside the home and in the immediate neighbourhood.”²⁵⁰

Normative masculinity thus became associated with private, domestic space.²⁵¹ In the postwar period, middle-class fathers were increasingly integrated into consumer culture through commodities, services, and activities that were geared specifically toward them.²⁵² According to Rutherford’s field research on Prince George and Abbotsford, in British Columbia, middle-class leisure was not only practiced within the private space of the home but also in other non-urban

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 18.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 15.

²⁴⁸ Adams, *Trouble*, 30.

²⁴⁹ Robert Rutherford, “Fatherhood, Masculinity, and the Good Life during Canada’s Baby Boom,” *Journal of Family History* 24 (1999): 352.

²⁵⁰ Margaret Marsh, quoted in Rutherford, “Fatherhood,” 352.

²⁵¹ More specifically, normative masculinity was associated with the exterior of the family home, where men used barbecue grills and performed lawn maintenance, and with family living spaces, where fathers watched television programs and commercials that were oriented towards them (e.g., sports programming, advertisements by brewery and petroleum companies). See Rutherford, “Fatherhood,” 364; Sommers, “Men,” 304.

²⁵² Rutherford, “Fatherhood,” 358.

spaces, such as the wilderness (e.g., camping) or the countryside (e.g., the cottage), where masculine domesticity was expressed through the use of trailers, boats, cars, and televisions.²⁵³

The consumption of leisurely goods and participation in recreational activities that were oriented towards family life and non-urban spaces became signs of normative masculinity in the postwar period.²⁵⁴

The family—and by extension hegemonic masculinity—played a crucial role in politics and the economy during the Cold War. In the West, commodity consumption became an expression of capitalist democracy: one had the freedom to choose from a wide array of goods.²⁵⁵ The communist critique of American consumer culture as a celebration of excess and hedonism was countered by the argument that commodity consumption was directed toward the nuclear family and was therefore a wholesome activity.²⁵⁶ Similar to their American counterparts, Canadian families participated in postwar consumer capitalism; a stable and prosperous family was considered a weapon against communism.²⁵⁷

The position of hegemonic masculinity is always precarious and vulnerable against competing social groups.²⁵⁸ Hegemonic masculinity maintains its dominance by marginalizing and suppressing practices and values associated with other existing masculinities.²⁵⁹ By limiting the possibility of different thought and action, hegemonic masculinity becomes naturalized and normalized.²⁶⁰ Michel Foucault explains that normalization is not simply a process that is enforced from top to bottom through state regulation: “When I think of the mechanics of power,

²⁵³ Ibid., 351, 356.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 353.

²⁵⁵ Greg Castillo, “Domesticating the Cold War: Household Consumption as Propaganda in Marshall Plan Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (2005): 263.

²⁵⁶ Sara Lennox, “Constructing Femininity in the Early Cold War Era,” in *German Pop Culture: How “American” is it?*, ed. Agnes C. Mueller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 69.

²⁵⁷ Adams, *Trouble*, 22.

²⁵⁸ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 36.

²⁵⁹ Sommers, “Men,” 290.

²⁶⁰ Adams, *Trouble*, 13.

I think of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives.”²⁶¹ While those who adhere to normative masculinity are rewarded, those who fail to embody normative masculinity are punished.²⁶² Methods of normalization are aimed at producing ideal subjects, and newspaper discourse plays an important role in this process. According to Richardson, “[J]ournalism exists to enable citizens to better understand their lives and their position(s) in the world.”²⁶³

Hegemony and Newspaper Discourse

Newspaper discourse produces normal subjects at the same time as it produces deviant subjects. In the Vancouver papers, men on Skid Road were labelled drunks, drug addicts, and criminals because they failed to conform to normative masculinity.²⁶⁴ An understanding of this language, how it is produced, and its shaping of social relations is crucial to grasping the context in which Herzog produced his photographs.

CDA’s method of textual analysis looks not only at the text that is present but also at what is absent; after all, the journalist carefully selects which words to use to describe a person, an action, or a process, and chooses how to construct a sentence.²⁶⁵ In doing so, other options are excluded, and this exclusion is significant. In order for textual analysis to be critical, it must demonstrate how the construction of the text reproduces or resists dominant ideologies that

²⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 39.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁶³ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 7.

²⁶⁴ Newspaper discourse on drug addicts will not be examined here because although journalists often mentioned drug addicts as habitués of Skid Road, they seldom wrote extensively about drug users or drug use on Skid Road—perhaps because this group represented only 4% of the population in 1965, whereas alcoholics formed 25% of the population. See Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 29. For articles about drug use on Skid Road, see Norman McCrae, “Pills Pushed Openly on Skid Road,” *Vancouver Sun*, May 27, 1961; Mackenzie Porter, “The Dope Craze that’s Terrorizing Vancouver,” *Maclean’s*, February 1, 1955; “Skidroad Plan Delay Called Political Evasion,” *Province*, June 9, 1967.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

support social inequalities.²⁶⁶

The discursive practices of journalism reproduce the hegemony of capitalism by enabling the voices of more powerful social groups to be more heavily represented in the news. For instance, the necessity for accuracy, objectivity, and efficiency in producing the news means that journalists often resort to traditionally authoritative sources for information.²⁶⁷ The result is a strong partiality towards the “coverage of public bodies [...] towards the coverage and pronouncement of politicians [...] a bias towards the establishment if you will.”²⁶⁸ Less powerful social groups are further disadvantaged by their inability to shape the news. More powerful social groups speak for them, often in negative ways that reinforce their invisibility and marginalization within society.²⁶⁹

Another aspect of journalistic production that is important to consider is the criteria for establishing what is newsworthy and what will appeal to the target audience. Generally, a news report should satisfy at least one of the following criteria: “significance; drama; surprise; personalities; sex, scandal, and crime; and proximity.”²⁷⁰ As we will see below, the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province*—the two primary English-language daily newspapers in Vancouver—featured readership-building campaigns that focused on sensational topics such as crime, drugs, and sex.²⁷¹ These campaigns resembled typical crime reduction campaigns, which “revolve perpetually around a central constellation of provocative subjects—vulnerability, social disorder,

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 88.

²⁶⁸ Richard Harwood, quoted in Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 88.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 137.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 91.

²⁷¹ Other English-language newspapers in circulation in Vancouver in the 1950s and 1960s include the *Vancouver Herald* (1933–1957), *Vancouver Times* (1964–65), *Native Voice* (1946–), and the *Georgia Straight*, a weekly newspaper established in 1967 as “an anti-establishment alternative to the conservative daily newspapers.” See “History of the Georgia Straight,” *Georgia Straight*, accessed April 3, 2016, <http://www.straight.com/history>; “BC, Lower Mainland, Vancouver Newspapers in Print & Microfilm,” Vancouver Public Library, accessed April 3, 2016, <http://guides.vpl.ca/content.php?pid=193504&sid=1622286#Vancouver>; Wilfred H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1967).

outsiders, youth and sex—and certain associated criminal activities.”²⁷² In order to grab readers’ attention, newspaper campaigns exploit three ideological themes: sensationalization, sentimentality, and symptoms rather than causes.²⁷³ Sensationalization entails using rhetorical language that relies heavily on negative or judgmental adjectives.²⁷⁴ Campaigns on Skid Road employed vicious words such as “pathetic,” “sordid,” and “hopeless.”²⁷⁵ Sentimentality refers to emotional appeal—although journalists aroused fear and disgust in readers toward Skid Road rather than the typical feelings of sadness or nostalgia that are associated with sentimentality. Finally, symptoms such as alcoholism and crime were targeted rather than potential causes,²⁷⁶ such as a lack of work opportunities or mental health issues. This discursive strategy allows newspapers to avoid critiquing capitalism. Richardson cites Mike Wayne who compellingly argues:

If [this] were not [the case] then one would expect to see the mainstream news media calling capitalism into question on a regular basis; one would expect to find them attacking the profit motive routinely, pointing out the irrationality of capitalism’s priorities, highlighting its wastefulness, attacking *wealthy* minorities that control vast resources rather than the poor and the vulnerable, and linking the various tragedies, discontents, and crises which they find in the world back to capitalist relations of production. ... Marx and Engels’ proposition of a link between ruling ideas and the ruling class does seem to me to be a reasonable proposition from which to start.²⁷⁷

Newspaper discourse thus reproduces the capitalist ideology of the ruling class, limiting the possibility of alternative perspectives or values and subduing the desire for resistance. Local newspaper articles published at the time that Herzog was making his photographs of Skid Road appealed to middle-class values in order to secure a middle-class audience. The views and concerns of this social class were therefore dominant, while those of the working class were marginalized or excluded.

²⁷² Ibid., 121.

²⁷³ Ibid., 122.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ryan, “Lost Souls”; “We Can’t Shrug it Off.”

²⁷⁶ For example, in Ryan, “The Lowest in Humanity,” Herbert Fiddes, executive secretary of Central City Mission, states that “[n]inety percent of the skid road problem ... is directly or indirectly due to the excessive use of liquor.”

²⁷⁷ Mike Wayne, quoted in Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 134.

With the three aspects of CDA in mind—that is, textual analysis, the discursive practices of journalism, and the social practices of society²⁷⁸—I will proceed to examine how newspaper discourse in the 1950s and 1960s produced deviant male subjects such as the drunk, the criminal, and the old-age pensioner on Skid Road, and how Herzog’s work challenges these representations.

“Vancouver’s Shame”: Newspaper Discourse on Skid Road

In the 1950s and 1960s, reporters for local newspapers asserted that men on Skid Road were fundamentally at odds with “normal” society. Journalists displayed no qualms about using disparaging language in such discussions because it was socially accepted by the middle class.²⁷⁹ One writer declares in the *Vancouver Province*: “[Skid Road] goes on its ugly way. And it’s [*sic*] way is so ugly, so costly, so utterly irreconcilable with normal social behaviour, that it should not be tolerated in a self-respecting colony of ants [emphasis added].”²⁸⁰ The writer continues, “And yet we tolerate it. We tolerate the ‘skid road’ even when we know that in it originates 90 percent of the city’s crime, most of the drug traffic, most of the venereal diseases and prostitution [emphasis added].”²⁸¹ The use of the word “we” implies that the reporter is addressing newspaper readers who exemplify “normal social behaviour” by adhering to the dominant behaviours, beliefs, and values of society.

The assertions of so-called experts on Skid Road correspond to the three primary elements of bourgeois representations of the working class: homogeneity, choice, and freedom.²⁸² In an article titled “Can Bulldozers and Wrecking Balls Really Destroy our Skid

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 143.

²⁸⁰ “We Can’t Shrug it Off.”

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 139.

Road?” Tom Ardies asks, “Why does one element of society gravitate to a Skid Road?”²⁸³ First, it is important to point out that this question contains a presupposition—“a taken-for-granted, implicit claim embedded within the explicit meaning of a text or utterance.”²⁸⁴ Ardies’s question assumes that there is in fact one segment of society that is drawn to Skid Road—an assumption that homogenizes its diverse population.²⁸⁵ In response to this question, the executive director of the B.C. Alcoholism Foundation, E.D. McRae, asserts: “They have a different way of life—different values. They don’t belong to the ordinary culture of the city.”²⁸⁶ McRae suggests that the social exclusion of men on Skid Road—their “way of life”—is their own choice. Meanwhile, Ted Hill, a social service administrator, believes that the freedom of men on Skid Road must be respected: “[U]nder our democratic system you can’t force a man to stop living that way.”²⁸⁷

Since Skid Road was considered socially and economically unproductive,²⁸⁸ journalists regularly debated whether Skid Road could be eliminated and, if so, how.²⁸⁹ The general consensus was that Skid Road should be left in its deteriorating, unsanitary state because the residents were the primary problem and had to be dealt with before the environment could be improved.²⁹⁰ However, there were a few individuals who protested the decision of civic authorities to spend money on policing rather than on improving the deplorable physical

²⁸³ Tom Ardies, “Can Bulldozers and Wrecking Balls Really Destroy our Skid Road?” *Vancouver Sun*, May 16, 1964, 6.

²⁸⁴ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 63.

²⁸⁵ Reverends Gordon Gardiner and Lloyd Wright implicitly reject the notion that a subgroup of society is drawn to Skid Road by stating: “Each case must be treated as completely individual. No two men are the same. No two men have the same problems. No two men have gone through the same trials which have led them to drink and skid road.” This statement exposes the contradictory tendency of working-class discourse to homogenize the working class as a dysfunctional group while simultaneously individualizing social problems. See Patrick Tryon, “300 Skidroaders Dine Out,” *Vancouver Province*, December 28, 1968, 29; Moon and Rolison, “Classism,” 130.

²⁸⁶ Ardies, “Bulldozers.”

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 13.

²⁸⁹ Ryan, “Lost Souls”; “Skid Road Problem,” *Coast News*, January 31, 1963, 2; Ardies, “Bulldozers.”

²⁹⁰ Ryan, “Skid Road Cleanup.”

conditions.²⁹¹ The city's neglect of Skid Road is appalling considering its knowledge of Dr. Leonard Marsh's 1950 report, which states that "52 percent of all dwellings in the board area which encompasses the skid road—house, apartments, rooms, cabins—have defective heating equipment or food storage facilities; 26 percent are excessively dark; 13 percent are damp—and nine percent are seriously afflicted with filth or smells. Defective plumbing and community toilet and bathing facilities are common."²⁹² Marsh's cost estimate of fifteen million dollars to improve conditions on Skid Road led civic authorities to dismiss his report and instead enact a policy of containment,²⁹³ wherein social services were offered only in this district to prevent "Skid Road types" from dispersing to other areas of the city.²⁹⁴ Journalists and experts generally agreed that Skid Road should remain intact but segregated to protect other city residents.²⁹⁵ Describing Skid Road as though it were a contagious disease,²⁹⁶ Staff Inspector Jim Mundie declares: "Every city has got it. There's no way of wiping it out completely. You can control it a lot better in a little pocket than having it spread out all over the city."²⁹⁷ According to the newspapers, two types of people most in need of containment within the area were "drunks" and criminals.

The Drunk

Newspaper discourse on Skid Road in the 1950s and 1960s concentrated heavily on men who drank alcohol to excess. A 1967 article in the *Province* indicates that there were "3,000 drunks" on Skid Road, although the total population of the area is not mentioned.²⁹⁸ Men on Skid Road

²⁹¹ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 65; Elsie, "Shocking Reports"; Tony Eberts, "IDEAS...for a Better City," *Province*, July 20, 1968.

²⁹² Ryan, "Skid Road Cleanup."

²⁹³ Ryan, "Lost Souls."

²⁹⁴ Tryon, "300 Skidroaders Dine Out"; Jeffries, "Shock," 25.

²⁹⁵ Ryan, "The Lowest in Humanity"; "Skid Road Problem"; Ardies, "Bulldozers."

²⁹⁶ Vancouver's Chinatown was described in similar terms at the turn of the twentieth century. See Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871–1921* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 109.

²⁹⁷ Ardies, "Bulldozers."

²⁹⁸ "Skidroad Bad, but Not without Hope," *Province*, September 16, 1967.

who drank a socially unacceptable amount of alcohol were most commonly referred to as “drunks,” whereas their middle-class counterparts were described as “liquor addicts” and “problem drinkers.”²⁹⁹ The term “drunk” has more pejorative and evocative connotations, conjuring an image of someone engaging in “loud, anti-social behaviour.”³⁰⁰ Journalists choose specific words to describe people, which limits the possibility of thinking of people in other ways.³⁰¹ Although writers acknowledged that alcoholics also existed within the middle class,³⁰² alcoholics on Skid Road were differentiated from alcoholics elsewhere based on individual characteristics associated with failed masculinity, including immorality, unemployability, and dependency.

Newspaper discourse in the 1950s asserted that men on Skid Road who drank to excess were prone to immoral behaviour. One reporter wrote in 1953 of group drinkers who regularly participated in rowdy drinking “parties” in the middle of the day: “Fights often occur during the parties. Some are arrested. The police blotter, three days in succession, [*sic*] last week, showed 29 in court one morning, 17 the next, 23 the next.”³⁰³ The writer asserts that the desperation of the alcoholic drives him/her to commit immoral acts: “The skid road alcoholic will do anything for a drink ... steal, shoplift, panhandle, beg, scavenge, stoop to the avails of prostitution.”³⁰⁴ Of course, public drunkenness was itself a crime,³⁰⁵ although police insisted that prison ensured the offender’s own safety. As Bill Ryan writes, “The police—under specific direction of Chief Constable Walter Mulligan—constantly strive to get all drunks, alcoholics, and canned heaters

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ M. Lynne Murphy, *Lexical Meaning* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 34.

³⁰¹ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 49. At the same time, a reporter’s choice of words may be limited by pre-existing texts that have established certain conventions or by the writing protocols of their newspaper company. See Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 96.

³⁰² “Skidroad Bad, but Not without Hope.”

³⁰³ Ryan, “‘Vancouver’s Shame’: 700 Trips to Jail!” *Province*, November 10, 1952, 1.

