

Feminine Discourse and the “Frequently Neglected Area”
of Mental Hygiene in 1950s Ontario Elementary Health Textbooks

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Abstract

This thesis examines how mental hygiene principles were adopted for a student audience through the elementary-level health textbooks series, *Health and Personal Development*, used in Ontario schools from 1952 until 1963. In particular, I analyse the lessons about girls and their healthy development as they matured into women. In the post-war period, mental hygiene principles were at the forefront of many aspects of Canadian society, including education. Thus, the health textbook series was introduced to address these concerns, containing lessons on both the physical and mental health of students.

With this emphasis in mind, this thesis examines how mental hygiene principles were integrated into Ontario schools. In particular, I explore how students were exposed to principles of mental hygiene through educational materials such as textbooks, and the didactic messages pertaining to mental hygiene as they related to girls. The results of this analysis demonstrate that healthy mental hygiene and personal development for girls, according to the textbooks, meant becoming wives, mothers, and homemakers, as their own mothers model. While these roles required many skills and responsibilities, and provided women with a certain amount of agency in the female-dominated sphere, girls were represented in the textbooks as having a limited set of options in life: to emulate their mothers' feminine domesticity, or to risk a life marred by poor mental hygiene.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Introduction: The Healthily Maturing Girl.....	1
Chapter One: Defining “Normal” in 1950s Canada.....	7
Chapter Two: Domesticity in the Female Sphere.....	34
Chapter Three: Advice on a Feminine Appearance.....	53
Chapter Four: Playing the Role of Community-Maker.....	68
Chapter Five: Scientific Mothering.....	80
Conclusion: Representing the Ideal: The Natural Progression to Wife, Mother, and Homemaker.....	98
Bibliography	105

Introduction: The Healthily Maturing Girl

Elizabeth was impatient while waiting to go to the show that Saturday afternoon, so she decided to read her *Girl Guide Handbook* to help pass the time. As she looked through the ‘Homemaking’ part, she was quite surprised.

‘Why, I know about lots of the things in this chapter!’ she thought. ‘I’ve learned about setting the table and making the table attractive just by helping Mother do it. And I’ve learned from her some of the very things this book tells about cooking and dishwashing.’

And so it was that Elizabeth discovered another advantage in helping around the house—she was learning the kinds of things she would need to know when she grew up and had a home of her own.¹

This excerpt from the health textbook *You and Others* shows the quintessential type of narrative contained in the pages of the *Health and Personal Development* series of textbooks used throughout Ontario during the 1950s and early 1960s. Directed at elementary students, the textbook series was created to address, in the words of the authors of one of the texts, the “frequently neglected area [of personal development] including the emotions, mental hygiene, social behavior, and other important phases of personal adjustment.”² Thus, combining both the physical and mental aspects of health, the series sought to teach students how to be not only physically well, but how to develop with healthy mental hygiene. The definition of this “healthy mental hygiene” was framed within the concept of normality as it was understood in the post-war era; a time when Canadians were in a desperate search for a sense of normalcy after the preceding decades of instability that saw countries economically devastated by the Great Depression and morally shaken by the Second World War. Moreover, the 1950s saw the rapid

¹ Helen Shacter and W.W. Bauer, *You and Others* (Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company Limited, ca. 1952), 80.

² Dorothy Baruch, Elizabeth Montgomery, and W.W. Bauer, *The Girl Next Door* (Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company, ca. 1952), 244.

modernization, mechanization, and urbanization of society—a reality that caused many to look inward to the security of the traditional family unit for a sense of home and stability.³ In this sense, married, middle-class, white, heterosexual, and patriarchal families were seen as the bulwarks against threats to democracy, economic instability, and morality.⁴ And so it was this framework of normalcy in which the textbooks operated, seeking to teach young students about their mental hygiene and personal development in a time when there existed a very narrow definition of what was “normal” in society’s view.

Mental hygiene in this time period had become a pronounced concern for everyday Canadians, who in the 1950s were routinely exposed to mental hygiene and psychological principles on a wide scale.⁵ Prior to the post-war period, what was known as the mental hygiene movement was increasingly influential throughout the country; however, its principles were still largely understood only by those working and researching in the field.⁶ It was not until the 1950s when psychologists became more prominent in the public discourse on health and normality that everyday Canadians came into contact with and became concerned over the idea of mental hygiene.⁷ As it was understood, mental hygiene was defined as “the adjustment of individuals to themselves

³ Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 5-7. Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 18-32. Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 12; 57-58; 61. R.D. Gidney, *From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario’s Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 10.

⁴ Gleason, 52-79. Adams, 20. Owsram, 12-18.

⁵ Gleason, 19-36.

⁶ Hans Pols, “Between the Laboratory and Life: Development Research in Toronto, 1919-1956,” *History of Psychology* 5, no. 2 (2002): 140.

⁷ Gleason, 19-24.

and the world at large with the maximum of effectiveness, satisfaction, cheerfulness, and socially considerate behaviour, and the ability to face and accept life's realities."⁸ In schools in particular, personality development was considered an important facet of a student's education. Childhood was viewed as the key time during which good mental hygiene could be fostered to prevent the occurrence of mental disorders.⁹ The *Health and Personal Development* textbook series sought to address these concerns, meaning to teach children of the 1950s what it meant to exhibit good mental hygiene in a time when security and normality were paramount to Canadians.

This push for the integration of mental hygiene principles in education is a worthwhile topic to explore in order to provide us with a better understanding of how schooling became less about the academic disciplines and more about the development of all aspects of the child—a structure of schooling that is commonplace in Ontario schools today. Teaching increasingly became less about rote learning, and more about how to cultivate children who would grow into the kind of adults that society desired to have. In the 1950s in particular, mental hygiene principles were at the forefront in many aspects of Canadian society, including education.

With this emphasis in mind, how were mental hygiene concepts integrated into Ontario schools? How were students exposed to these principles through educational materials such as textbooks, and what kind of didactic messages do the textbooks contain about normal mental hygiene and how children could achieve it in their own lives,

⁸ Evelyn Marie Roberts, "Mental Health Clinic Services: A Study of Children Between 6 and 12 Years of Age Examined by Mental Health Clinics in Vancouver from 1945-1947 Inclusive," (master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1949), 51-52, quoted in Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 28.

⁹ Sharon Yvonne Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 144.

particularly as they matured into adults? Lastly, how do the textbooks frame “healthy” pictures of female mental hygiene, maturation, and behaviour? In order to provide a thoroughly detailed analysis in a limited space, I focus my study on the representations of female mental hygiene and the didactic messages attributed to them. Mental hygiene, personal development, and maturity are used interchangeably in this study, and relate to the aforementioned definition provided in the textbook series, including “the emotions ... social behavior ... [and] phases of personal adjustment.”¹⁰ Personal development thus refers to the ways in which children accepted their social responsibilities, acted appropriately, controlled their feelings, and did so with enthusiasm and happiness.

This thesis addresses these research questions through an analysis of three textbooks from the *Health and Personal Development* series used in elementary schools in the post-war years. The series was the only recommended set of textbooks in health for use in Ontario schools from the 1952-53 school year until 1963, and included textbooks for use in grade one to grade six classrooms.¹¹ I opted to analyze the textbooks written for the latter three grades because of their more detailed and advanced content than the textbooks intended for the younger grades. Health textbooks, as opposed to those of other school subjects, provide a direct window into content about mental hygiene and personal development, as these topics were very much considered a health issue, and not one of science, social science, or physical education. I focus on elementary-level textbooks rather than high school textbooks because in the 1950s, only half of Ontario students

¹⁰ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 244.

¹¹ Ontario Department of Education, *Text-Books Approved (Grades 1-X) Authorized and Recommended (Grades XI-XII) for Public, Separate, Continuation and High Schools, Collegiate Institutes and Vocational Schools for the School Year 1952-53* ([Toronto?]: [Queen’s Printer?], 1952). Ontario Department of Education, *Text-Books Approved or Recommended for Use in Elementary and Secondary Schools* ([Toronto?]: [Queen’s Printer?], 1962).

between the ages of fifteen and nineteen were enrolled in school.¹² While this number shows a marked increase from the preceding decade of a 38 percent enrolment,¹³ it still indicates that elementary textbooks would have had the widest exposure to the greatest number of Ontario students at the time.