³⁰⁴ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

³⁰⁵ Drinking was criminalized in the 1930s. See Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 98–99.

off the streets and into cells, for their own protection.”³⁰⁶

By the mid-1960s, experts began to perceive the relationship between alcoholism and immorality differently. Summarized in a 1965 article in the *Province*, a recent civic proposal on changes to the management of chronic drunks on Skid Road emphatically argued that “the drunk should be regarded as a person with an illness, not a criminal.”³⁰⁷ However, this well-intentioned statement is undermined by the continued use of the term “drunk.” The tradition of using pejorative language to describe alcoholics persisted in the newspapers, as evidenced by an article from 1970 in the *Vancouver Sun* about a group of local businessmen who were outraged by the behaviour of Skid Road inhabitants in Pioneer Park. The journalist recounts the businessmen’s vivid descriptions of Pioneer Park: “They said that drunkards and vagabonds of both sexes swarm over it. There is ‘indecent exposure, filthy language and absolute filth on the ground’.”³⁰⁸ The word “swarm” heightens the negative language used to describe the park users, conjuring images of insect infestations and concomitant feelings of disgust and fear. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s and continuing into the 1970s, newspaper discourse attributed immoral behaviour to heavy drinkers on Skid Road.

Newspaper discourse asserted that these men were unemployed because they did not want to work, or were unable to hold a job due to personal inadequacies. In an article from 1953, Coroner Glen McDonald authoritatively states: “They know they’re failures. They don’t want success or responsibility. They don’t want the surroundings that demand it. They don’t want to cut the grass.”³⁰⁹ McDonald exhibits the sense of entitlement that middle-class elites have to

³⁰⁶ Ryan, “Skid Road Cleanup.” A “canned heater” is someone who drinks “canned heat,” which Jonathon Green defines as “a form of crude alcohol, intended for heating purposes but drunk, as is methylated spirits, by down-and-out alcoholics who can afford nothing better.” See Jonathon Green, “Canned Heat,” in *Cassell’s Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell & Co., 2000), 240.

³⁰⁷ Bud Elsie, “Hostels Urged for Drunks,” *Province*, September 9, 1965.

³⁰⁸ “‘Filth’ Depicted in Park Pictures,” *Vancouver Sun*, August 12, 1970, 33.

³⁰⁹ Ardies, “Bulldozers.”

speak for members of the working class and to define their lived experiences. The coroner's labelling of men on Skid Road as failures demonstrates how hegemony operates by punishing those who exhibit different values, behaviours, and practices. Reporter Bill Ryan suggests that the Skid Road alcoholic may become so desperate for a drink that he may even work for a day in order to buy one.³¹⁰ The incompatibility of alcoholics and work is emphasized in a story in the *Vancouver Sun* about a Salvation Army soldier who was a "full-time wine artist" before he received help and overcame his alcohol addiction. The article states that as an ex-alcoholic, the man was "now back on the job as an electrician."³¹¹ Alcoholism was thus conflated with unemployability and deviancy, while being employed was associated with normalcy and responsible drinking or teetotalism. An article from 1966 in the *Province* sums up the tragic cycle experienced by Skid Road alcoholics: "Most [alcoholics] will land up in skid road, conveniently forgotten—for a while. Then they will be swept up by the police and projected into a dreary—and expensive round of jail, release, unemployment, dejection, booze—and skid road [*sic*]."³¹²

Journalists also emphasized the helplessness of drunks on Skid Road. An article from 1952, which addresses the problem of alcoholics using their welfare checks to buy alcohol, opens with the sentence: "Vancouver social workers are out to switch Skidroad drunks from bottle to spoon feeding."³¹³ This patronizing metaphor suggests a parent-infant relationship between social workers and alcoholics in which the latter are incapable of basic survival skills. An article from 1953 reinforces this image of drinkers: "There is little or no thought of eating. 'I've gone

³¹⁰ Ryan, "Lost Souls."

³¹¹ "Syd Bourne Dies: Hundreds Mourn Skid-Road Saint," *Vancouver Sun*, May 11, 1962.

³¹² "Skidroad's Wrecks a Costly Luxury..." *Province*, October 17, 1966.

³¹³ "City Drive on Skidroad Drunks Set," *Vancouver Sun*, May 31, 1952.

two weeks without eating’, one boasted to this reporter.”³¹⁴ The word “boasted” suggests that the speaker is proud of not having eaten for an extended period of time, which in turn implies that he possesses some character deficiency, since a “normal,” responsible person eats everyday to ensure good health. However, the direct quote itself offers the possibility of alternative interpretations. For example, it is possible that the speaker lacked the money to buy food to eat. By dwelling on the wasteful spending of social assistance by alcoholics on Skid Road and their need for rehabilitation, journalists emphasized their reliance on the government, social workers, police, and other authority figures for their subsistence. This dependency served to justify the social control of men on Skid Road.

These negative representations of male alcoholics on Skid Road were influenced by the history of heavy drinking as a key signifier of working-class masculinity.³¹⁵ Beginning in the late nineteenth century, migrant labourers working in the resource industries and on the railroad shared a distinctive work life characterized by tough physical labour, long hours, and isolation from women.³¹⁶ These conditions, combined with racial divisions, produced a bachelor subculture of unattached, white, working-class men.³¹⁷ This subculture was comprised of particular social practices and spaces within the city that were “alternatives to the harsh indignities of the capitalist workplace, the constraints of bourgeois moral and cultural codes, and the responsibilities of the family household. They were central to the shaping of [white migrant workers’] masculine identities.”³¹⁸ In other words, working-class masculinity developed in opposition to hegemonic masculinity. One of the practices of working-class men that defied

³¹⁴ Ryan, “700 Trips to Jail!”

³¹⁵ Robert Hogg, *Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 110.

³¹⁶ Rooney, “Societal Forces,” 14.

³¹⁷ Rennie Warburton, “Race and Class in British Columbia: A Comment,” *BC Studies* 49 (Spring 1981): 84.

³¹⁸ Craig Heron, “The Boys and Their Booze: Masculinities and Public Drinking in Working-Class Hamilton, 1890–1946,” *Canadian Historical Review* 86, no. 3 (September 2005): 411.

hegemonic masculinity was drinking with other men in public spaces.³¹⁹ Saloons and later on beer parlours proliferated on Skid Road.³²⁰ Heavy drinking became a marker of working-class manliness. Beginning in the early twentieth century, middle-class elites carried out campaigns to suppress the immoral activities of these men, which included not only drinking but also gambling and paid sex.³²¹ The success of these efforts was limited, and, according to Craig Heron, social drinking came to “symbolize a collective defiance of bourgeois efforts to control” single, white, working-class men.³²² However, drinking was not always about defiance: for many, this was simply how life was, and there was little thought or possibility of alternative leisure activities. Albert Emond, who arrived in Vancouver in 1945 and worked as a logger, explains:

Sometime in November, people from the logging camps came in and stayed for the winter. That’s what I used to do: come in in November and stay all winter in the Columbia Hotel. In the spring, you went back to the logging. Most of the entertainment was in the beer parlour, or a wild woman once in a while. I liked going to the hockey game to watch the Canucks play, but mostly I lived on unemployment insurance and hung around the beer parlour. I don’t want to recollect that, but that’s the way it worked. I didn’t use the library much. Too busy in the beer parlour. Didn’t know any better.³²³

Whereas heavy social drinking represented white working-class manliness and solidarity, the upper classes perceived it as an emasculating activity that countered their beliefs in moral responsibility, regulation, and self-restraint.³²⁴ The characteristics that the upper classes attributed to the heavy drinker, such as immaturity, egocentricity, and aggressiveness, were

³¹⁹ Ibid., 412.

³²⁰ Robert A. Campbell, “Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver’s Beer Parlours, 1925–1954,” in *Labouring Canada: Class, Gender, and Race in Canadian Working-Class History*, ed. Bryan D. Palmer and Joan Sangster (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2008), 305. Beer parlours first opened in Vancouver in 1925. See Robert A. Campbell, “Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver’s Beer Parlours, 1925–1954,” *Labour / Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999): 109.

³²¹ Heron, “The Boys,” 415.

³²² Ibid., 412.

³²³ Dew, *Hastings*, 114.

³²⁴ Dummit, *Manly Modern*, 155.

similar to those associated with the working-class man.³²⁵ The image of the working-class man on Skid Road as a heavy drinker continued into the postwar period, even though the types of men residing in the area were no longer restricted to migrant workers and the reasons behind heavy drinking had changed. Whereas drinking had been a way for men to let loose after long periods of working on the frontier in the earlier years, in the postwar period most men on Skid Road were older and unemployed or marginally employed.³²⁶ Many of them had returned from the war and did not accept postwar values, nor were they able to fulfill the tremendous expectations of the new era.³²⁷ In addition, many people who were not sufficiently integrated into the labour force were unable to reap the benefits of improved working conditions.³²⁸ As McDonald explains: “Throughout Vancouver’s history peddlers, vagrants, prostitutes, crippled ex-loggers, and casual labourers have worked on the margins of the city’s economy, lacking skills, economic security, and respectability.”³²⁹ In the postwar period, drinking was still at times a social activity on Skid Road, carried out in back alleys or parks, but for many it had also become a form of escape from difficult circumstances. As Heron explains:

[Men on Skid Row] told investigators that these sociable drinking sprees were the bright spots in a marginal existence broken by only occasional part-time employment and mostly lived out in “flops,” city missions, hostels, and, frequently, jail cells, because being drunk in a public place was still a punishable offence whether or not any disturbance resulted. Many of these men did not mind being sent to jail, where they could dry out, get more nutritious food, put on weight, and generally improve their health.³³⁰

Although the purpose of drinking on Skid Road had changed for the most part, bourgeois definitions of working-class heavy drinkers as social deviants persisted. Middle-class views on the drinking habits of white working-class men throughout the early twentieth century strongly

³²⁵ Lori Rotskoff, *Love on the Rocks: Men, Women, and Alcohol in Post-World War II America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 85.

³²⁶ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 21.

³²⁷ Dew, *Hastings*, 13–14.

³²⁸ McDonald, “Working,” 31.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 330.

influenced newspaper discourse on Skid Row in the postwar period, although these views took on a new sense of urgency and significance amidst anxieties about the relationship between middle-class men and alcohol.

In the 1940s, experts and the public began to acknowledge that alcoholism was no longer limited to marginal working-class men and women on skid row, but could also affect members of the upper classes.³³¹ Drinking in moderation became increasingly common among middle-class professionals and men serving in the Second World War, as it had become a sign of respectable masculinity.³³² However, both these social groups experienced immense stress at work and were prone to consuming alcohol as a coping mechanism, which could lead to alcoholism. This addiction posed a threat to hegemonic masculinity in the postwar period because it signified “a man’s failure to conform to prevailing norms.”³³³ Newspaper discourse on Skid Row illustrated to middle-class men the dire consequences of succumbing to excessive drinking and failing to fulfill their responsibilities. In this way, Skid Row discourse distinguished normative masculinity from pathological masculinity. As Sommers writes: “The significance of the skid-row derelict, among the *bêtes noires* of urban industrial society, is as a negative lesson to men: He is what not to be but what you could become if you are not careful.”³³⁴ Experts asserted that the alcoholic failed both as a breadwinner and as a marriage partner—two key elements of normative masculinity.³³⁵ Newspaper discourse on Skid Row reinforced the construction of

³³¹ Ibid., 352.

³³² Rotskoff, *Love*, 84, 89.

³³³ Ibid., 85.

³³⁴ Sommers, “Men,” 289.

³³⁵ A psychologist who conducted a comparative study on alcoholics, former alcoholics, and non-alcoholic men found that non-alcoholic men “displayed the greatest interest (in their vocation) as indicated by a successful career,” whereas alcoholic men “showed little evidence of any personal life goal or ambition.” Alcoholics were seen as being unfit for marriage. Sociologist Selden Bacon surveyed 1,200 men living in Connecticut who had been arrested for public drunkenness, and found that “only 23 percent were married and living with their wives, compared with 72 percent of the ‘ordinary’ adult population. Alcoholic men were divorced twelve times as often and separated six times as often as nonalcoholic men.” Based on these findings, Bacon concluded that not only did alcoholism have a

alcoholics as examples of failed masculinity by presenting stories about well-off men with families and jobs who became alcoholics and ended up on Skid Road. Consider this example from a 1962 article:

Syd Bourne's story was the familiar one of the social and business drinker who ends up a vagrant in jail. He lost his job [as an insurance company executive] in Montreal. He lost his wife, the niece of one of the city's greatest financiers, and became estranged from his wealthy brothers. They shipped him to Vancouver in 1939. Here he drifted and drank until Major [Bill] Leslie [of the Salvation Army's Harbor Light Corps] and his co-workers somehow opened for him a door into a bright, new non-alcoholic world.³³⁶

A news report from 1953 claims that alcoholics on Skid Road come from all walks of life: "The ranks of the canned heaters and alcoholics in themselves are a study. They include doctors, lawyers, plumbers, sea captains, contractors, virtually every type of citizen."³³⁷ Reflecting anxieties about the effects of alcohol on middle-class masculinity, such statements disavowed the reality that most men on skid row had only ever had working-class affiliations.³³⁸

Herzog's Representations of Leisure on Skid Road

Although alcoholism was a major problem on Skid Road,³³⁹ Herzog refrained from photographing the consumption of alcohol, beer parlours, and other public spaces associated with drinking. Instead of perpetuating the image of the alcoholic, Herzog recorded men on Skid Road engaged in other forms of leisure within spaces that historically served the bachelor subculture of migrant labourers. His photographs of secondhand shops, barbershops, used bookstores, and news outlets humanize men on Skid Road by exploring the complex relationship between

deleterious effect on marriages, but that alcoholic men were inherently incompatible with marriage because of specific personality traits such as "immaturity, ... egoism, and self-pity." See Rotskoff, *Love*, 81–82.

³³⁶ "Syd Bourne Dies."

³³⁷ Ryan, "700 Trips to Jail!"

³³⁸ Caplow, "The Sociologist," 10.

³³⁹ According to an article in the *Vancouver Sun*, "[D]rug and alcohol deaths on Skid Road have risen from 41 in 1967 to 113 in 1970." See "Deaths Increasing among Alcoholics," *Vancouver Sun*, June 26, 1971, 12.

consumption and identity.³⁴⁰ In early-twentieth-century Vancouver, this relationship became politicized through class conflict regarding working-class use of public urban space.³⁴¹ Herzog's photographic study of the various recreational uses of public urban space by unattached, white, working-class men challenges middle-class efforts to associate public space with pathological masculinity. While work was no longer a key component of their masculine identities, the (previous) position of these men within the relations of production necessarily shaped their leisure and consumptive practices. These practices variously diverged from and converged with normative masculinity, demonstrating that subordinated masculinities are not categorically different from normative masculinity as asserted in newspaper discourse, but are both resistant against and complicit in normative masculinity.³⁴² At the same time as Herzog's work shows a deep appreciation for the values and tastes of his subjects, it reveals how their deviations from hegemonic masculinity contributed to their economic marginalization and social exclusion.

Secondhand Shops

Herzog's photographs of secondhand shops on Skid Road reveal not only the needs, tastes, and values of its residents, but also the history of Skid Road as a masculine, working-class space.

Secondhand shops originally catered to migrant workers on Skid Road.³⁴³ Men who possessed a limited formal education were compelled to accept low-skilled, unstable, low-paying jobs.³⁴⁴ The

³⁴⁰ As Mark Jayne contends, "Consumption is understood to be ... an active constituent in the construction of space and place ... and as playing a vital role in constructing our identities and lifestyles." See Mark Jayne, *Cities and Consumption* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

³⁴¹ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 38.

³⁴² Sally Robinson rejects the popular yet reductive oppressor/oppressed paradigm in the study of masculinity. She argues that this paradigm creates a binary relationship between masculinities that does not fully take into account historical or cultural context. What she proposes in place of this paradigm is an approach that examines both men's resistance to and complicity in dominant masculinity. Robinson suggests that it is necessary to not only consider white working-class masculinity as a subordinate masculinity but also to think about how white working-class men are resistant to and complicit in dominant masculinity. See Sally Robinson, "Pedagogy of the Opaque," 152.

³⁴³ Sommers, "Men," 290.

³⁴⁴ Rooney, "Societal Forces," 14.

lives of transient labourers were characterized by “economic vulnerability and restraint,”³⁴⁵ and so secondhand shops were common on Skid Road. In his 2005 essay “Exploring Vancouver in the Fifties and Sixties,” Herzog explains his enduring interest in the display windows of secondhand stores: “My first colour slides in Canada show wondrous secondhand stores. Their displays were often artful in naive and sometimes tacky ways. They blew me away. It didn’t take me long to realize that they were really cultural microcosms of North American history.”³⁴⁶

The objects in secondhand shops can reveal the history of a place by illustrating the needs and tastes of a community from an earlier time. (Of course, such objects may intermingle with others that originated in other places and communities.) *Second Hand Shop Cordova St.* (1961) (fig. 4) offers a fragmented view of the window display of a secondhand shop on Skid Road. Arranged in a row outside the window are several different shovels, hammers, and axes. Inside the window display, men’s leather shoes, jackets, and belts are neatly arranged. The window bears a white sign advertising new logger boots for sale. This collection of objects forms a portrait of white working-class masculinity. The jackets, belts, and shoes reveal the sartorial styles of the recent past and present, while the tools and logger boots allude to the history of manual labourers on Skid Road.³⁴⁷ Whereas newspaper discourse focused on heavy drinking as a signifier of working-class masculinity, *Second Hand Shop Cordova St.* affirms that manual work was a central component of working-class masculinity.³⁴⁸ As Tim Edwards states: “[S]uccessful masculinity was equated directly with success at work whether in middle-class terms of a career or in more working-class terms of physical labour.”³⁴⁹ The recycling of the clothing and tools of migrant workers through the secondhand shop represents the inverse of the workers’ treatment

³⁴⁵ R.W. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 105.

³⁴⁶ Herzog, “Exploring Vancouver,” 160.

³⁴⁷ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 26.

³⁴⁸ Connell, *The Men and the Boys*, 105.

³⁴⁹ Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 8.

by employers as disposable commodities.³⁵⁰ As one man put it: “If you got hurt, well, there’s a lot of men outside...the man was nothing.”³⁵¹



Fig. 4. Fred Herzog, *Second Hand Shop Cordova St.*, 1961. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

Second Hand Shop Cordova St. also speaks to the different relationships of the working and middle classes to postwar consumer culture. At a time when commodity consumption was

³⁵⁰ Munt, introduction, 7–8.

³⁵¹ Jean Williams, “In the Mill,” in *Working Lives: Vancouver 1886–1986*, ed. Elaine Bernard (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1985), 51.

becoming a central feature of North American culture,³⁵² the existence of secondhand shops demonstrated that socially and economically marginalized individuals experienced little of the effects of postwar economic prosperity. In addition, certain members of the working class rejected the growing commodity culture, instead valuing secondhand and handmade objects, craftsmanship, and self-reliance. Robert Bruce (1894–1985), who was a boat builder in North Vancouver for forty years, has said: “I think young people today should take up some hobby or craft. Learn to make things with their hands. It doesn’t matter what it is, craft or hobby. If I was to talk to them I’d say get out and enjoy yourself and take up some craft and make things yourself. Don’t depend on bought stuff.”³⁵³

Herzog recalls that “[p]eople wondered why I need the latest camera equipment to make snaps of all that junk.”³⁵⁴ As a *flâneur* trained in the art of observation, Herzog detected the ethnographic significance of secondhand shops and the objects therein. However, *Second Hand Shop Cordova St.* departs from traditional ethnography and its claims to objectivity in that the window frame, which corresponds to the upper and left edges of the photograph, raises the viewer’s awareness of the photograph as an artificial construction. In addition, a reflection of Herzog with his camera held up to his eye is subtly visible in the store window, further calling attention to the status of the photograph as a subjective representation of working-class masculinity.

Barbershops

Herzog’s numerous photographs of barbershops counter the portrayal of men on Skid Road as

³⁵² Magdalena Fahrni and Robert Rutherford, “Introduction,” in *Creating Postwar Canada: 1945–75*, ed. Magdalena Fahrni and Robert Rutherford (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2008), 3.

³⁵³ Dew, *Hastings*, 28.

³⁵⁴ Herzog, “Exploring Vancouver,” 160.

alcoholics who are incapable of self-care.³⁵⁵ In an article from 1967 Gerry Deagle confirms this stereotype: “I went down Hastings street. A man came toward me—in his sixties, looking like the stereotype of the Skid Road bum, scruffy clothes, red face, a week’s stubble.”³⁵⁶ Major Wagner, the Salvation Army’s prison representative in British Columbia, describes the poor physical condition of alcoholics: “They sleep outside ... they fall downstairs ... they don’t eat ... they fall in the road way ... they stagger around ... they’re the victims of everybody ... they’re in terrible physical condition ... they keep drinking and their broken bones won’t mend ... I’d like to know what there is in canned heat and rubbing alcohol that keeps them alive?”³⁵⁷ In contrast to the dominant image of bedraggled and frail alcoholics on Skid Road who are dependent on welfare and social services, Herzog’s pictures of barbershops suggest not only that men on Skid Road valued self-care, but also that barbershops were key spaces where they expressed their masculine identities.

While the barbershop was a popular subject for American photographers such as Walker Evans,³⁵⁸ Herzog may have recognized the importance of the barbershop as a space for white working-class men in the city after reading John Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer*. In the novel, a character named Bud Korpenning—a working-class man who travels to Manhattan to find work—visits a barbershop shortly after his arrival in the city. Dos Passos paints a vivid picture of Bud’s visit to the barbershop: “Drowsy from the smell of lather and bayrum and singed hair that weighed down the close air of the barbershop, Bud sat nodding, his hands dangling big and red between his knees. ... The barber’s pudgy hands moved through his hair, the scissors whirred

³⁵⁵ Photographs by Herzog featuring barbershops include *U.R. Next* (1959), *Main Barber* (1968), *Empty Barber Shop* (1966), and *Ferry Barber Shop* (1959).

³⁵⁶ Gerry Deagle, “Down-and-Outs Keep Going to Nowhere: Archie Trod Skid Roads from Halifax to Vancouver,” *Vancouver Sun*, December 26, 1967.

³⁵⁷ Ryan, “700 Trips to Jail!”

³⁵⁸ Department of Photographs, “Walker Evans (1903–1975).”

like a hornet behind his ears.”³⁵⁹

Herzog’s *U.R. Next* (1959) (fig. 5) shows the interior of Allen’s Barber Shop from the perspective of someone standing on the street. Inside, facing the viewer, a middle-aged white man in a white apron—presumably Allen—is cutting the greying hair of another white man. Clues that this barbershop is a working-class space include the large crack in the lower left of the window indicating physical deterioration, the many calendars adorning the walls as decoration, and the casual tone of the sign “U.R. Next” located in the lower portion of the window.



Fig. 5. Fred Herzog, *U.R. Next*, 1959. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

As with *Second Hand Shop Cordova St.*, Herzog has cropped the image so that the conspicuous

³⁵⁹ John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1953), 16.

red and white borders of the shop window serve as a frame containing the scene inside the barbershop, calling attention to the constructedness of the photograph. Furthermore, Herzog's reflection in the window makes the viewer conscious of the photographer. In addition to affirming the photograph as a form of subjective representation, Dónal O'Donoghue suggests that Herzog's presence in the photograph signifies a sense of intimacy between him and his subjects.³⁶⁰ This intimacy may stem from a shared appreciation for grooming as a masculine activity. *My Room Harwood Street* (1958) (fig. 6), which depicts Herzog's personal shaving accessories on a window sill in his house, suggests that Herzog regarded grooming rituals as an important component of his masculinity.



Fig. 6. Fred Herzog, *My Room Harwood Street*, 1958. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

³⁶⁰ O'Donoghue, "Intimacy," 318.

O'Donoghue has examined the barbershop as a space of intimacy between men.³⁶¹ The barbershop functions as a “space of appearance”—“where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly.”³⁶² Men make judgments about each other’s appearance—that is, each other’s performance of masculinity—within the heteronormative and gender normative atmosphere of the barbershop.³⁶³ In this way, certain modes of masculinity are reinforced, while others are excluded. In turn, a sense of intimacy is established among those whose bodies “extend the space” of the barbershop.³⁶⁴ The fact that only the barber and his customer appear to be in the barbershop in *U.R. Next* creates a sense of quiet intimacy between them. O'Donoghue’s notion of intimacy is similar to the concept of homosociality—“the nonsexual attractions held by men (or women) for members of their own sex.”³⁶⁵ Visiting the barbershop was one way in which men on Skid Road bonded and affirmed to each other the importance of maintaining one’s appearance as an expression of white working-class masculinity.

Some men on Skid Road sought to transcend their social class by emulating the appearances of middle-class men. *Main Barber* (1968) (fig. 7) shows the interior of a barbershop on Main Street, where one wall displays several pages from hair trade magazines depicting men modelling various hairstyles. Each look represents a different type of white middle-class man, such as “Man of the World” and “College Senior.” These magazine pictures illustrate that appearance is a primary signifier of class, and that some working-class men on Skid Road conformed to middle-class tastes and normative ideals of masculinity.

³⁶¹ O'Donoghue, “Intimacy.”

³⁶² Hannah Arendt, quoted in O'Donoghue, “Intimacy,” 323.

³⁶³ O'Donoghue, “Intimacy,” 314.

³⁶⁴ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 11.

³⁶⁵ Sharon R. Bird. “Welcome to the Men’s Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity,” *Gender & Society* 10, no. 2 (April 1996): 121.



Fig. 7. Fred Herzog, *Main Barber*, 1968. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Terry Eagleton links taste and class, arguing that middle-class tastes are implicated in the broader project of hegemony.³⁶⁶ An essential feature of a successful hegemonic project is that it must allow people to participate and conform.³⁶⁷ While the exercise of taste is ultimately subjective, it is nevertheless influenced by externally imposed, hegemonic values.³⁶⁸ As such, taste not only distinguishes social classes but can also represent a negotiation between classes.³⁶⁹ Individuals occupying a lower position in the social hierarchy tend to imitate what has been decided as good taste by social elites.³⁷⁰ *Main Barber from Sidewalk* (1968) (fig. 8) situates the physically deteriorating barbershop in an area populated by unattached men living

³⁶⁶ Terry Eagleton, quoted in Jon Cook, “Culture, Class and Taste,” in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change*, ed. Sally R. Munt (London; New York: Cassell, 2000), 99.

³⁶⁷ Cook, “Culture,” 100.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 98–99.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

in rooming houses and cheap hotels, exposing the disparity between men's lives on Skid Road and the idealized images of successful, young, white, middle-class men on the walls of the barbershop.



Fig. 8. Fred Herzog, *Main Barber from Sidewalk*, 1968. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

Reading

Whereas newspaper discourse emphasized heavy drinking as a prevalent activity on Skid Road, Herzog's photographs of men reading and used bookstores, such as *Reader Spruce* (1959) (fig. 9), *Bookshop Main* (1963) (fig. 10), and *Shopper* (1962) (fig. 11), acknowledge the popularity of this generally wholesome pastime.³⁷¹

³⁷¹ Dew, *Hastings*, 14.



Fig. 9. Fred Herzog, *Reader Spruce*, 1959. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).



Fig. 10. Fred Herzog, *Bookshop Main*, 1963. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).



Fig. 11. Fred Herzog, *Shopper*, 1962. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

While images of individuals reading have a long tradition in the history of Western art,³⁷²

Herzog's photographs in particular were undoubtedly influenced by his experiences as a working-class, minimally educated young man who learned about the world through literature.³⁷³

He explains: "Because nobody looked after me [when I was a teenager] and nobody helped me, I had to develop my own intellectual vision of the world, which was quite deficient because I am not a very educated person."³⁷⁴ As a young man, Herzog met other working-class autodidacts; in particular, he greatly admired a man from Berlin named Gerhard Blume, whom he first encountered while working on a ship in Vancouver. Herzog describes Blume thusly:

He was self-taught; he knew literature—not only German literature but English, French, Italian, Russian, everything. He had a comprehensive mind, not only a memory for details but how philosophy enters into language, how language enters into literature, how the best novels are actually more real than reality, because the people who wrote them understand how the world

³⁷² See Garrett Stewart, *The Look of Reading: Book, Painting, Text* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

³⁷³ Herzog states: "I do a lot of reading. I have thousands of books, not just photo books but all kinds of stuff. It shapes my outlook." See Walsh and Enright, "Colour His World."

³⁷⁴ Walsh and Enright, "Colour His World."

functions. He steered me to books and historians, books on how the economy influences all aspects of society, science, religion and politics.³⁷⁵

Herzog respected other working-class men who shared an interest in reading, although he photographed people of all genders and classes partaking in the act. Newspaper readers often appear in his images since, as Belshaw puts it, “[t]he daily newspaper is as integral to the idea of the modern city as property taxes.”³⁷⁶ These photographs may have also been inspired by Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer*, in which reading the newspaper is a daily ritual for Manhattan residents. Dos Passos even inserts fictional newspaper excerpts into his narrative to illustrate to the reader what his characters are reading.

Reading was the only affordable recreational activity for most men on Skid Road.³⁷⁷ According to the city’s Social Planning Department, reading was the second most popular pastime (after watching television).³⁷⁸ Norman Wiles (1910–1985), who was raised in the East End and served in the army, describes his passion for reading: “I’m an avid reader. I’m so avid that if I start a book I can’t lay it down even though it disgusts me, too porno or not porno enough, and I’ve got to carry on and finish it.”³⁷⁹ Many made use of the Carnegie Library’s reading rooms because they were free;³⁸⁰ however, the main reading rooms were closed down in

³⁷⁵ Arnold, “Interview.”

³⁷⁶ John Belshaw, Review of Shelley Fralic’s *Making Headlines: 100 Years of the Vancouver Sun*, *BC Studies* 178 (Summer 2013), accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.bcstudies.com/?q=book-reviews/making-headlines-100-years-vancouver-sun>.

³⁷⁷ Steiman, “Community Organization,” 41.

³⁷⁸ Dew, *Hastings*, 14.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁸⁰ The Carnegie Library (1903–1957) originated as the New London Mechanics Institute, established in January 1869 by J.A. Raymur, the manager of the Hastings Mill, to provide a meeting room and library for mill employees. According to Chad Gaffield, Mechanics’ Institutes, which flourished in the nineteenth century in countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, were educational establishments that aimed to edify working-class men by teaching them “the underlying scientific principles of their work as well as the general value of ‘rational information’.” These institutes provided reading rooms and served as lending libraries. The presence of the Carnegie Library in the heart of Skid Road, on Main and Hastings, and the Library’s history as a Mechanics’ Institute, helps to explain the prevalence of reading as a recreational activity among working-class men on Skid Road. See “New London Mechanics Institute / Hastings Literary Institute,” http://www.vpl.ca/find/details/library_history; *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Mechanics’ Institute,” by Chad Gaffield, accessed December 9, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/mechanics-institutes/>.

the mid-1950s due to insufficient funds, which Steiman, writing in 1955, argued “has robbed many of these men of their only form of wholesome recreation and will increase the present over-burdened facilities of the remaining reading rooms.”³⁸¹ Men on Skid Road were castigated for their deviant behaviour while the city failed to provide any enriching forms of leisure.

Although reading was for the most part an enriching pastime, Herzog’s photographs of men on Skid Road reading newspapers critique the insidious effects that media representations of the working class have on working-class readers. *Man and Tabloids* (1966) (fig. 12) shows a man wearing a feathered fedora and black suit jacket with his back to the viewer, reading the cover of two tabloids on display in a shop window.



Fig. 12. Fred Herzog, *Man and Tabloids*, 1966. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

³⁸¹ Steiman, “Community Organization,” 41.

While the cover of the *National Enquirer* features a headline about a medical feat, the cover of *Confidential Flash*—self-described as “the nation’s most exciting tabloid”—has a lecherous headline that reads: “Sheepish Shepherd Becomes Sex-Mad Wolf: His Iron-Hard Fingers Were Tearing Away My Garments...” Next to these words is a white brunette woman striking a confident pose in a black corset and garter belt. According to Richardson, tabloids are “newspapers representing the working class *to* the working class.”³⁸² The example in Herzog’s photograph appears to belong to the postwar phenomenon of “invasion-of-privacy” publications. Mark Gabor explains: “Led by *Confidential*, these magazines exploited the intimacies of individuals, known and unknown, in extreme acts of violence and indiscretion.”³⁸³ The tabloid cover in Herzog’s photograph demonstrates the tendency of the upper classes to sexualize women of lower classes as proof of their deviance.³⁸⁴ Representations of working-class deviance in tabloids undoubtedly negatively influenced how working-class people on Skid Road perceived themselves. To make matters worse, they had nowhere to turn to for positive representations.

In the early twentieth century, newspapers directed toward the working class were produced by white working-class men who collectively fought for better work conditions and were invested in political, social, and economic issues.³⁸⁵ However, by the end of the war, the collective interests of men on Skid Road had waned. As James F. Rooney explains: “The changing orientation of skid-row men ... is manifested in their choice of reading material. Radical newspapers ... used to be popular. ... This change to conservative reading habits may be

³⁸² Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 134.

³⁸³ Mark Gabor, *The Illustrated History of Girlie Magazines: From National Police Gazette to the Present* (New York: Harmony Books, 1984), 42.

³⁸⁴ Moon and Rolison, “Classism,” 126.

³⁸⁵ Examples of such newspapers include the *Western Clarion* (established in 1903 and terminated in 1920 as the *Indicator*) and the *B.C. Workers’ News* (which lasted from 1935 to 1946 under various titles). See “Working Class – British Columbia – Newspapers,” Vancouver Public Library, accessed April 3, 2016, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/search?q=Working+Class+--+British+Columbia+--+Newspapers&t=subject>.

attributed to the lack of class-based political institutions on skid row.”³⁸⁶ Negative portrayals of the working class in tabloids naturalized the social exclusion of men on Skid Road, fuelling feelings of shame, self-deprecation, and disempowerment.³⁸⁷

The devastating effects of exclusively negative representations on Skid Road residents become more apparent if we compare their situation to that of their Chinese counterparts. In the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, Chinatown was similarly dominated by a population of unattached men.³⁸⁸ The fact that Chinese labourers accepted lower wages angered white labourers; racial discrimination against the Chinese combined with cultural differences led white and Chinese labourers to delineate separate spaces for themselves in the East End.³⁸⁹ Because Skid Road and Chinatown were populated by working-class bachelors, these neighbourhoods developed side by side and were seen as distinct from the rest of the East End, which was primarily residential areas inhabited by working-class families.³⁹⁰

By mid-century, migrant labour was no longer in demand,³⁹¹ bringing to an end the political, economic, and social interests that had united migrant workers on Skid Road.³⁹² Consequently, newspapers that had served such interests also met their demise, contributing to a growing sense of alienation and disenfranchisement among unattached, white, working-class men.³⁹³ By contrast, the ethnic solidarity of Chinese men endured over the course of the early twentieth century and into the postwar period, in large part due to social and economic support

³⁸⁶ Rooney, “Societal Forces,” 31–32.