The results of this analysis demonstrate that healthy mental hygiene and personal development for girls meant becoming wives, mothers, and homemakers, as their own mothers model. By showing how girls practice the behaviours their mothers exhibit, the textbooks affirm that the healthy and happy way for girls to mature was to mirror their mothers. Mothers in the textbooks are described as managing the family in a female-dominated sphere, separate from men. In this realm, they have many responsibilities related to family and community wellness, safety, and happiness. Women in the textbooks are the established experts at raising the children, and making important decisions regarding their health and welfare. They also manage the household, including keeping it a happy place for the family to reside. At the same time, they maintain attractive appearances and help to build a sense of community. Mothers do not work for a salary, however, as this duty is attributed to the men, who in the textbooks remain largely detached from family matters. While working in the home required many skills, mothers are not shown as having the option to work for pay, except in exceptional circumstances, whether they wished to or not. In effect, the women in the textbooks are represented as having a limited set of choices in life: either accept a life of domestic femininity or risk of the mental health of themselves, their husband, and their children alike.

Mothers in the textbooks act as models of the proper behaviour for young girls to

¹² *Gidney*, 27.

¹³ *Ibid.*

reproduce in their own lives. Throughout the textbooks, girls are shown practicing the skills that their mothers demonstrate—learning how to clean the home, cook for the family, and accept a future life as a mother and wife—revealing the type of gendered behaviour that the textbooks construct as indicative of healthy and normal mental hygiene. Instead of preparing for a life of paid work as an adult like the boys do, girls in the textbooks practice the skills that their mothers are experts at, including how to manage a household, raise children, make themselves attractive, conscientious, and pleasing to society. Granted, these roles required a great amount of practice and skill in learning how to run a household and raise children in a healthy environment; however, girls in the textbooks are effectively told what their choices in life include: either emulating their mothers' domestic femininity, or endangering their own futures by choosing a path that fell outside of this expectation, which would evidence improper and unhealthy mental hygiene. Girls in the textbooks are not represented as having the option to aspire to become anything outside of the roles of wife, mother, and homemaker, regardless of their own perceived ambitions.

Chapter One: Defining “Normal” in 1950s Canada

Prior to the Second World War, blanketed under the campaign known as the mental hygiene movement, psychologists sought to address problems of feeble-mindedness, mental illness, and other maladjustments in order to improve the functioning of society.¹ As Theresa Richardson shows in *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada*, early in the twentieth century, mental hygienists were primarily concerned with the campaign to prohibit those deemed “feeble-minded and delinquent” from reproducing, as many prominent psychologists pointed to heredity as the cause for problems of mental hygiene.² These eugenic overtones were gradually disregarded by psychologists in favour of the view that it was the influence of environment, not heredity, that caused poor mental hygiene.³ This shift in thinking drove researchers in psychology to focus on defining what was “normal” and “healthy” in childhood development through the stages to adulthood. Then, instead of trying to identify the pathology of poor mental hygiene, they focused on prevention by discerning how to control the environment in which children were raised.⁴ These beliefs were most prominently conveyed by psychologists William Blatz and Samuel Laycock, who focused on treatment and prevention in their analysis of mental hygiene.⁵ Continuing to advance their field as a valid profession throughout the 1930s and 1940s, by the post-World War Two period, psychologists had

¹ Pols, 140.

² Theresa R. Richardson, *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 64. Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885-1945* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990).

³ Gleason, 24.

⁴ Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, 142-43.

⁵ Gleason, 24.

established themselves as a significant influence in the “private lives” of Canadians.⁶

According to Mona Gleason, psychologists were able to create this niche through some important avenues that effectively increased their interaction with everyday Canadians. Most significantly, psychologists in the pre-war period worked in schools helping to test, diagnose, and treat students with mental deficiencies, as well as helping to develop school curriculum. At the same time, they also assisted in establishing and running child guidance clinics across the country. Through the schools and clinics, parents and their children came into close contact with psychological principles on a daily basis. It was these interactions, Gleason argues, that allowed psychologists to firmly establish their influence in Canadian homes and families throughout the pre-World War Two years.⁷ By the time World War Two had ended, professionals working through social institutions such as doctors, teachers, social workers, and nurses had come to rely on psychological principles to define the baseline for mental normalcy. Psychology had become a daily facet of Canadian life, as psychologists like Blatz and Laycock did public lectures, radio shows, television appearances, and wrote articles for numerous magazines and newspapers.⁸ Throughout all of these public avenues, their primary topic was normalcy and how to cultivate it in one’s family through proper child-rearing techniques.

As 1950s Canada became a country focussed on the mental hygiene of its populace, and particularly its children, there existed other avenues beyond the medical world through which mental hygiene and psychology became part of the dominant discourse. Sharon Wall and Brian J. Low both offer research into other areas of society where mental hygiene principles were operationalized. Wall focuses her research on

⁶ Gleason, 19-24.

⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁸ Ibid., 35.

records from various Ontario summer camps, examining how administrators incorporated mental hygiene ideas within camp programming. These principles ranged from developing independence from parents to being able to get along with peers and demonstrating a balanced personality.⁹ Similarly, Low's work examines how mental hygiene principles were gradually incorporated into National Film Board (NFB) films about children. He examines films produced between the late 1940s and the late 1960s, determining that there was a strong influence of notions of mental hygiene in NFB portrayals of children. Like in Wall's analysis, Low uncovers qualities that were considered "normal" for children such as becoming independent, being responsible, and being liked by peers.¹⁰ Both researchers note a perceptible influence of psychological principles in programming, specifically regarding educating and raising children in the 1950s.

Experts in child-rearing included not only psychologists and social workers, but those in the medical field such as doctors and nurses as well. Taken together, these experts became a prominent voice in childcare advice throughout the twentieth century. As Katherine Arnup explores in *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada*, there was a perceptible shift in the ways in which Canadian mothers raised their children, starting from the nineteenth century's reliance on "maternal instincts," and progressing to the twentieth century's emphasis on the advice of experts to

⁹ Sharon Yvonne Wall, "Making Modern Childhood, the Natural Way: Psychology, Mental Hygiene, and Progressive Education at Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-1955," *Historical Studies in Education* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 73-110.

¹⁰ Brian J. Low, "'The New Generation': Mental Hygiene and the Portrayals of Children by the National Film Board of Canada, 1946-1967," *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 540-570.

guide mothers in child-rearing.¹¹ Arnup argues that the post-World War Two period in particular marked a notable transition from relying on family and friends for advice on child-rearing to depending on doctors and psychologists to advise mothers on this issue.¹² While Arnup acknowledges that not every mother's experience was the same due to differences in class, race, and ethnicity, she also asserts that these experts defined the "dominant view of good mothering."¹³ With regard to psychology, Arnup notes that the main view according to experts in the 1950s was one that emphasized the child's mental well-being and proper adjustment.¹⁴ It was therefore deemed important for mothers to consult both medical and psychological professionals during the post-war years in order to raise their children with strong mental and physical foundations.

Providing a more centralized study on scientific mothering, Denyse Baillargeon explores the Quebec experience during the twentieth century in *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970*. Echoing Arnup's assessment of the rising role of medical advice in child-rearing, Baillargeon determines that in Quebec, the processes of pregnancy and childbirth became highly medicalized throughout the twentieth century. Mothers no longer sought the advice of their female relatives on the "conditions" of pregnancy and childbirth, and instead relied on a doctor's care to guide them through.¹⁵ In the post-World War Two period specifically, Baillargeon notes an increase in the medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth as prosperity rose and

¹¹ Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵ Denyse Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970*, trans. W. Donald Wilson (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009), 1-2.

healthcare access for babies and their mothers improved.¹⁶ Quebec mothers were in line with the rest of Canadian mothers, as Arnup shows in her study, as they began to rely more heavily than in earlier decades on the advice of medical experts to teach them how to be good mothers.

It was in this climate where psychology and scientific motherhood were becoming prominent fixtures in Canadian discourse that the *Health and Personal Development* textbook series was written in the United States and approved for use in Ontario schools. The series sought to incorporate and promulgate ideas of mental hygiene throughout its textbooks in a time when Canadian schools were seeing record numbers of children pass through their doors: between 1952 and 1966, the baby-boom increased school enrolment from 2.5 million students to almost 5 million.¹⁷ In Ontario specifically, schools saw a record 875,000 children and adolescents enrolled in public education by 1955.¹⁸ These rising numbers were buttressed with longer stays in the education system and more frequent school attendance than in earlier decades, which as Doug Owram argues, meant that children of the 1950s were more influenced by the schooling system than any preceding generation.¹⁹ It was in this environment where children were attending school in record numbers, and mental hygiene became a greater social concern than ever before, that the textbooks were recommended for use in Ontario schools. In this sense, a record number of children were possibly exposed to the mental hygiene lessons contained in the series, rendering an analysis of its content worthwhile, as the series likely experienced great exposure and use in Ontario classrooms.