³⁸⁷ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 45, 140.

³⁸⁸ The gendered division of labour combined with the 1923 Immigration Act—which banned immigration from China—resulted in a predominantly male population in Chinatown. See Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 51.

³⁸⁹ Warburton, “Race and Class,” 84.

³⁹⁰ Rooney, “Societal Forces,” 18.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 19, 21.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

from their native country.³⁹⁴ Wing Chung Ng adds:

The numerous organizations in Chinatown, as ethnic institutions par excellence, had been instrumental in maintaining a distinct cultural and social space for the immigrant Chinese. They enshrined certain traditional cultural values, such as clanship loyalty, native place sentiments, filial piety, mutual assistance, and public harmony, through their routine activities and ritual performances.³⁹⁵

The Chinese in Vancouver became a powerful enough social group that they were able to produce newspapers for their own community. The existence of these publications meant that prejudiced representations of the Chinese in English newspapers were not the only ones they encountered. Certainly, English newspapers influenced how the Chinese were treated by the rest of society—and they undoubtedly felt alienated³⁹⁶—but they were also validated by positive representations of themselves in Chinese newspapers. Ng elaborates: “Chinatown had at least one, and as many as three, Chinese-language dailies, in addition to an English-language biweekly magazine and other smaller and irregular publications. Editorials, news reports, announcements, letters to the editor, and items in the literary supplements were all important outlets for ethnic Chinese voices.”³⁹⁷ The way in which newspapers united the Chinese community is evident in Herzog’s work *Newspaper Readers* (1961) (fig. 13), in which a group of older Chinese men are gathered on the sidewalk in front of a window reading the *Chinese Voice*. Reading the newspaper was evidently a regular social activity among Chinese men that fostered a sense of identity and belonging. Whereas access to positive newspaper representations contributed to the strength of

³⁹⁴ Wing Chung Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945–80: The Pursuit of Identity and Power* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 13, 15, 18.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁹⁶ Vancouver’s Chinatown was similarly associated with vice, gambling, prostitution, alcoholism, and unsanitary conditions in the early twentieth century. See Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montreal; Buffalo: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991); Jennifer W. Jay, “Writing the Chinese Canadian Diaspora: Multiculturalism and Confucian Values,” in *Power and Identity in the Chinese World Order: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Wang Gungwu*, ed. Billy K. L. So et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 315; Daphne Marlatt, “Afterwards, a Foreword,” in *Opening Doors: In Vancouver’s East End: Strathcona*, ed. Carole Itter and Daphne Marlatt (Madeira Park: Harbour, 2011), 21; Mawani, *Colonial Proximities*, 109.

³⁹⁷ Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver*, 7.

the Chinese community, prevailing harmful images of men on Skid Road in newspaper discourse accelerated the decline of the neighbourhood.



Fig. 13. Fred Herzog, *Newspaper Readers*, 1961. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

The Criminal

In the newspapers Skid Road was described by police, social workers, and religious officials as a crime-infested area where “90 percent of the city’s crime originates.”³⁹⁸ An article in the *Province* from 1964 reports: “Eight policemen, including two RCMP members, said at a habitual

³⁹⁸ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

criminal hearing that 100 per cent of the people roaming the street in the skid road area at night are criminals preying on the public,” and that “roughly half of these people live in the area.”³⁹⁹ This “sordid” district not only “cost Vancouver taxpayers ‘hundreds of thousands of dollars’ in thefts and robberies,” but it also was deemed a threat to the rest of society.⁴⁰⁰ Major Wagner, the Salvation Army’s prison representative in British Columbia, confirms: “They’re a menace, it’s true.”⁴⁰¹ By using the general term “they,” Wagner homogenizes the population of Skid Road, suggesting that all men on Skid Road are dangerous. The contradictory nature of discourse is exemplified when he adds: “And yet most of them are grand fellows when you get to know them. Most would give the shirt off their back to the other fellow. There’s a great fellowship among them.”⁴⁰²

Skid Road was described as a violent place where deaths often occurred. It was reported in 1965 in the *Vancouver Sun* that “80 to 100 deaths occur on Skid Road each year.”⁴⁰³ An article from 1953 reveals that drunken fights were common, and that one man was sent to prison for seven years for “beating up ‘a drinking companion’.”⁴⁰⁴ In addition, many people died in the cheap hotels on Skid Road. For instance, the Stratford Hotel, on Keefer Street, was said to be a flophouse run by a negligent hotel operator that housed about seventy men.⁴⁰⁵ Father Leon Kotsko declared: “The place is a disgrace. . . . Men die in that hotel every week.”⁴⁰⁶ A 1968 article in the *Province* titled “Addicts, Crooks, Drunks to Lose Hangouts” announced that the New Fountain and Stanley Hotels on West Cordova were being demolished to make way for a

³⁹⁹ “Skidroad Society Branded,” *Vancouver Province*, April 29, 1964. It is uncertain whether the policemen and RCMP members meant that the criminals on Skid Road preyed on each other or on people outside this neighbourhood, although the term “the public” suggests the latter.

⁴⁰⁰ “We Can’t Shrug it Off”; Ryan, “700 Trips to Jail!”

⁴⁰¹ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Kathy Hassard, “Mortality Rate High For Skid Road Women,” *Vancouver Sun*, September 10, 1965.

⁴⁰⁴ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

⁴⁰⁵ Elsie, “Shocking Reports.”

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

parking lot.⁴⁰⁷ John Griffiths reports: “Murder and violence in their explosive atmosphere has been common. The last violent death, which led to the demands for the closure, occurred in the Stanley Nov. 27, when a woman was found strangled in a washroom cubicle. In a recent visit, I saw blood and broken glass lying unnoticed on the floor of the New Fountain.”⁴⁰⁸ While journalists aim to be objective in their reporting by providing a multitude of perspectives from different sources,⁴⁰⁹ in this instance Griffiths’s personal observations add weight to his assertion that the Stanley and New Fountain Hotels were settings of frequent violence and the hangouts of deviants. The middle-class reader would have trusted Griffiths’s descriptions because they reaffirmed statements made in previous journalistic texts concerning the dangerous atmosphere of Skid Road.

Newspapers also detailed the effects of crime on businesses nearby. Art McKenzie wrote in the *Province* in 1966 about a group of local businessmen called IDEAS (Improvement of Downtown East Area Society) who aimed to attract more customers to the area by “redeveloping” Skid Road. The problem, states McKenzie, is that “the people are leery of the boozers, panhandlers, muggers and shoplifters.”⁴¹⁰ This sentence perpetuates the marginalization of people on Skid Road by labelling them in exclusively derogatory ways, and also by suggesting that they are not part of “the people”—that is, society. McKenzie declares that Skid Road residents frighten away potential customers. Compounding the problem are the regular cases of petty theft which leave stores with heavy losses in inventory. The members of IDEAS sought “to get rid of the cheap hotels, the poorer beer parlours, stolen goods receivers, and the liquor

⁴⁰⁷ John Griffiths, “Addicts, Crooks, Drunks to Lose Hangouts,” *Province*, December 5, 1968.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 87.

⁴¹⁰ Art McKenzie, “Hastings St. Resolves to Halt the Skid,” *Province*, June 18, 1966, 23.

store.”⁴¹¹ Thus business owners used crime as a pretext for eliminating poor people from the neighbourhood in order to draw more middle-class patrons. An article in the *Province* from 1969 describes one businessman, A.A. Evans of B.C. Collateral Loan Brokers Ltd., who claimed that business in the area had declined by fifty percent since a nearby café began accepting meal tickets.⁴¹² According to Evans, the gathering of “derelicts and drunks” around the café made women “afraid to walk down the street.”⁴¹³ He not only demanded that the city find a place “outside the business district where these people can be fed,” but also urged the police to conduct an investigation.⁴¹⁴ Evans’s views reflect the general consensus among the middle class that the impoverished ought to be physically segregated and kept out of sight.⁴¹⁵ However, their containment only worsened problems on Skid Road and heightened the fear and misunderstanding of middle-class outsiders.

The above newspaper articles on crime on Skid Road demonstrate how authorities wielded the power of the law in the battle between the middle class and working class over the use of urban space. The implications of controlling people living on the streets by criminalizing their activities are described by Antonio Tosi: “Framing homelessness in terms of public order and nuisance subtracts the question of homelessness from social policies. It takes it out of the area of ‘positive’ policies and this new approach reflects an individualist/social pathology perspective which seeks to make homeless people responsible and even guilty for their own situation.”⁴¹⁶ The criminalization of poverty thus sustains the hegemony of capitalism by concealing the relationship between capitalism and structural poverty.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² “Police Probe Charge Derelicts Hurt Trade,” *Province*, March 24, 1969.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Huey, *Negotiating Demands*, 4.

⁴¹⁶ Antonio Tosi, “Homelessness and the Control of Public Space – Criminalising the Poor?” *European Journal of Homelessness* 1 (December 2007): 225.

The priority given to the police and the courts as journalistic sources resulted in a biased representation of crime on Skid Road with which many residents disagreed.⁴¹⁷ Gary Poirer, for instance, states: “In a sense this is home. I mean, I grew up in this area and I was never frightened of anybody. I feel comfortable here. Some people say, ‘Watch out for this, watch out for that’. And it’s pretty foolish the outlook that people have, because there’s all kinds of violence no matter where you go.”⁴¹⁸

Herzog’s “Engagingly Seedy” Vancouver

While none of Herzog’s photographs depict crime or violence in progress, the artist recognized that these were inevitable aspects of urban life.⁴¹⁹ He also perceived the role of newspaper coverage in informing citizens of crime in the city. In Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer*, a character named Bud is getting his hair trimmed at a barbershop when he comes across the newspaper headline “ADMITS KILLING CRIPPLED MOTHER...”⁴²⁰ This passage suggests that city dwellers more often encounter crime via newspapers than in real life. Herzog captures this relationship in *Robson Street* (1957) (fig. 14), in which two young women are enjoying a walk with their children in the sunny West End. The tranquil pastel pinks, blue, and yellow colours of the group’s clothing form an idealized image of leisure in the city. However, behind the group to the right is a man in a black suit and brown hat holding a newspaper featuring the headline: “BOY, 14, CHARGED IN BRUTAL SLAYING.” The striking contrast between the violent subject of the article and the pleasant scene on Robson Street speaks to the perception that the middle class are attracted to stories of criminal violence because they provide a glimpse into lives that are so different from their own. Using sensationalistic headlines to entice readers,

⁴¹⁷ A 1965 civic report states that the majority of seniors on Skid Road preferred to stay there, suggesting that they did not see it as a particularly dangerous place. See Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 28.

⁴¹⁸ Dew, *Hastings*, 141.

⁴¹⁹ Arnold, “An Interview,” 27–28.

⁴²⁰ Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer*, 16.

newspapers trade on this fascination with crime in order to boost sales.⁴²¹ Newspaper coverage of crime on Skid Road was produced with profit as a motive, but it had the harmful effect of engendering fear among middle-class readers and furthering the divide between Skid Road and the rest of the city.



Fig. 14. Fred Herzog, *Robson Street*, 1957. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

Herzog's work acknowledges that violence and crime were characteristic of Skid Road, but it departs from newspaper discourse in its admiration of the unruliness of traditional white

⁴²¹ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 115.

working-class masculinity. *Man with Bandage* (1968) (fig. 15) shows a middle-aged white man standing on the street in the foreground, and an elderly white woman behind him waiting at a bus stop.⁴²² The diagonal axis lends great depth to the image, situating the subjects on Hastings Street in the heart of Skid Road.⁴²³



Fig. 15. Fred Herzog, *Man with Bandage*, 1968. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

This photograph is a study in contrasts, particularly concerning body language. The woman serves as a foil to the man, who is the primary focus of the image. Not only does the man occupy more space within the composition, but the white colour of his shirt also draws the viewer's attention to him. The man, wearing a short-sleeved undershirt and black trousers, has a bandage

⁴²² Trey Taylor, "Fred Herzog's Bandaged Man," <http://www.dazeddigital.com/photography/article/16950/1/fred-herzogs-bandaged-man>.

⁴²³ Hastings Street is identifiable by the Regent Hotel and Balmoral Hotel in the background.

wrapped around his left hand and wrist and a tissue soaked with blood on his chin. His right arm is raised to reveal a large, fading bruise. The hazy light suggests that it is morning; perhaps this man was involved in a scuffle or accident the previous night, which would explain why he is dressed inappropriately in an undershirt in public. Herzog explains that this person caught his attention because of the contrast between his “elegant, assured” posture and his “sloppy dress.”⁴²⁴ The figure exudes a casual confidence as he leans slightly backwards with a cigarette dangling between his fingertips. Although perhaps slightly undernourished, the elderly woman represents a more conventional definition of elegance compared to the underdressed, laidback man. Thoughtfully dressed in a long black coat and an ivory brimmed hat, she is gracefully carrying a cane, a well-cared-for alligator bag, and white gloves in her hands. The black colour of her coat adds to the severity of her expression, but also lends her an air of sophistication. Whereas the woman’s gloves are a sign of social propriety, the man’s visually similar bandage on his hand symbolizes unruliness. The woman is carefully clutching her possessions, while the man is loosely holding onto his cigarette. She is scowling at him in disapproval, although her proximity to him implies that she is not afraid of him and is accustomed to such sights. The man does not notice that the woman is glowering at him, and likely would not care.

With a distaste for middle-class pretensions,⁴²⁵ Herzog found the man’s casual disregard for social respectability refreshing. He comments: “In Germany you would never see a single man like that, elegant, relaxed, and at the same time completely negligent of good behaviour.”⁴²⁶ Instead of perpetuating the stereotype of the violent criminal on Skid Road, *Man with Bandage* expresses respect for the white working-class masculinity of the early twentieth century, which

⁴²⁴ Trey Taylor, “Bandaged Man.”

⁴²⁵ Milroy, “Words,” 12.

⁴²⁶ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

celebrated “virility through physical toughness, danger, and even violence.”⁴²⁷ In describing the unruly, white, working-class man in the photograph as “elegant,” Herzog defies postwar middle-class values of respectability and public order.⁴²⁸

The Old-Age Pensioner

Whereas the drunk and criminal were said to be drawn to Skid Road because of their deviant nature, old-age pensioners were portrayed in newspaper discourse as “decent citizens,”⁴²⁹ victims of old age who had no other option but to live on Skid Road because of their meagre pensions. According to a 1972 article about Skid Road, “As of Aug. 1970, 2785 persons in the area (41%) were on welfare and 2038 on pensions (30%).”⁴³⁰ Based on the 1961 census, nearly all pensioners were men.⁴³¹ Although unattached old-age pensioners constituted a significant portion of the Skid Road population, they were not often discussed in newspaper discourse on Skid Road, perhaps because their struggles were of less interest and relevance to middle-class readers compared to crime and alcoholism in the district.⁴³² Nonetheless, one reporter contemplated “the plight of old-age pensioners virtually condemned to live on the skid road.”⁴³³ The word “condemned” suggests that living on Skid Road was a punishment that seniors were forced to suffer. Journalists avoided critiquing the treatment of workers as disposable commodities under capitalism and its consequences, including forced early retirement, premature non-productivity, and poverty.⁴³⁴ In an article in the *Vancouver Sun*, Charles Daly, manager of the Central City Mission, emphasizes that personal inadequacies are to blame for the poverty of

⁴²⁷ Sommers, “Men,” 294.

⁴²⁸ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 32, 38.

⁴²⁹ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

⁴³⁰ Harry Rankin, “Wealth and Hellfare,” *Vancouver Sun*, November 15, 1972.

⁴³¹ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 28.

⁴³² Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 134.

⁴³³ Ryan, “Skid Road Cleanup.”

⁴³⁴ McDonald, “Working,” 31; Rooney, “Societal Forces,” 24.

men on Skid Road: “People with limited education and advancing years are finding it impossible to cope. They can’t keep up with our accelerated society. They can’t produce. They can’t make the grade.”⁴³⁵ For the most part, however, journalists and authorities were concerned with the welfare of seniors on Skid Road and the fact that their pensions did not even cover basic necessities.⁴³⁶

While positive depictions of other “Skid Road types” were virtually absent in newspaper discourse,⁴³⁷ in 1969 Moira Farrow devoted an entire article in the *Vancouver Sun* to the plight of a ninety-five-year-old pensioner named Harry Ryan.⁴³⁸ Ryan had lived in the New Fountain Hotel in the unit block West Cordova for eighteen years before plans were made for its demolition that year. Farrow describes Ryan as a skilled and generous man who shared his popular pies with “other fellows here who don’t know what a good meal is.”⁴³⁹ The hotel had been “pleasant” when Ryan first moved in, but in recent years conditions had swiftly deteriorated. He lamented that he had no idea where he would live next. Whereas newspaper discourse associated drunks and criminals on Skid Road with immorality, social disorder, and irresponsibility, Farrow states that Ryan “doesn’t drink, doesn’t smoke and his tiny room, painted in institutional green, was a haven of order amid its squalid surroundings.”⁴⁴⁰ In other words, Farrow attributes middle-class values to the old-age pensioner in an effort to arouse empathy in the middle-class reader. Ryan distinguishes himself from the deviants of Skid Road when he says: “[I]n the last two or three years they’ve been letting the wrong kind of people in here and I’ve been meaning to move for a long time.”⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁵ Ardies, “Bulldozers.”

⁴³⁶ Ryan, “Skid Road Cleanup.”

⁴³⁷ Patrick Tryon, “300 Skidroaders Dine Out.”

⁴³⁸ Moira Farrow, “Starting New Life at 95: Skid Road Pie Man Moves,” *Vancouver Sun*, January 8, 1969, 1.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

The old-age pensioner, who was seen as possessing the dominant values of order, citizenry, morality, and sociability, was discursively constructed in opposition to drunks and criminals on Skid Road. Evidently, a man's age affected whether he was associated with the pathological masculinity of Skid Road. Although the old-age pensioner could ostensibly also be an alcoholic and/or a criminal, he was portrayed as embodying a non-threatening form of working-class masculinity that in many ways conformed to normative ideals. Nevertheless, some Vancouver residents assumed that old-age pensioners were deviants who were responsible for their unfortunate situations. For instance, Ray Culos, who grew up in Strathcona, admits: "On Prior Street, there were great rows of tenement houses—single rooms for pensioners. We thought, when we were young, that these people didn't deserve anything better, that it was pretty obvious they'd done something wrong, and they were less than desirable types."⁴⁴² Newspaper discourse indirectly influenced negative perceptions of old-age pensioners by reproducing hegemonic ideals of masculinity.

A number of old-age pensioners on Skid Road in the postwar period had once been employed in the resource industries.⁴⁴³ As they aged, either employers refused to hire them because they preferred younger workers, or they were no longer able to endure the highly physical demands and rapid pace of work.⁴⁴⁴ Many were unable to find employment in other fields and retired with little savings before they were eligible to receive a pension.⁴⁴⁵ Within the city, retired camp workers not only settled in the Skid Road area, but also in "rooming houses, old bunkhouses and row cabins scattered in profusion all along ... Victoria Drive to the city's

⁴⁴² Carole Itter and Daphne Marlatt, eds., *Opening Doors: In Vancouver's East End: Strathcona* (Madeira Park: Harbour, 2011), 210.

⁴⁴³ Rolf Knight, *Along the No. 20 Line: Reminiscences of the Vancouver Waterfront* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1980), 50.

⁴⁴⁴ Rooney, "Societal Forces," 24.

⁴⁴⁵ Knight, *No. 20 Line*, 50.

inner core.”⁴⁴⁶ Numerous pensioners’ hotels lined Pender Street. Many also lived in “coolie cabins,”⁴⁴⁷ built fifty to sixty years earlier near the waterfront alongside sawmills that were no longer operational by the postwar period.⁴⁴⁸ Herzog’s *Squatter – Railroad Tracks* (1961) (fig. 16) depicts an elderly man walking past railroad tracks towards stairs leading down to rough-hewn wooden cabins along the waterfront.



Fig. 16. Fred Herzog, *Squatter—Railroad Tracks*, 1961. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

Carrying a newspaper and a cane, the man is sporting a brimmed hat, a plaid jacket, and dirt-covered pants. The contrast between the man’s squalid living conditions and the picturesque

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ A “coolie” is, “in usually pejorative European usage, an unskilled labourer or porter usually in or from the Far East hired for low or subsistence wages.” See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “Coolie,” accessed April 3, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/coolie-Asian-labourer>.

⁴⁴⁸ Knight, *No. 20 Line*, 51.

mountains in the background is striking. The railroad tracks and the industrial buildings across the water in the middle ground situate this old-age pensioner within the part of Skid Road that extended to the waterfront where many working-class men were employed. Whereas newspaper discourse obscured the causes of the poverty of old-age pensioners by focusing on their meagre pensions, *Squatter—Railroad Tracks* illustrates the relationship between their poverty and their position within the relations of production.

Rolf Knight describes the retired workers who settled on Skid Road and on the waterfront as a “cosmopolitan lot” because they preferred to live in the city rather than in the countryside.⁴⁴⁹ Indeed, a civic report on Skid Road, released by the City of Vancouver Planning Department in 1965, confirmed that most pensioners preferred to stay in the area because they enjoyed the lively atmosphere and the company of other seniors.

Preliminary tabulations of a study of the preferences of pensioners living here suggest that the overwhelming majority of them want to stay in the neighbourhood. Interviews, however, considered that about 30% of the pensioners’ homes were “poor” or “unsuitable.” The elderly pensioner wants to live here but dislikes much of the skid road atmosphere. He doesn’t want to join old people’s clubs and jealously treasures his independence—in many cases, this is all he has.⁴⁵⁰

This report suggests that journalist Bill Ryan’s statement that pensioners were “virtually condemned” to live on Skid Road is untrue.⁴⁵¹ It was perhaps inconceivable to members of the middle class that a decent person might prefer to live on Skid Road. According to newspaper discourse, if someone was on Skid Road it was because “weaknesses, crimes, or stupidity [had] brought them there.”⁴⁵²

Loitering and the “Disorderly Vitality of the Street”

Pensioners appreciated the vitality of Skid Road possibly because it enlivened their daily

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 28.

⁴⁵¹ Ryan, “Skid Road Cleanup.”

⁴⁵² Eberts, “IDEAS....”

loitering. They were too poor to partake in most types of recreational activities and struggled with boredom. Knight explains:

Few went to church, not many were politically active, none had “hobbies.” There’d be an occasional trip to a movie matinee and sometimes a visit to the local beer parlour, when they could afford it. On sunny days many would sit on the grassy margins of the Powell Street Grounds or around Victory Square or at a dozen other comparable places, taking the air and talking to acquaintances. There’d be minor chores around their rooms or drawn-out shopping trips for the ingredients of their slumgullion. When all else failed there were endless games of cribbage and solitaire.⁴⁵³

Loitering, conversing with acquaintances on the street, and generally spending most of their time in the public spaces of the city were not unfamiliar to those old-age pensioners who had once been manual labourers. As Purvey and Belshaw write:

The routines of Vancouver’s roughest working class involved a season in the woods, on the water, or in mines followed by a winter’s sojourn in the hotels and taverns of East Hastings Street. These were men who were used to being out of doors. ... They were pros at loitering and watching the world go by, easily roused to anger, and unwilling to bend to any authority that treated them with disrespect.⁴⁵⁴

Beginning in the early twentieth century, middle-class elites, who preferred public order and private sociability, disapproved of working-class men socializing and gathering in public spaces of the downtown core; they feared “mass interests and the unregulated, out-of-doors spontaneity of the city.”⁴⁵⁵ Vagrancy laws were introduced to harass and control the unemployed, migrant workers, and other working-class people who organized public political meetings, such as members of the radical labour union Industrial Workers of the World.⁴⁵⁶ In the postwar period, these laws were less directed at a person’s employment status and more so at his/her actions;⁴⁵⁷ nevertheless, loitering was still potentially illegal, as the law dictated that anyone who “loiters in

⁴⁵³ Knight, *No. 20 Line*, 51.

⁴⁵⁴ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 74.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁵⁶ Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, *Labour before the Law: The Regulation of Workers’ Collective Action in Canada, 1900–1948* (Don Mills; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 83.

⁴⁵⁷ Prashan Ranasinghe, “Reconceptualizing Vagrancy and Reconstructing the Vagrant: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Criminal Law Reform in Canada, 1953–1972,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 48, no. 1 (2010): 67.

a public place and in any way obstructs persons who are there” could be charged for vagrancy.⁴⁵⁸

Herzog’s photographs of working-class men on the streets acknowledge the significance of loitering as a feature of the subculture of unattached men on Skid Road.⁴⁵⁹ The loiterer rejects middle-class values of public order and private sociability,⁴⁶⁰ in part because he enjoys spending his leisure on the street in the company of others, and in part because he is unemployed or marginally employed. Henri Lefebvre has argued that the modern man performs a critique of the everyday (i.e., work and family life) through leisure activities.⁴⁶¹ As a form of working-class leisure, loitering may represent a critique of the working-class man’s everyday life. Leaving aside the possibility of loitering as a pleasurable activity, the loitering of old-age pensioners reflects the reality that many of them had low-paying, unstable jobs as manual labourers, which left them with little or no savings upon retirement. Susan Buck-Morss writes: “[C]apitalism, rather than paying the idler-on-the-street royally, turns its reserve army of the unemployed out onto the street and then blames them for being there.”⁴⁶² The loiterer thus functions as a symbol of the exploitative nature of capitalism.⁴⁶³ As a “dream-image”—that is, an image originating in the dream of capitalism from which Benjamin sought to awaken us—the loiterer has subversive potential.⁴⁶⁴ The loiterer rejects the monotony and speed of the production process. He ignores rush hour and is not concerned with hurrying to get somewhere.⁴⁶⁵

Herzog’s photographs of old-age pensioners on Skid Road as loiterers defy newspaper representations of them as “normal” citizens who respected dominant values, but whose old age

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁵⁹ Photographs by Herzog of people loitering include *Corner Grocery* (1960), *Coin City Arcade* (1968), and *The Greasy Spoon* (1959).

⁴⁶⁰ Sommers, “Men,” 295.

⁴⁶¹ Henri Lefebvre, foreword to *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., trans. John Moore (New York; London: Verso, 1991), 29.

⁴⁶² Buck-Morss, “Loitering,” 113.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

“condemned” them to poverty and life on Skid Road.⁴⁶⁶ The pleasure that pensioners found in observing working-class life in the city is evident in *Waterfront Flaneur* (1959) (fig. 17), a close-up shot of an elderly white man leaning on a rail, facing away from the viewer toward a hazy, picturesque view of ships on the waterfront.



Fig. 17. Fred Herzog, *Waterfront Flaneur*, 1959. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

It was the man’s dignified appearance that caught Herzog’s eye: his face is freshly shaved, his hair is neatly trimmed, and he is wearing a well-maintained grey newsboy cap and a dark grey suit jacket. Herzog comments: “[W]hat interested me about him is that he must have decided, ‘Today, I’m going to hit the town’, so he got up in the morning and put on a decent jacket and a

⁴⁶⁶ Ryan, “Skid Road Cleanup.”

nice cap.”⁴⁶⁷ The man’s urban ensemble is juxtaposed with the gruelling atmosphere of the waterfront. He is calmly observing the bustling activity of the ships and workers as though he is familiar with such sights; Robert Enright speculates that this man may have been a dock worker.⁴⁶⁸ In the first half of the twentieth century, many men who worked on the waterfront lived nearby on Skid Road and in other parts of the East End for the sake of convenience.⁴⁶⁹ The man in the photograph may very well have been a former dock worker who was now an old-age pensioner living on Skid Road. While he appears to be at home on the waterfront, members of the middle class shuddered at the thought of it. For them, the waterfront “was synonymous ... with industry, grit, smuggling, pollution, unsanitary float houses and shanties housing the urban detritus, and organized labour.”⁴⁷⁰ Although wealthy residents initially owned homes with waterfront views in the West End, by the 1930s they were moving away from the downtown area to neighbourhoods such as Shaughnessy, Point Grey, and Kerrisdale.⁴⁷¹ This widened the spatial divide between the working people and their employers, reflecting the negative perceptions of the middle class towards the working-class areas of the city.⁴⁷² However, *Waterfront Flaneur* affirms a working-class appreciation for the vitality of these areas. Herzog himself was captivated by the constant activity of the waterfront and, having worked as a seaman for a few years, felt a sense of belonging there.⁴⁷³

The title “Waterfront Flaneur” exposes the ways in which the acceptability of a man’s presence in and movement through public space was judged according to his social status.⁴⁷⁴ A

⁴⁶⁷ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Itter and Marlatt, *Opening Doors*, 212.

⁴⁷⁰ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 46–47.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ John Mackie, “Artist Has a Knack for Turning Everyday Life into Art,” *Vancouver Sun*, March 15, 2008, F3.

⁴⁷⁴ Buck-Morss, “Loitering,” 112–13. Herzog seems to have conceived the title “Waterfront Flaneur” while preparing for the 2007 exhibition *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs* at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In an

man of the leisure class who strolled through the city was described as a *flâneur*, while his working-class counterpart was merely a loiterer. By referring to the working-class man in the photograph as a *flâneur*, Herzog is perhaps mocking bourgeois pretensions. On the other hand, in describing the figure in these terms, Herzog suggests that the subject is a purposeful observer; after all, the *flâneur* differs from the “vulgar idlers and gapers” in his intellect and imagination.⁴⁷⁵ Herzog’s other photographs of working-class men reading welcome the possibility of their explorations of the city as *flânerie*. The *flâneur* keeps his intentions to himself; indeed, an air of mystery and unknowability surrounds the figure in *Waterfront Flâneur*, as his back is turned away from the viewer. At the same time, the viewer has the privilege of seeing what the *flâneur* is seeing. Herzog invites the viewer to look at the world from the perspective of the subject—that is, a single, white, working-class pensioner who is both physically and economically at the margins of society, but who nevertheless finds pleasure in the vitality of working-class life. In this process, the waterfront comes alive, and one can easily imagine the thrill of watching colossal ships glide through the water as men work away amidst the sounds of thunderous ship horns and strident seagulls.

interview with Herzog, Robert Enright mentions the photograph *Flâneur Granville* (1980) and states, “I think of flâneur as more a European naming than a North American one.” Herzog replies, “That was impressed upon me when we made the show at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Flâneur comes from Walter Benjamin, and we used the word in Germany to describe going for a walk. So I knew the word but I had not attached it to photography. When I realized that Benjamin could have used it to apply street photography [*sic*], we decided to include that photograph in the book.” See Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

⁴⁷⁵ Ferguson, “The *Flâneur*,” 28.

Chapter 3: Skid Road: “The Beat of Pickup Women”

Like skid rows elsewhere in North America in the first half of the twentieth century, Skid Road was dominated by men.⁴⁷⁶ Few women lived there, and those who did risked being labelled as prostitutes.⁴⁷⁷ As a matter of fact, prostitution thrived on Skid Road in the early twentieth century, when it was common for transient labourers to seek the services of sex workers during their winter stay in the city.⁴⁷⁸ By the 1950s, a series of prostitution and venereal disease campaigns had largely curtailed prostitution in Vancouver, although it persisted on Skid Road.⁴⁷⁹ The sex trade was not a frequent topic in newspaper discourse on Skid Road in the postwar period, but what journalists did write about prostitutes and other women in this district reinforced the discursive construction of male residents as sexual deviants by emphasizing their engagement in extramarital sex and their dysfunctional relationships with women. This chapter explores the parallels that Herzog’s images draw between the heterosexual practices of men on Skid Road—specifically prostitution and the display of pinup images—and the widespread commodification and hypersexualization of women in postwar popular culture. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the definitions of normative and deviant sexuality in the postwar period. Next, I situate newspaper discourse on gender relations between men and women on Skid Road within a sociohistorical context. I then apply textual analysis to specific newspaper articles to show how men on Skid Road were portrayed as victims of diseased prostitutes in the 1950s, but conversely were depicted as predators and failed husbands in the 1960s. I argue that Herzog’s work *Bargain Shop* (1962) not only acknowledges the historical significance of prostitution on Skid Road, but also critiques prostitution as a product of the capitalist patriarchy. I then examine Herzog’s

⁴⁷⁶ Sommers, “Men,” 296.

⁴⁷⁷ Buck-Morss, “Loitering,” 119.

⁴⁷⁸ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 97.

⁴⁷⁹ Michaela Freund, “The Politics of Naming: Constructing Prostitutes and Regulating Women in Vancouver, 1934–1945” (master’s thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1995), 11; Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

Barber (1967), looking in particular at how the display of pinup images—another common heterosexual practice on Skid Road—reproduced the hegemony of the capitalist patriarchy. Herzog’s works challenge simplistic newspaper representations of men on Skid Road as sexual deviants by exploring how these men departed from hegemonic masculinity by remaining unmarried, yet were complicit in hegemonic masculinity in their patriarchal expressions of heterosexuality.

Normative Sexuality

In the 1940s and 50s, normal sexuality was characterized exclusively by heterosexuality, expressed through marriage as an emotional and sexual bond between a man and a woman.⁴⁸⁰ Since sexuality was regarded as a core element of an individual’s identity rather than merely a descriptor of one’s actions, it played a significant role in defining who was “normal” and who was “deviant.”⁴⁸¹ Sexual discourse not only defined what and who was “normal,” or socially desirable, but it also punished those who deviated from norms by encouraging their social marginalization.⁴⁸²

In the postwar years the nuclear family was the primary focus of social life.⁴⁸³ The efforts of middle-class elites to control extramarital sex bolstered the idea that sex should only occur within the context of marriage. They believed that extramarital sex would disrupt social order,⁴⁸⁴ whereas sex within marriage strengthened heterosexual relationships and led to parenthood—a key sign of adult maturity.⁴⁸⁵ The dominant image of the nuclear family reinforced rigid gender roles. Within this context of compulsory heterosexuality, a man was expected to be a

⁴⁸⁰ Adams, *Trouble*, 10.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 20; Skeggs, *Formations*, 5.