¹⁶ Baillargeon, 91-100.

¹⁷ Owram, 114.

¹⁸ Gidney, 292.

¹⁹ Owram, 115.

In addition to the growing numbers of children in school, the nature of Canadian schooling itself had begun to shift—if only subtly—in the post-war era. The progressive movement in education, emerging from teachings by educational thinker John Dewey, had trickled into the educational system. Championing notions of “child-centredness, anti-authoritarian teaching, and [the] belief in the social importance of education,” pro-progressive thinking had some perceptible influence in Canadian classrooms, and in Ontario, was given “cautious approval” by the Department of Education.²⁰ Progressives believed that the “whole child goes to school,” and that therefore education should not only develop children’s intellectual capacity, but their “social, emotional, and physical growth as well.”²¹ Indeed, students were increasingly taught about personality development, social skills, and were given more opportunities to try vocational fields.²² Canadian schools also began putting stronger emphasis on non-traditional subjects like art, health, and music, as the socializing role of school increased. Granted, the progressive movement did not wholly take root, as many traditional views of schooling remained, but its ideas did have some influence on a new child-centred approach.²³ Likewise, the socializing role of school was not a new concept, as scholars such as Paul Axelrod and Neil Sutherland have shown in studies of late nineteenth and early twentieth century education in Canada;²⁴ however, the progressive movement did draw attention to specific and new ways through which the system could focus on educating the “whole

²⁰ Owram, 128. Gidney, 32.

²¹ Gidney, 31.

²² Owram, 128. Tomkins, 267-68. Gidney, 31.

²³ George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1986), 286.

²⁴ Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 22. Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 156.

child.”

Owram notes that this new approach was part of a 1950s emphasis on the socializing function of schooling. He argues in the chapter “School Days” in *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* that after the war, parents put more emphasis on education and its vital influence on their children’s development and success than ever before.²⁵ The Canadian public began to think of schools not only as sites of learning the traditional core subjects like English, mathematics, and science, but as places where juvenile delinquency, mental hygiene and morality were to be addressed.²⁶ As Owram succinctly notes, “Education... was no longer a peripheral experience either to the child or to society.”²⁷ In this newly central education system, Owram indicates that there was a strong element of citizenship and of teaching the values and aims of Canadian society at the time.²⁸ To exemplify this point, Owram looks to various textbooks across the curriculum to ascertain what types of “life lessons” were being projected. He discovers a strong emphasis on democracy, common and family values, ethics, and mental hygiene. Furthermore, in a detailed look at health textbooks written for high school use, Owram notes that textbooks taught the aforementioned ideals along with gendered notions of men and women’s roles in society. He suggests that although women are described in situations of “domestic democracy” where they are portrayed going out to work, the textbooks ultimately suggest that a woman’s natural role was as a homemaker.²⁹ Owram argues that education in the 1950s was therefore based on

²⁵ Owram, 115.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 112.

²⁸ Ibid., 128.

²⁹ Ibid., 129-31.

conservative values, but also suggested a sense of dynamism that at least opened the possibility for change, particularly for the status of women and girls in society.³⁰

Contributing to the scholarship on education in the post-war years, George S. Tomkins echoes Owram's assessment of the post-war era. However, he cites a greater ambivalence regarding progressive education, noting that while Ontario's Hope Commission of 1950 integrated some progressive ideas, it voiced a largely traditionalist view of education.³¹ Despite this evaluation, Tomkins does note that the "socializing role of the school increased ... with its emphasis on personality development."³² Pointing to the Hope Commission again, Tomkins argues that one of its messages was that the socializing role of education must include an inculcation of "virtues, habits, customs and conventions" that were considered to be accepted by society.³³ More specifically relating to mental hygiene, Tomkins notes that the idea of bringing mental health and schooling together was disseminated throughout the provinces, emphasizing "personality and character development" through education.³⁴

R.D. Gidney also favours a cautious yet perceptible integration of progressive education ideals, beginning in the late 1930s and continuing in the post-war years.³⁵ He argues that while some small changes were made in the elementary education system in Ontario, such as the integration of school health services, domestic training, manual training, and the use of the "Little Grey Book" of curriculum (introduced in 1937), overall the progressive movement did not make great gains in Ontario during the 1950s.

³⁰ Owram, 134-35.

³¹ Tomkins, 286.

³² Ibid., 267-68.

³³ Ibid., 345.

³⁴ Ibid., 361.

³⁵ Gidney, 32.

It was however a time when children were in school longer than ever before. Gidney notes that as Ontario experienced an economic surge, parents were more likely to leave their children in school longer in order to give them a chance that they “never had” when they were children. This meant more children than ever were staying in school until seventeen or eighteen years of age.³⁶ Moreover, based on recommendations in the Hope Commission, in Ontario children were regulated by law to attend school by the age of six rather than eight, and the province was also less inclined to allow work exemptions for older children.³⁷ The widening of democracy in society led to a call for more integration of democratic ideals in the school as well, although Gidney does not provide specific examples of these democratic ideals.³⁸ In essence then, the 1950s was a time of great social change, and with that social change came some notable differences in education, including a slight integration of progressive ideals such as the introduction of vocational subjects and the emphasis on less traditionally academic courses like health, music and art.

Lorna R. McLean also looks at the education system of the 1950s to understand its integration of citizenship education and to ascertain to what extent ideas such as “social justice, human rights, international development and discrimination” were introduced to students.³⁹ McLean examines artefacts such as the Ontario curriculum and pedagogical materials, along with federal government publications and high school yearbooks, determining that there was a trace of educational content on social rights and

³⁶ Gidney, 27. The exact percentages of this are as follows: in 1946, 38 percent, in 1955, 51 percent, and in 1960, 63 percent.

³⁷ Gidney, 29.

³⁸ Ibid., 30.

³⁹ Lorna R. McLean, ““There is No Magic Whereby Such Qualities Will be Acquired at the Voting Age’: Teachers, Curriculum, Pedagogy and Citizenship,” *Historical Studies in Education*, Fall 2010, 13.

discrimination topics.⁴⁰ McLean does note, however, that while the content in the provincial curriculum discusses the importance of incorporating lessons on prejudice based on race, colour, class, creed, or national origin, it does not cover gender discrimination or stereotyping. Moreover, the language used in the curriculum, such as in the grade seven social studies curriculum on “Living in a Democracy,” is exclusive in nature, using the pronoun “our” to speak of the collective “we”—all the while silencing marginalized voices such as those of women.⁴¹ So while there was a slight increase in the coverage of rights and prejudice in citizenship education in the 1950s, the issue of gender was left largely overlooked.

It is clear then that in the 1950s, although conservative voices were largely outweighing those of the progressives, mental hygiene and educating the “whole child” were still important considerations for public educators. As the literature suggests, notions of mental hygiene and democracy were integrated into the education system in response to the widening concern about these issues in society at large. The *Health and Personal Development* series in particular evidences the push for more content on mental hygiene in schools. Based on this documentation, a detailed examination of what precisely the textbooks conveyed about mental hygiene and social rights—in this case about the gendered expectations of society—is essential to better understand to what extent the educational system embraced principles of mental hygiene and how textbook creators interpreted this content for a student population. What content were students being exposed to regarding their personal development and mental hygiene in an era when these topics were determined to be so important to educators and to society overall?

⁴⁰ McLean, 13.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

My primary concern in this thesis is the notion of mental hygiene as it related to girls and their proper and normal personal development. As explored throughout this thesis, the textbooks convey an idealized version of family life that did not correspond with the realities of many families. In 1950s Canada, when the mass media represented women as staying home, it was in fact a time when women were participating in the paid labour force.⁴² Married women in particular were working for pay, as in 1951, 30 percent of women in the workforce were married, and by 1958, this number rose to 43.5 percent.⁴³ As Joan Sangster shows, however, the image of the female worker was not present in the media in the post-war era. Instead, the image that dominated was one of the June Cleaver-esque domesticated wife and the breadwinning husband, regardless of whether it reflected reality.⁴⁴ These idealized visions coincided with the real fact that in Ontario, it was no longer just young, unmarried women who joined the labour force, but an increasing number of married and older women who either continued to work or who re-entered the paid labour market.⁴⁵ The representation in the popular media thus portrayed an inaccurate version of what life was like for some women in Ontario during the post-war era.