⁴⁸⁴ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 111.

⁴⁸⁵ Adams, *Trouble*, 33.

breadwinner and father.⁴⁸⁶ Adult heterosexuality was not regarded as innate but rather as the outcome of normal development. As Adams puts it, “[Heterosexuality] was an achievement.”⁴⁸⁷

As a result of the hegemony of the nuclear family in the postwar period, single men were suspected of being homosexuals, and were described as immature and un-masculine. According to American sociological experts, there were a number of possible reasons why some men did not marry: “Some were simply misfortunes, such as ‘poor health or deviant physical characteristics’, ‘unattractiveness’ and extreme geographical isolation. But high on the list for men were homosexuality, emotional fixation on parent(s) and unwillingness to assume responsibility.”⁴⁸⁸ Regardless of the reason, bachelors were “often the objects of scorn or pity.”⁴⁸⁹

The History of Prostitution on Skid Road

Hierarchical masculinities emerged according to prevailing definitions of normal and deviant sexualities. Men on Skid Road were socially marginalized not only because they were not married, but also because they engaged in extramarital sex with prostitutes.⁴⁹⁰ Exploring the dialectical relationship between work and leisure will allow us to understand why paid sex was such a common part of migrant workers’ lives.⁴⁹¹

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British Columbia’s economy depended heavily on the resource-extraction and transportation industries.⁴⁹² Due to the gendered division of labour these industries employed only men, resulting in a male-dominated population in Vancouver. Lefebvre contends that “the so-called ‘modern’ man expected to find something in

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Sommers, “Men,” 296.

⁴⁹¹ Lefebvre, *Critique*, 29.

⁴⁹² Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 26.

leisure which his work ... [did] not provide.”⁴⁹³ Indeed, migrant workers sojourning in the city preferred recreational activities that compensated for the isolation from women and physical stress they endured on the job. The sex trade in the downtown core thrived on the considerable population of unattached men with money to spend. Archie Miaishita, who worked as a manual labourer, explains: “[S]ome places were strictly for sex. ... But one thing—it was all enjoyment. Because you were working out in the bush or the logging camp or in the stink hole of a pulp mill, and you stayed there about six months without any contact from the outside. When you came out you wanted to really splurge. You wanted to live it up.”⁴⁹⁴

Class, gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity influence the forms of leisure that individuals seek.⁴⁹⁵ Among white, working-class, heterosexual men on Skid Road, paid sex was a popular leisure activity. They did not share middle-class views of sex as a physical and emotional bond between two married people. Since seasonal employment and low wages made it difficult to develop long-term romantic relationships with women, men on Skid Road regarded paid sex as practically “an inalienable right.”⁴⁹⁶ In sex they found pleasure and liberation—two key elements that people generally demand of leisure, according to Lefebvre.⁴⁹⁷ Norman Wiles, who grew up in Vancouver’s East End in the 1910s, elaborates:

[T]he logger, the miner just into town always heads for the dingiest part in town where there are women, booze or whatnot. I was no exception, of course. Alexander Street had more brothels in one block than all the rest of Vancouver. There was the Empire, and a big bordello, the Windsor, that was right across the street from the Maple Hotel. Now it’s the St. James. You could trip through the third floor of the Windsor and select any woman you wanted for a two-dollar bill. Now the price is at least thirty-five dollars and it’s going up. Isn’t inflation a terrible thing? It even screws up your sex life. A lay is still a lay, isn’t it? It can’t be that much better now than it was in my day, I know that.⁴⁹⁸

Working-class men who engaged in paid sex did not see themselves as exploiting women; in

⁴⁹³ Lefebvre, *Critique*, 34.

⁴⁹⁴ Dew, *Hastings*, 41.

⁴⁹⁵ Lefebvre, *Critique*, 33.

⁴⁹⁶ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 97.

⁴⁹⁷ Lefebvre, *Critique*, 33.

⁴⁹⁸ Dew, *Hastings*, 39–40.

fact, Wiles firmly believes that sex workers deserve respect:

I stole a brand-new Packard and used it to hit joints three days in a row. And do you know who my best customers were? The hookers. They'd buy silk stockings, anything, off of me, no questions asked about price. That's why I always thought kindly of those girls and I hate like hell to see anyone degrade them or demean them in any way. 'Cause they're good girls. They live their life and don't interfere with ours, so why should we give them a bad time?⁴⁹⁹

The view that working-class men were not complicit in the exploitation of women was argued by many socialists in the early twentieth century. They saw prostitution as a product of the capitalist exploitation and dehumanization of women.⁵⁰⁰ Although both bourgeois and working-class men engaged in paid sex, socialists interpreted the relationships of these two social groups to prostitutes in dramatically different terms. Janice Newton explains that “[w]orking-class women were pictured as ‘playthings of wealthy sports’ and victims of ‘the lusts of leisure class men’ and ‘tyrannical foremen’.”⁵⁰¹ In addition, capitalists forced working-class women into prostitution by offering inadequate wages.⁵⁰² Meanwhile, socialists believed that working-class men had no option but to engage in paid sex because seasonal employment and low wages precluded them from being married and, in turn, from having sex.⁵⁰³ As Newton puts it: “Like the prostitute, the single working-class man was depicted as a victim of capitalism: deprived of sex without marriage, he was ‘forced’ to resort to prostitutes.”⁵⁰⁴ The sexual urges of working-class men were seen as irrepressible and necessary to satisfy in order to prevent them from sexually assaulting women.⁵⁰⁵ Given the popularity of socialism among workers in the early twentieth century,⁵⁰⁶ socialist views on paid sex as a right of working-class men may help explain the

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁰⁰ Janice Newton, *The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 1900–1918* (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 124.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 125.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 129–30.

⁵⁰⁶ See A.R. McCormack, “The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 21 (Spring 1974): 3–27.

prevalence of prostitution on Skid Road.

As prostitution became more common in the urban centre, the views of unattached, white, working-class men regarding paid sex clashed with those of the middle class. In the 1930s, members of the middle class sought to wrest ownership of the downtown core from the working class in order to give the city a more respectable image. The former, convinced that prostitution was morally degrading, a primary source of venereal disease, and a potential cause of social disintegration, initiated numerous campaigns to purge the city of it.⁵⁰⁷ The condemnation of prostitution—especially in the newspapers—led to its criminalization in the 1930s.⁵⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the working and middle classes alike continued to enjoy displays of female sensuality at the city’s many nightclubs and burlesque joints.⁵⁰⁹ Overall, however, female sexuality was seen as a form of deviance and public expressions of it were heavily policed by the media, politicians, and the courts.⁵¹⁰ Despite the criminalization of prostitution, police, under the supervision of chief of police W.W. Foster, were only successful in suppressing the more public aspects of the practice, such as street-walking, “window-tapping,” and conspicuous brothels that offended tax-paying citizens.⁵¹¹ Women who had worked at brothels that police shut down had to apply for welfare, but they soon returned to prostitution, which by then had dispersed to different areas of the city.⁵¹² This cyclical process motivated Mayor Telford to organize three drives or “purges” to eliminate prostitution, which took place in 1935, 1939, and 1943.⁵¹³ Alderman Helena Gutteridge, who advocated for suffrage before 1917 and better working conditions for women, criticized the mayor’s strategies for eliminating prostitution, insisting that “[p]rovision

⁵⁰⁷ Purvey and Belshaw, 98–99.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 91.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁵¹¹ Freund, “Constructing Prostitutes,” 41.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid., 11.

should first have been made for these girls to earn an honest living. You have put the cart before the horse.”⁵¹⁴

In the postwar period, authorities were satisfied with the reduction of prostitution, although it maintained a limited presence on Skid Road.⁵¹⁵ The decline in the practice may be attributed in part to demographic changes on Skid Road. Instead of migrant workers with money to spend, the area was now inhabited mostly by men living in extreme poverty.⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, the increasing integration of women into the labour force may have enabled working-class women to pursue other forms of paid work.⁵¹⁷ Still, the fact that the population of Skid Road was eighty percent men in the postwar period meant that there was an ongoing demand for prostitution.⁵¹⁸

“The Beat of Pickup Women”: Prostitution in Newspaper Discourse on Skid Road

Although prostitution was not a major topic in newspaper discourse on Skid Road, journalists regularly mentioned prostitutes as habitués alongside drunks, criminals, drug addicts, and vagrants.⁵¹⁹ Beginning in the Depression years and continuing into the 1950s, newspaper discourse conceived of prostitutes as sexual predators and as the cause of venereal diseases.⁵²⁰ In an article from 1953 in the *Province*, Bill Ryan writes that Skid Road is “[t]he core of what prostitution is left in Vancouver and ‘the place where most venereal disease contacts and associations are made’.”⁵²¹ He adds that Skid Road is “[t]he beat of pickup women and other

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁵¹⁵ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

⁵¹⁶ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 21.

⁵¹⁷ Bryan Palmer, *The Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800–1980* (Toronto; Boston: Butterworth, 1983), 270.

⁵¹⁸ Dew, *Hastings*, 15. There undoubtedly were middle-class individuals who also patronized sex workers in the Skid Road area. See Ross, *Burlesque West*, 61.

⁵¹⁹ Ryan, “Lost Souls”; “Skidroad Society Branded”; Ardies, “Bulldozers.”

⁵²⁰ Freund, “Constructing Prostitutes,” 60.

⁵²¹ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

parasites who prey on seasonal workers who head there to spend their pocketful of pay.”⁵²² Ryan asserts that prostitutes are the ones exploiting men—a view that working-class men themselves did not share. The term “parasite” reinforces a link between prostitutes and venereal disease. Ryan’s statements support the discursive construction of prostitutes as the “willful spreaders” of venereal disease.⁵²³ Men did not transmit venereal diseases; they could only be infected by them.⁵²⁴ Discourse on venereal disease thus justified the suppression of prostitution. However, many young white women who were not prostitutes were labelled as such by authorities.⁵²⁵ Freund contends that the campaigns against prostitution were not only about eliminating prostitutes: “[M]iddle-class reformers were ... less concerned with venereal disease than with the control of female sexuality.”⁵²⁶ As Purvey and Belshaw put it: “[W]omanhood was, as a whole, regarded as a kind of deviance: the *real* citizen was a white male, ideally ‘productive, responsible, and compliant’.”⁵²⁷ The need to police female sexuality explains why Ryan and others denounced prostitutes as diseased sexual predators.

The prostitute was perceived as a social threat because she challenged the discursive construction of the public domain as a masculine space.⁵²⁸ Although police suppressed the presence of prostitutes in public urban spaces, prostitutes continued to work in semi-private spaces such as brothels.⁵²⁹ These places were tolerated as long as they remained hidden from middle-class citizens.⁵³⁰ In an article from 1953 in the *Vancouver Province*, a representative of the American Social Hygiene Association, who “periodically tour[ed] the city deliberately

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Freund, “Constructing Prostitutes,” 61.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁵²⁷ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 33.

⁵²⁸ Vettel-Becker, *Shooting from the Hip*, 68.

⁵²⁹ Freund, “Constructing Prostitutes,” 41.

⁵³⁰ Hubbard, *Cities and Sexualities*, 51.

seeking contact with ‘pickup girls’ and prostitutes,” states that prostitution is well-contained and limited to Skid Road.⁵³¹ Phil Hubbard explains that sexual acts are permitted or suppressed depending on the specific spaces in which they occur. He elaborates: “As legal geography suggests, the law is always spatial in the sense that it dictates the appropriateness of different actions in different spaces, and is fixated on notions of propriety, property and privacy. By making distinctions between the legality of sex acts in different spaces, the law plays a key role in constructing a veritable *moral geography*.”⁵³² Since it is virtually inevitable that prostitution will exist in some form in any city, authorities often resort to its containment and regulation rather than aiming for complete eradication.⁵³³ The reputation of Skid Road as a place of “vice and degradation” meant that it was a suitable place within the city for the controlled presence of prostitution.⁵³⁴

By the mid-1960s, the discursive formation of the prostitute had given way to “The Destitute Woman.”⁵³⁵ The changing discourse on women on Skid Road was perhaps influenced by a number of social changes, including the sexual revolution of the 1960s and more progressive views on female sexuality.⁵³⁶ In a 1965 article titled “Mortality Rate High for Skid Road Women,” Kathy Hassard reports on a discussion panel devoted to “the plight of The Destitute Woman,” sponsored by the East-Enders Society at First United Church.⁵³⁷ The Society was a private social service aimed at helping women in Vancouver’s East End,⁵³⁸ and was headed by May Gutteridge, a distinguished social worker who served as the dominant voice for

⁵³¹ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

⁵³² Hubbard, *Cities and Sexualities*, 34.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵³⁴ “We Can’t Shrug it Off.”

⁵³⁵ Hassard, “Skid Road Women.”

⁵³⁶ Lawrence Aronsen, *City of Love and Revolution: Vancouver in the Sixties* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2010), 55.

⁵³⁷ Hassard, “Skid Road Women.”

⁵³⁸ The East Enders Society fonds are in the SFU Archives. See “Fonds F-59 – East Enders Society Fonds,” SFU Archives, accessed April 3, 2016, <http://atom.archives.sfu.ca/index.php/f-59>.

women on Skid Road in newspaper discourse.⁵³⁹ Members of the panel included the city coroner, police, and social workers. The label “The Destitute Woman,” coined by members of the East-Enders Society, is far more positive than the derogatory noun “derelict,” which carries a similar meaning and was typically used to refer to men on Skid Road in newspaper discourse. Whereas the word “derelict” constitutes a person’s identity, the adjective “destitute” describes the state of women on Skid Road rather than defining who they are.

According to city coroner Glen McDonald, “There were nine accidental (poison, alcohol, drugs, or violence) female deaths [on Skid Road] in 1963. In 1964 there 12 [*sic*]. During the first six months of 1965 the total rose to 10. That will be an increase of 180 per cent if the total is projected to the end of the year.”⁵⁴⁰ By omitting the active process of women consuming poison, alcohol, or drugs, McDonald’s statement avoids placing blame on the women for their own deaths.⁵⁴¹ They are instead framed as victims of poison, alcohol, drugs, and violence—in other words, victims of Skid Road. The representation of women on Skid Road differed dramatically from that of men, who were seen as responsible for their own situations.

Whereas men had been the victims of prostitutes in the 1950s, they were now deemed the sexual predators and working-class women were the victims. According to Gutteridge, it was common for women to be sexually harassed by men. In an article from 1965 on her plans to open the first hostel for destitute women on Skid Road, Gutteridge states: “Many women report the (hotel) manager will send a man to their room without their permission. They pay fines for personal favours. Male customers come into the rooming houses and ask for a room, a bottle and a woman.”⁵⁴² Men on Skid Road were perceived as active deviants, while women who lived

⁵³⁹ Douglas Todd, “May Gutteridge’s Tough-Talking Legacy,” *Vancouver Sun*, January 25, 2011.

⁵⁴⁰ Hassard, “Skid Road Women.”

⁵⁴¹ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 55, 57.

⁵⁴² Elsie, “Shocking Reports.”

there were seen as their innocent victims. Gutteridge ensured that the women under her care were represented as “normal” women who fell into unfortunate circumstances. In a subsequent article on life in the hostel headed by Gutteridge, the reporter states that the women and children there have been deserted.⁵⁴³ The women are described thusly: “Women at the hotel keep their rooms tidy, make beds, get their own breakfast, lunch and help with the dishes. They do the things any woman would do living at home.”⁵⁴⁴ Whereas journalists used various demeaning terms to refer to men, such as “derelicts,” “drug addicts,” and “crooks,” this was not the case with women, who were simply referred to as “women.” In the above statement they are autonomous agents actively performing various domestic chores, demonstrating that they are responsible and exemplars of normative femininity. Although both white and Indigenous inhabitants of the hostel were described in these terms in the article, Indigenous women were generally depicted as deviants in newspaper discourse on Skid Road. For example, in an article on plans for the demolition of the New Fountain and Stanley Hotels—“the nerve centres of vice and degradation in the heart of skid-road”—the reporter lists the various types of deviants that existed there: “Alcoholics, ex-convicts, tough loggers and Indian women mingle with homosexuals and dope addicts.”⁵⁴⁵ Not only were Indigenous women considered deviants,⁵⁴⁶ but the white working-class men who enjoyed their company were necessarily deviants, as well. Thus, the dominant image of The Destitute Woman on Skid Road in the 1960s was of a white working-class woman.

⁵⁴³ Nikki Moir, “Door is Always Open at Skid Road Haven,” *Province*, November 19, 1965.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Griffiths, “Addicts, Crooks, Drunks.”

⁵⁴⁶ For a summary of how colonial ideologies have depicted Indigenous women in Canada as “sexually licentious savages or beasts of burden,” see Sarah Hunt, “Decolonizing Sex Work: Developing an Intersectional Indigenous Approach,” in *Selling Sex: Experience, Advocacy, and Research on Sex Work in Canada*, ed. Emily van der Muelen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 82–100. For an analysis of public discourse on Indigenous women in postwar Vancouver, see Meghan Elizabeth Longstaffe, “The Death and Life of Aboriginal Women in Postwar Vancouver” (master’s thesis, University of British Columbia, 2009).

The Prostitute and the Fashion Mannequin

By photographing the prostitute on Skid Road rather than The Destitute Woman of the 1960s, Herzog acknowledged the historical significance of prostitution in the area. More broadly speaking, the prostitute “was the quintessential female figure of the urban scene. ... For men as well as women, the prostitute was a central spectacle in a set of urban encounters and fantasies.”⁵⁴⁷ Along with other women on the street, the prostitute was an object of the *flâneur*'s gaze. As Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson states: “[W]omen are essential components of the urban drama that the *flâneur* observes. A woman idling on the street is to be ‘consumed’ and ‘enjoyed’ along with the rest of the sights that the city affords.”⁵⁴⁸ Yet any woman who loitered in public space risked being seen as a prostitute. As Ferguson puts it: “All the women in the street belong in [the *flâneur*'s] personal harem.”⁵⁴⁹

Despite the elimination of prostitution from the streets in the postwar period, Herzog's *Bargain Shop* (fig. 18) documents its ongoing presence on Skid Road. This photograph shows a profile view of a middle-aged white man returning the gaze of a young white woman in the window of a former bargain shop as he walks by. The woman stands between parted curtains as though she is in a play, performing for the passerby in hopes of piquing his interest. This stylish lady, who is wearing an elegant bright yellow dress, a string of pearls, seductive red lipstick, and black eyeliner, is juxtaposed with the shabby architecture and decor, evidenced by the chipping paint on the exterior, the dingy purple curtains, and the peeling “bargain shop” sign.

⁵⁴⁷ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 21.

⁵⁴⁸ Ferguson, “The *Flâneur*,” 28.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*



Fig. 18. Fred Herzog, *Bargain Shop*, 1962. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

Herzog explains that the attractive woman is a sex worker seeking the attention of a prospective client: “She wanted the guy going by to come into her boudoir.”⁵⁵⁰ Victorian representations of prostitutes in art and literature alternated between desire and disgust. In some instances prostitutes symbolized temptation and untamed female sexuality; in others prostitutes were “fallen” women “who, by lowering themselves to sell their bodies, had rejected the feminine virtues of chastity and homemaking.”⁵⁵¹ In these latter examples, prostitutes were associated with

⁵⁵⁰ Walsh and Enright, “Colour His World.”

⁵⁵¹ Hubbard, *Cities and Sexualities*, 40.

deviance and disease.⁵⁵² Although the suppression of prostitution in Vancouver was based on the pretense that prostitutes were the cause of venereal disease, the woman in *Bargain Shop* looks young, healthy, clean, and beautiful—hardly the image of a sickly or predatory prostitute.⁵⁵³

The presence of the woman within the enclosed space of the defunct bargain shop reflects the efforts of the authorities to suppress the public elements of prostitution.⁵⁵⁴ The “bargain shop” sign demonstrates the appropriation of semi-private urban spaces by prostitutes, whose public presence was forbidden beginning in the 1930s.⁵⁵⁵ Indeed, many abandoned storefronts and warehouses on Skid Road were utilized for other (often illicit) purposes.⁵⁵⁶ Buck-Morss has noted that the stigmatization of women and female sexuality within public space has functioned to deny women power.⁵⁵⁷ The disempowerment of women is signified in *Bargain Shop* by the confinement of the prostitute within a dark, oppressive space behind the shop window. In contrast to the bright sunlight outside, it is pitch black inside the shop. The curtains create a barrier between the outside and the inside to conceal illegal activities from the public eye. The inner borders of the two window panes form a visual line dividing the man in the left portion of the photograph from the woman in the right portion of it, highlighting the division between the masculine public domain and the feminine private domain. Whereas the woman is stationary, peering at the outside world but unable to be in it, the man displays his male privilege by walking freely on the street. While a street-based sex worker has the potential to express her agency by physically approaching a prospective client, the woman in Herzog’s *Bargain Shop* is separated from the outside world and therefore unable to approach or to speak to another person.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 38.

⁵⁵³ Ryan, “Lost Souls.”

⁵⁵⁴ Freund, “Constructing Prostitutes,” 41.

⁵⁵⁵ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 98-99.

⁵⁵⁶ Graham, *Downtown – Eastside*, 21.

⁵⁵⁷ Buck-Morss, “Loitering,” 119.

Furthermore, the image captures the woman as she is blinking, so that her eyes appear closed and unable to return the man's gaze. Her passivity is reinforced by the limpness of her right hand. Herzog comments: "I honestly don't know who she was but she waved to that man. There is a very interesting component of the body language that I have to explain. In England, Germany and Canada when we want somebody to come in, we wave with the hand pointing up. In Spain you point the hand down, which she is doing, so she must have been Spanish or Mexican."⁵⁵⁸

That the woman may be an immigrant alludes to the difficulties working-class immigrants faced in their search for financial stability. With the man's left hand seemingly in his pocket—we can see that his left arm is bent—and his right arm extended, it seems as though the man is about to wave back. However, neither of them are smiling; it is an emotionless encounter between strangers.

The "bargain shop" sign foregrounds prostitution as a process of monetary exchange between a man and a woman.⁵⁵⁹ While street photographers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries recorded prostitutes alone or with their clients,⁵⁶⁰ it is uncommon within the tradition of street photography to explicitly address the economic aspect of prostitution. The "bargain shop" sign is indicative of the low socioeconomic status of both the woman and her clients. Although the sign refers to the previous function of the space, it now suggests in a demeaning way that the woman offers cheap services. The sign, located above the woman's head, implies that she is a

⁵⁵⁸ Walsh and Enright, "Colour His World."

⁵⁵⁹ Hubbard, *Cities and Sexualities*, 38.

⁵⁶⁰ Examples of photographs of prostitutes alone or with other prostitutes include: Eugène Atget, *La Villette, fille publique faisant le quart, 19e. Avril 1921 (La Villette, Streetwalker Waiting for a Client, 19th arrondissement. April 1921)*, 1921, printing-out paper print, 23.5 x 17.7 cm, SFMOMA; Eugène Atget, *Rue Asselin*, 1924–25, printed ca. 1950, gelatin silver print, 23.5 x 17.3 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum; Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Calle Cuauhtemotzin, Mexico City*, 1934, printed 1946, gelatin silver print, 23.4 x 34.6 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. An example of a work depicting a prostitute with a client is Brassai, *A Monastic Brothel, Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Quartier Latin*, ca. 1931, gelatin silver print, 30.2 x 22.2 cm, Museum of Contemporary Art.

commodity, and that she is not worth much. The typically impersonal nature of sexual relations between prostitutes and their clients is evident in Herzog's photograph.

The representation of the prostitute as a commodity in *Bargain Shop* resonates with the broader commodification and sexualization of women in mass culture in the postwar period. In Buck-Morss's analysis of the figure of the whore based on Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, she writes that this figure is an allegory for the transformation of things in the modern age.⁵⁶¹ For Benjamin, the figure of the whore revealed how erotic desire had become distorted under capitalism by being displaced onto the commodity.⁵⁶² The prostitute's corporeal body resembled the artificial body of a mannequin used to display the latest fashions; "the more expensive her outfit, the greater her appeal."⁵⁶³ Quoting Benjamin, Buck-Morss continues:

As a dialectical image, she is "seller and commodity in one." As a commodity, she is connected in [*The Arcades Project*] with the constellation of "exhibition," "fashion," and "advertisement": "The modern advertisement demonstrates ... how much the attraction of woman and commodity can fuse together." As seller she mimics the commodity and takes on its allure: the fact that her sexuality is on sale is itself an attraction.⁵⁶⁴

Resembling a fashion mannequin, the beautiful, expressionless woman in *Bargain Shop* appears to be clothed in the latest fashions. Like an advertisement, she is an idealized fantasy.

The desire for the prostitute as the "fashionable, purchasable woman-as-thing" signified a desire for exchange value itself which lay at the heart of capitalism.⁵⁶⁵ The dialectical image of the whore in fact reflected the status of all wage-labourers in capitalist society.⁵⁶⁶ *Bargain Shop* may thus be seen as a critique of capitalism wherein the figure of the prostitute exposes the similar status of the working-class man as both seller and commodity. However, according to

⁵⁶¹ Buck-Morss, "Loitering," 120.

⁵⁶² Ibid., 137.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 121.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

Joan Acker, women suffer more than men under capitalism.⁵⁶⁷ She proposes that the wage, which is rooted in the relations of production and is a key element of distribution in capitalist society, is gendered. This is made evident by the gendered division of labour and the reality that women have always been paid less than men. Acker concludes: “The wage and the work contexts within which it is earned are gendered in ways that re-create women’s relative disadvantage.”⁵⁶⁸ The social and economic dominance of men and the subordination of women (within the same social class) enabled men on Skid Road to pay women for sex. In this sense, working-class men experienced the benefits of normative masculinity, the primary purpose of which is to uphold the hegemony of patriarchal capitalism.⁵⁶⁹ The connection that Benjamin makes between the whore and the fashion mannequin reveals the similarities between working-class prostitution and bourgeois commodity culture in the postwar period; that is, they both relied on the sexual objectification and commodification of women. Some feminist studies of sexuality assert that the social dominance of men is dependent on compulsory heterosexuality.⁵⁷⁰ Despite bourgeois attempts to establish clear distinctions between hegemonic masculinity and the supposedly pathological masculinity of Skid Road, Herzog’s work exposes the ways in which both modes of masculinity reproduced the social dominance of men through certain heterosexual practices, such as the display of pinups.

The Commodification and Sexualization of Women in Postwar Popular Culture

While middle-class elites asserted that prostitution was a manifestation of working-class deviance,⁵⁷¹ Herzog’s representation of the treatment of prostitutes as commodities provokes

⁵⁶⁷ James E. Curtis and Lorne Tepperman, *Sociology: A Canadian Perspective* (Don Mills; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 366.

⁵⁶⁸ Joan Acker, quoted in Tepperman and Curtis, *Sociology*, 366.

⁵⁶⁹ Connell, *The Men and the Boys*, 77.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 74–75.

⁵⁷¹ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 99.

reflection on the sexualization and commodification of women's bodies in mass media in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁷² Reflecting some of the more liberal attitudes toward sex that had emerged during the war, popular culture became saturated with “sexy movie stars, the so-called ‘sex appeal’ of advertisements, and sexually explicit books and magazines.”⁵⁷³ The most influential sexually explicit publication in the postwar period was *Playboy*, founded by Hugh Hefner in 1953.⁵⁷⁴ Appealing to male readers of all classes, its pornographic centrefolds of women initially caused parental concern. In Canada, official censors defined the magazine as “softcore porn” and recommended it be transferred to the adult section of stores; however, they “conceded the magazine had its literary merits and, more importantly, it encouraged ‘normal heterosexual behaviour’.”⁵⁷⁵ Indeed, within a sexualized mass culture it had become normal for men to objectify women. Girlie magazines—the precursors of *Playboy*—became tremendously popular during the war, but depicted women as “fun-loving and wholesome” rather than as sexually titillating.⁵⁷⁶ Astute publishers foresaw that soldiers serving overseas—having limited contact with the opposite gender—would find images of “healthy, well-bathed” women desirable.⁵⁷⁷ Hung in masculine spaces such as barracks, common recreational spaces, and washrooms, these popular pictures motivated soldiers to fight so that they could return home and marry a beautiful woman after the war ended.⁵⁷⁸ In the postwar period, pinups became increasingly pornographic. Mark Gabor explains: “In the course of the fifties, there was a definite transition from the playful, naive, frolicking girlie image to a relatively more direct sexual image: the magazines

⁵⁷² Aronsen, *City of Love*, 54.

⁵⁷³ Adams, *Trouble*, 35.

⁵⁷⁴ Vettel-Becker, *Shooting from the Hip*, 98.

⁵⁷⁵ Aronsen, *City of Love*, 59; Bruce Ryder, “Undercover Censorship: Exploring the History of the Regulation of Publications in Canada,” in *Interpreting Censorship in Canada*, ed. Allan C. Hutchinson and Klaus Petersen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 147.

⁵⁷⁶ Gabor, *Girlie Magazines*, 57.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

tried to appeal to the readers' eyes and fantasies. By the end of the fifties, the models were smiling less and licking their lips more."⁵⁷⁹ Through the display of pinups taken from *Playboy* and girlie magazines such as *Bachelor*, *Bare*, *Cabaret Quarterly*, *Eyeful*, *Foto-Rama*, *Frolic*, *Gala*, *Modern Man*, *Night & Day*, and *Vue*, men of all classes constructed masculine spaces through and in which they expressed their masculine and heterosexual identities.⁵⁸⁰

Pornography and the Skid Road Barbershop

Although newspapers asserted the pathological masculinity of men on Skid Road, the ways in which they expressed their gender and sexual identities at times converged with those of middle-class men. *Barber* (fig. 19) offers an oblique view of a middle-aged white man opening his wallet inside a barbershop.



Fig. 19. Fred Herzog, *Barber*, 1967. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 82.

⁵⁸⁰ Ross, *Burlesque West*, 88.

The wall behind the figure is covered with calendars featuring images of young white women posing with bare breasts and seductive gazes. Indeed, the fifties were “the bosom years” in the world of pinups.⁵⁸¹ The fact that the man in the barbershop is fully clothed in a casual black suit jacket and a blue and black plaid shirt underscores the near-nudity of the pinup models. The incorporation of sexualized images of women into everyday objects such as calendars reveals the extent to which the objectification of women had been normalized by the 1960s. Furthermore, the use of pinup calendars as forms of commercial advertising resonates with Benjamin’s conceptualization of the whore as both seller and commodity.⁵⁸²

Barber illustrates the significance of heterosexuality as a central component of white working-class masculinity in the postwar period. O’Donoghue contends that the barbershop has historically functioned as a space that reinforces heteronormativity and dominant forms of masculinity.⁵⁸³ The barbershop is a space where “masculinities are enacted, staged, tried on, surveyed, recognized, and regulated through language, performance, and appearance.”⁵⁸⁴ It is in the barbershop that many boys and young men learn how to express their identities as heterosexual men. Ahmed contends that “[s]exuality itself can be considered a spatial formation not only in the sense that bodies inhabit sexual spaces, but also in the sense that bodies are sexualized through how they inhabit space.”⁵⁸⁵ Spaces are gendered and sexualized through the objects and people inhabiting them.⁵⁸⁶ In the postwar period, masculine spaces often contained pinup images of women through which men bonded with other heterosexual men and against which men formed their masculine identities. The ways in which men expressed their sexual and

⁵⁸¹ Gabor, *Girlie Magazines*, 81.

⁵⁸² Buck-Morss, “Loitering,” 120.

⁵⁸³ O’Donoghue, “Intimacy,” 314. Although O’Donoghue does not specify the geographical context of his discussion of barbershops, the examples he uses are limited to North America.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 316.

⁵⁸⁵ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 67.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

gender identities were limited by the sexual and gendered spaces they inhabited. The presence of pinups influenced men in barbershops to express their heterosexuality through the sexual objectification of women. As Jane Root observes: “For many men pornography is part of growing up. . . . The women’s bodies in the magazines were admired, compared, joked about and laughed at, and this activity helped to confirm their sense of superiority as males.”⁵⁸⁷ The significance of pornography in constructing the heterosexual, masculine space of the barbershop is explained by one man interviewed by Root:

The last time I went to the barbershop . . . I sat down, alone, in front of a big stack of magazines with *Playboy* on the top. I felt like the other men expected me to reach for the porno magazines and revel in them, because this was a place where us men can lust together over pictures of nude women. . . . It is a point of understanding between men, even men who are strangers—we can all look at those pictures and understand each other. Anyone who doesn’t like *Playboy* is obviously not a real man.⁵⁸⁸

This man’s experience demonstrates how the space of the barbershop tends to reinforce heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity.⁵⁸⁹ In *Barber*, the man is opening his wallet as if to pay someone, but there is no one else in the photograph—save for the women in the pinup images behind him. This suggests that when a man visits a barbershop, he is not only paying for the grooming services rendered, but also for the experience that the barbershop offers—that is, the experience of reaffirming the homosocial bond between men and their collective social dominance over women through expressions of heterosexuality.⁵⁹⁰

Ahmed asserts that “[s]ome spaces extend certain bodies and simply do not leave room for others.”⁵⁹¹ The sexually explicit pinups of white women in *Barber* reflect the tastes of heterosexual, white, working-class men; it is these specific types of bodies that extend the space of the barbershop. Ahmed also speaks of how the repetition of norms and customs shapes spaces

⁵⁸⁷ Jane Root and Jane Hawksley, *Pictures of Women: Sexuality* (London; Boston: Pandora Press, 1984), 40.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁸⁹ O’Donoghue, “Intimacy,” 314.

⁵⁹⁰ Bird, “Welcome,” 121. It is possible that heterosexuality is emphasized in the barbershop partly to offset the physical closeness that necessarily occurs between a barber and his client.