Joan Sangster thoroughly dissects these popular representations of life in the 1950s in her chapter “Representations and Realities: The Shifting Boundaries of Women’s Work” in *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-war Canada*. She argues that while women were certainly going out to work outside of the home and were

⁴² Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-war Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 19.

⁴³ Gleason, 55.

⁴⁴ Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 9-18.

⁴⁵ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 16-17.

also involved in “organizing, advocating, and unionizing,” the predominant version of life shown in popular media and advice literature was one that promoted the domesticated ideal.⁴⁶ The connection between femininity and domesticity was clearly portrayed, and the implication remained that women should fulfil their “natural” position as domesticated wives and mothers in order to secure and uphold the “nuclear, hetero-normative family.”⁴⁷ Moreover, these portrayals marginalized and excluded the immigrant woman’s experience in the labour market and did not therefore reflect their reality either.⁴⁸ Sangster argues that regardless of whether or not women had become an important part of the labour market at the time, this idealized version of family life still existed, and in effect, created an environment in which the options for women were delineated by these representations, telling them what was “possible, preferable, or impossible” for them to achieve.⁴⁹

Providing a complementary analysis of the representations of women in the labour market during the 1950s, Veronica Strong-Boag examines popular Canadian publications like *Saturday Night*, *Chatelaine*, and *Star Weekly Magazine* to discern how women were portrayed in relation to the paid working force.⁵⁰ Strong-Boag argues that the popular press presented two views of women in paid labour: either it was a threat to patriarchy, stability, and the psychological well-being of families, or it was a reasonable pursuit to supplement family income after children reached adolescence.⁵¹ The latter opinion was still imbued with the sense that a mother’s primary responsibility was

⁴⁶ Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 23-24.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 18.

⁵⁰ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-1960,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 5-25.

⁵¹ Ibid., 10-19.

managing the household and caring for the pre-adolescent children, but also projected that if mothers could adequately perform the “double day,” their salaries could provide benefits such as increased access to consumer goods, and better healthcare, education, clothing, and housing.⁵² Strong-Boag concludes that although these debates in the press during the 1950s reveal a growing acceptance of women in paid work, they still show a middle-class domestic ideal in which women were firstly responsible for the home and family, and only if they were in an advantageous position could they “choose” to enter the labour market to supplement their husband’s earnings. In this sense, those women who worked for pay out of necessity—single mothers, and mothers from lower-class families, for instance—were largely ignored in the popular press, favoured instead by a homogeneous middle-class representation.⁵³ Lastly, Strong-Boag argues that among the debates in the press, for women in the 1950s, domestic duties remained “overwhelmingly women’s problems,” regardless of the growing acceptance of women in the paid labour force.⁵⁴

Contributing to the study of popular media in post-war Canada, Valerie J. Korinek examines the popular women’s magazine, *Chatelaine*, in *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*. Korinek challenges the assessment that all media at the time represented a picturesque vision of the new consumer-driven, affluent suburban life of the 1950s and 1960s, instead arguing that *Chatelaine* often provided women readers with an outlet in which to challenge the notion

⁵² Strong-Boag, “Wage-Earning Wives,” 10-19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5-25.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

of “domestic bliss.”⁵⁵ Articles subtly covered controversial topics such as the difficulties of adjusting to life in a modern era, and the ups and downs of being a mother and wife—topics that Korinek suggests helped to lay the groundwork for the feminist wave of the 1960s and 1970s.⁵⁶ Korinek concedes though that the magazine was not immune to the genre’s typical content, as most of the articles, advertisements and cover art fit into the conventional mould that showed the nuclear family with happy housewives, breadwinning husbands, and a picture-perfect life in suburbia.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Korinek points to the readers’ critical reception of such content, and to the less abundant but significant editorials and articles that promoted a pro-feminist agenda.⁵⁸ Taken together, Korinek argues, these two subversive aspects of the magazine contributed to its new take on life in Canada for women in the fifties and sixties.⁵⁹

Sarah Burke Odland similarly analyses the popular American women’s magazine *Ladies’ Home Journal* and its content on domesticity, femininity and motherhood.⁶⁰ Through an examination of the articles and advertisements contained in issues published in 1946, Odland argues that the magazine also portrayed the notion that motherhood was the quintessence of femininity, and that not only must women be mothers, they must be domesticated as well. Odland’s argument strays from convention, however, when she suggests that the representations of domesticity were less prescriptive than those of motherhood: that mothers should certainly be domestic, but that women in general—who