⁵⁹¹ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 11.

in regular ways so that a foreign space may feel familiar; indeed, that is how we are able to recognize the barbershop in Herzog's photograph as a space oriented towards heterosexual, white, working-class men. In other words, sexuality "is expressed in socially constructed ways."⁵⁹² However, Lefebvre warns that a sense of familiarity can be misleading:

We live on familiar terms with the people in our own family, our own milieu, our own class. This constant impression of *familiarity* makes us think that we know them, that their outlines are defined for us, and that they see themselves as having those same outlines. We define them and we judge them. We can identify with them or exclude them from our world. But the familiar is not necessarily the known. ... Familiarity, what is familiar, conceals human beings and makes them difficult to know by giving them a mask we can recognize, a mask that is merely the lack of something.⁵⁹³

As with many other photographs by Herzog of men on Skid Road, the store window in *Barber* forces the viewer to acknowledge that he/she is an outsider looking in, and can never completely know or understand the subject or the space the photograph depicts. The oblique perspective, which prevents a view of the entire space of the barbershop, underscores this point.

Playboy and the Consumption-Oriented Bachelor

Herzog's photographs of pinups in various urban spaces suggest that pinups were a common way for bachelors of different social classes to express their "normal" sexuality.⁵⁹⁴ In the 1950s and early 1960s, *Playboy's* alluring image of a middle-class, consumption-oriented bachelor came to rival the family man as the ideal model of masculinity.⁵⁹⁵ A comparative analysis of the discourses on the deviant sexuality of unattached men on Skid Road and on the normative sexuality of the consumption-oriented bachelor reveals that the social class of a bachelor, and by

⁵⁹² Ibid., 100.

⁵⁹³ Lefebvre, *Critique*, 15.

⁵⁹⁴ Gabor, *Girlie Magazines*, 12; Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth, and Leisure-Style in Modern America* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001), 152.

⁵⁹⁵ Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 42.

extension his ability to participate in consumer culture, was the primary factor influencing whether a bachelor's masculinity was perceived as normal or deviant in the 1960s.⁵⁹⁶

Playboy magazine promoted the ideal of a middle-class, unattached, heterosexual man who rejected domesticity but embraced hedonistic consumption—of both objects and women.⁵⁹⁷ Hefner railed against the restrictiveness of normative masculinity—the “conformity, togetherness, anonymity and slow death” that men suffered when they could be “free,” that is, unmarried.⁵⁹⁸ *Playboy* argued that a man should be able to enjoy sex without having to bear the responsibilities of having a wife and children. Ehrenreich describes *Playboy*'s primary message: “You can buy sex on a fee-for-service basis, so don't get caught up in a long-term contract.”⁵⁹⁹ This novel middle-class attitude towards sex—as a pleasurable experience that did not require becoming emotionally or financially involved with a woman—had long been the norm for working-class men on Skid Road. The prevalence of pornographic pinups on Skid Road and the success of *Playboy* in the postwar period reflected the increasingly normalized view of women as sex objects that could be bought and consumed.⁶⁰⁰

In newspaper discourse, a primary difference between men on Skid Road and middle-class men was that the former were unemployed. While in the 1950s adult masculinity required that a man have both a family and a job, by the 1960s it was socially acceptable to be a bachelor as long as one was employed.⁶⁰¹ Without a family or a job, the man on Skid Road exemplified failed masculinity.⁶⁰² Employment was crucial to the type of masculinity that Hefner espoused

⁵⁹⁶ Buck-Morss, “Loitering,” 112–113.

⁵⁹⁷ Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 122.

⁵⁹⁸ Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 43–44.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶⁰⁰ Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 122.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰² McDonald, “Working,” 25.

because the playboy needed money in order to afford a luxurious lifestyle.⁶⁰³ Hefner protested women's control of the domestic domain, and urged men to reappropriate this space for themselves.⁶⁰⁴ Throughout the late 1950s, *Playboy* advertisements depicted "imported liquor, stereo sets, men's colognes, luxury cars, and fine clothes,"⁶⁰⁵ asserting that men could express their masculinity and social status through the acquisition of fashionable commodities rather than through the possession of a wife and children.⁶⁰⁶ However, Osgerby contends that "the attention that *Playboy* lavished on matters of style and leisure was relatively tangential to its real business of the subordination and sexual objectification of women."⁶⁰⁷ Although the image of the consumption-oriented bachelor threatened the dominance of the middle-class family man,⁶⁰⁸ the fact that *Playboy* celebrated the hegemony of patriarchal capitalism explains why the playboy ideal gained traction instead of being suppressed. The *Playboy* model of masculinity and working-class masculinity on Skid Road were similar in that both were based on bachelorhood and hedonistic consumption. Sex and alcohol were promoted in *Playboy* as aspects of a hedonistic lifestyle, just as they had been key components of the bachelor subculture of Skid Road in the early twentieth century.⁶⁰⁹ Whereas newspaper discourse asserted that extramarital sex and drinking reflected the failure of working-class men to maintain stable employment, the playboy who indulged in these activities avoided denigration because he was employed. The main distinction between the man on Skid Road and the playboy lay in the extent to which they were able to participate in the new capitalist economy which required the continual regeneration

⁶⁰³ Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 46.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁷ Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 122.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, x.

⁶⁰⁹ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 32.

of consumer desires.⁶¹⁰ While men on Skid Road lacked the financial means to purchase new commodities on a regular basis, the *Playboy* bachelor bolstered consumer capitalism through hedonistic commodity consumption.⁶¹¹ Whereas the unattached man had been viewed with scorn and suspicion in the early 1950s, by the 1960s the middle-class bachelor had become “an expression of the new middle class ‘morality of pleasure as duty’, an icon of dynamic and prosperous modernity.”⁶¹² With the rise of the playboy, failed masculinity became more strongly associated with being unemployed than with not having a family. However, the connection between sexual deviance and men on Skid Road in newspaper discourse rested on the conflation of gender identity and sexual identity, so that failed masculinity and deviant sexuality were perceived to go hand in hand.

Despite the similarities between the playboy and the working-class masculinity associated with Skid Road, Osgerby claims that “for the most part a model of masculinity rooted in narcissistic style and sensual pleasure remained anathema to blue-collar masculine ideals.”⁶¹³ Some men’s magazines that were directed towards working-class readers continued to espouse “traditional machismo” and to rebuke “‘unmanly’ hedonism,” as though the two were diametrical opposites.⁶¹⁴ Osgerby’s analysis of these magazines suggests that the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century bachelor subculture of migrant workers, which valued both male virility and hedonism, was no longer the dominant mode of white working-class masculinity in the postwar period.⁶¹⁵ Indeed, the 1950s and 1960s were characterized by the “corporatization, suburbanization, and domestication of working-class social life.”⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁰ Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 9.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 151.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.* Examples of such magazines include *Lucky* and *Wildcat*.

⁶¹⁵ Sommers, “Men,” 304.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Pornography in Herzog's Self-Representations

The importance of heterosexuality in Herzog's construction of white working-class masculinity on Skid Road can only be understood in relation to the centrality of heterosexuality in his self-representations, specifically *Studio* (1959) and *Self-Portrait* (1961). Similar to men on Skid Road and other unattached men, Herzog asserted his heterosexuality through the display of pinups.

Studio (fig. 20) shows a section of Herzog's room, including his desk on which there is a Music of India record; a television; a framed abstract black, white, and red print; and several photographs of people, motorcycles, and a variety of other subjects on his wall.



Fig. 20. Fred Herzog, *Studio*, 1959. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

The objects in this space illustrate the artist's eclectic tastes and appreciation of fine art and world cultures. Standing out among these objects is a colour photograph on the wall in front of Herzog's desk depicting a nude woman posing seductively with her arm over her head and her large breasts exposed. The position of the pinup in front of Herzog's desk indicates not only his predilection for such images, but also the significance of his sexual orientation to his identity. Through the display of pinup images, Herzog expressed his heterosexuality in ways that mirrored normative practices of the period among both white working- and middle-class bachelors.⁶¹⁷

A different pinup—a *Playboy* centrefold of Miss June, *Playboy* Playmate of the Month—is subtly visible in Herzog's *Self-Portrait* (fig. 21). In this image, Herzog appears in profile, bent over a desk in the same room, looking straight ahead with a pen and paper in his hand, as if contemplating what to write. He is casually dressed in a dark t-shirt. The pictures on the wall, which are arranged differently than in *Studio*, include: a black and white photograph of someone riding a motorcycle; the aforementioned *Playboy* centrefold, which has been cut off to show only the bare legs of a woman lying on her back on a beach towel; a colour image of a basket of vegetables; a portrait of a black girl; and an unclear picture depicting what appears to be a person. Sunlight from a window beyond the frame of the photograph illuminates certain areas of Herzog's body and the wall, so that some images, such as the *Playboy* centrefold, remain in the shadows. The pictures on the wall seem like a random collage, clues to Herzog's personality which are difficult to decipher. However, based on Herzog's photograph of his room in *Studio* and the privileged position of the pinup therein, what is clear is that the presence of the *Playboy* centrefold in *Portrait* reiterates his avid interest in pinups and his desire to express his heterosexuality as a central feature of his identity.

⁶¹⁷ Gabor, *Girlie Magazines*, 12.



Fig. 21. Fred Herzog, *Self-Portrait*, 1961. Reproduced from Douglas Coupland et al., *Fred Herzog: Photographs* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011).

It is notable that of all the images on the wall, only the images of the girl and the woman are partly cut off. The picture of the girl, who is looking sideways as if peering at the pinup on the left, is partly obscured by Herzog's head so that her mouth is hidden.⁶¹⁸ Meanwhile, Herzog has cropped the photograph so that the pinup only shows the lower half of the woman's body. The missing elements of these two images signify that women are silent objects to be gazed at. On

⁶¹⁸ This image of a black girl also appears centre left in *Studio*, where she seems to be looking at the pinup hanging in front of the desk. This relationship between the girl's gaze and the pinups speaks to the hegemony of representations of white people in the mainstream media, which encourages both white and non-white girls and women to desire and celebrate whiteness as the ideal form of feminine beauty. None of the pinups in any of Herzog's photographs depict black women. Although black pinup models did exist, they did not often appear in mainstream media. See Ronald E. Hall, *An Historical Analysis of Skin Color Discrimination in America: Victimism among Victim Group Populations* (New York: Springer, 2010), 156. For a discussion of pinups featuring black women, see Megan E. Williams, "'Meet the Real Lena Horne': Representations of Lena Horne in *Ebony* Magazine, 1945–1949," *Journal of American Studies* 43, no. 1 (2009): 117–130.

the other hand, Herzog's contemplative expression, combined with the pen and paper in his hand, reinforces the notion that men are intellectual subjects.

While Herzog denounced consumer culture,⁶¹⁹ his self-portrait reveals his complicity in *Playboy's* sexual objectification of women. Although he was uncritical of *Playboy's* treatment of women, his photographs allow the viewer to critically examine the relationship between pinups and the spaces in which they appear. Such an analysis shows that white working- and middle-class men alike articulated their heterosexual identity by decorating their spaces with these pictures, ultimately reinforcing the social dominance of men and the subordination of women. Furthermore, *Studio* and *Self-Portrait* reveal the ways in which Herzog's identity as a heterosexual man oriented him toward spaces in the city that extended his body and emanated a sense of familiarity. He undoubtedly identified with men on Skid Road who similarly filled their own spaces with pornographic pinups, and that is likely why these images figure in his construction of white working-class masculinity on Skid Road. As Herzog states: "It has been said that you can only photograph that which you know."⁶²⁰ His own taste for pinup images influenced his perception that such images and the spaces they inhabited were meaningful expressions of white working-class masculinity on Skid Road.

⁶¹⁹ Walsh and Enright, "Colour His World"; Milroy, "Words," 19.

⁶²⁰ Fred Herzog, "Explaining the World without Words" (unpublished notes, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, undated).

Conclusion

The 1970s saw a shift in newspaper discourse on Skid Road following public opposition to the city's urban renewal initiatives. With the intention of modernizing the blighted areas of the downtown core, the city developed plans in the mid-1950s to demolish substantial portions of the East End, including parts of Skid Road, Gastown, and Chinatown, in order to build a downtown freeway.⁶²¹ The imminent fruition of the city's plans in the late 1960s galvanized local residents, students, and community development groups to organize powerful protests which culminated in the defeat of the downtown freeway scheme in 1968.⁶²² The rise of political activism among East End residents led to the founding of the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA) in 1973.⁶²³ The pejorative name "Skid Road" was discarded and the neighbourhood was subsumed under the broader geographical area of the Downtown Eastside. Due to the efforts of DERA, the unattached men on Skid Road who had been labelled drunks and criminals in newspaper discourse of the 1950s and 1960s were in the 1970s more sympathetically framed as "retired resource industry worker[s]."⁶²⁴ Despite these positive developments, the Downtown Eastside continued to decline due to drugs, "an influx of people from the west with arrest warrants," and a strict policy of containment.⁶²⁵ Today, the Downtown Eastside remains in news coverage as a notorious neighbourhood characterized by extreme poverty, drug use, and prostitution.⁶²⁶ Living conditions in the area are worse than they were in the 1950s and 60s, exacerbated by detrimental civic strategies that can be traced back to the postwar period when newspaper discourse

⁶²¹ Purvey and Belshaw, *Vancouver Noir*, 65.

⁶²² Arnold, "Vancouver Photographs," 17.

⁶²³ Jim Green and David Lane, "Tenants' Organizations," in *Working Lives: Vancouver 1886–1986*, ed. Elaine Bernard (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1985), 191.

⁶²⁴ Sommers, "Men," 288.

⁶²⁵ Jeffries, "Shock," 25.

⁶²⁶ Amber Dean, "Space, Temporality, History: Encountering Hauntings in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside," in *The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region*, ed. Sarah Carter, Alvin Finkel, and Peter Fortna (Edmonton: AU Press, Athabasca University, 2010), 122.

supported their implementation.⁶²⁷ The dominant image of Skid Road as a place infested by alcoholics, criminals, and drug addicts in postwar newspaper discourse has undoubtedly contributed to the present-day neglect of the urban poor in Vancouver.

I have sought to show how Herzog's experiences as an unattached, white, working-class man in Vancouver in the early fifties profoundly influenced his *flânerie* as a street photographer, resulting in photographs that offer an idiosyncratic and empathetic understanding of the lives of unattached men on Skid Road in the 1950s and 1960s. Whereas newspaper discourse attributed the values, practices, and socioeconomic marginalization of men on Skid Road to deficiencies in their characters, Herzog's photographs investigate the ways in which their position within the relations of production profoundly shaped the nature and extent of their cultural participation.⁶²⁸ This thesis has examined the ways in which Herzog's photographs contest newspaper discourse on the drunk, the criminal, the old-age pensioner, and the sexual deviant on Skid Road. Herzog responded to newspaper representations of men on Skid Road as drunks who exhibited dependency, immorality, and physical deterioration by photographing other popular leisure activities and spaces historically associated with the bachelor subculture of Skid Road, including secondhand shops, barbershops, and the reading of literature and newspapers. The criminal on Skid Road was described in newspaper discourse as a menace and an economic burden to society; by contrast, Herzog's work expresses an admiration for the machismo of working-class masculinity on Skid Road. While newspaper discourse portrayed the old-age pensioner as an adherent of dominant values whose meagre pension forced him to live on Skid Road, I have argued that Herzog's photographs of men loitering counter newspaper discourse not only by capturing their pleasure in loitering, but also by critiquing the idea of loitering as a consequence

⁶²⁷ Huey, *Negotiating Demands*, 4.

⁶²⁸ Munt, introduction, 12.

of capitalist exploitation. Newspaper discourse also labelled men on Skid Road as sexual deviants because of their engagement in extramarital, paid sex. However, Herzog's work explores the historical significance of prostitution to migrant workers on Skid Road in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and also highlights how both prostitution (a "deviant" practice) and the sexualization and commodification of women in popular culture (a "normal" practice) reinforced patriarchal capitalism. In order to deconstruct and expose the techniques of hegemonic masculinity, I have demonstrated the various ways in which men on Skid Road were punished for deviating from dominant gender norms and rewarded for conforming to them.

Further research on Herzog's postwar street photography and how it relates to that of other contemporary Vancouver-based street photographers can contribute to deconstructing dominant depictions of the Downtown Eastside by highlighting alternative ones. Herzog's work demonstrates the power of positive visibility, particularly for a population accustomed to either invisibility or hypervisibility in mainstream media. By intervening in hegemonic representations perpetuated by outsiders to the Skid Road neighbourhood, Herzog's humanizing and personal photographs critique the politics of fear and division and enable new ways of knowing the working-class poor. His work dismantles the mythology of Skid Road by viewing it as a community united by shared values and practices, yet also struggling with alienation and disenfranchisement. That the term "skid row" has regained currency in contemporary news discourse on the Downtown Eastside only reinforces the import of Herzog's photographs.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁹ See, for example, Associated Press, "Canada's Olympic City Has Notorious Skid Row," NBC News, last modified January 30, 2010, accessed April 3, 2016, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/35160185/ns/world_news-americas/t/canadas-olympic-city-has-notorious-skid-row/; Sherri Borden Colley, "CEO from Skid Row: Addict-Turned Millionaire Shares Story," *Chronicle Herald*, October 22, 2013, <http://thechronicleherald.ca/metro/1162180-ceo-from-skid-row-addict-turned-millionaire-shares-story>; Jane Armstrong, "10th Overdose in 2 Weeks in Vancouver's Skid Row," *Globe and Mail*, September 1, 2005, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/10th-overdose-in-2-weeks-in-vancouver-s-skid-row/article18246424/>.

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