⁵⁵ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 105-254.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁶⁰ Sarah Burke Odland, “Unassailable Motherhood, Ambivalent Domesticity: The Construction of Maternal Identity in *Ladies’ Home Journal* in 1946,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 34, no. 1 (2010): 61-84.

may have been married without children, or who were in the workforce—did not necessarily need to be domestic. Nevertheless, the overarching message of the *Ladies' Home Journal* remained that motherhood was the primary goal for women, and that any other role was less desirable for women to pursue.⁶¹

Offering another analysis of a popular women's artefact from the post-war era, Jessamyn Neuhaus examines the discourses contained in cookbooks published in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.⁶² Neuhaus centres her analysis on the perspective that assessments of the 1950s like Betty Friedan's notion of the "feminine mystique" do not tell the whole story of gender relations in that era. She argues instead that artefacts like cookbooks can show a complicated and often contrasting understanding of gender for that time period. She demonstrates how cookbooks do indeed portray the stereotypical housewife who cooks for her husband's every whim, but how they also reveal a certain ambivalence through the cookbook's acknowledgement that cooking could be monotonous and tedious, and that women would not always derive deep satisfaction from their domestic duties. Neuhaus asserts that this ambivalence created room for questioning the norms of housewife and breadwinner, and did not simply reproduce the patriarchal ideology of the time.⁶³

Those women who did not fulfil the idealized vision of the domesticated wife by entering the labour market were subjected to a patriarchal work environment that reproduced and reinforced women's role as secondary in the labour market, and primary in the home. Kristina R. Llewellyn demonstrates this point in her article "Gendered

⁶¹ Burke Odland, 61-84.

⁶² Jessamyn Neuhaus, "The Way to a Man's Heart: Gender Roles, Domestic Ideology, and Cookbooks in the 1950s," *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 529-555.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 543-555.

Democracy: Women Teachers in Post-War Toronto.”⁶⁴ Through the use of oral testimonies from women who taught in secondary schools in Toronto throughout the 1950s, Llewellyn argues that although there was a general push towards a model of liberal democracy in schools following the Second World War, schools remained highly patriarchal. Llewellyn shows how men remained in positions of authority in schools, while female teachers sought to carve out their own localized power by controlling the curriculum and authority within their own classrooms. Women were ultimately unable to exert the same amount of power as men in schools because the structure was based on patriarchal conventions.⁶⁵

In a similar way, Shirley Tillotson examines the gendered politics of recreation and leisure in post-Second World War Ontario in *The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-War Ontario*.⁶⁶ Just as Llewellyn cites how democratic ideals were being introduced into the education system, Tillotson recounts how the same was true for municipal recreation committees. The goal for adapting a democratic structure was for women and men to participate equally in these services to better serve their community. However, Tillotson argues, what transpired was a system in which women were pushed into menial, domesticated jobs, while men took the positions of authority and influence in municipal committees.⁶⁷ Like other avenues of life in the 1950s, recreation services worked in a dichotomous way, with a pronounced objective for

⁶⁴ Kristina R. Llewellyn, “Gendered Democracy: Women Teachers in Post-War Toronto,” *Historical Studies in Education* 18, no. 1 (2006): 1-25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-25.

⁶⁶ Shirley Tillotson, *The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-War Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-19.

equal opportunity for both men and women and an actual arrangement that reinforced conventional gender hierarchies.

It is this dichotomy of women's roles in the 1950s as both visible in the labour market and yet imbued with patriarchal mores that Wini Breines observes in *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing up Female in the Fifties*. Focusing on the American example, Breines explores the paradoxical position for women in the post-war era, where on the one hand they were continuing to enter the labour market and were enjoying greater access to higher education, while on the other hand they were living in a time that was "politically and culturally conservative, particularly regarding gender and family issues."⁶⁸ Breines argues that this tension yielded an undercurrent of female youth culture that rebelled and explored new ways of expression. It was these same girls, Breines notes, who grew up under their parents' conservative values, but ultimately became the instigators and supporters of the feminist wave of the 1960s and 1970s.⁶⁹

In the post-war era, the role of women in Canadian society continued to shift. Through a summary of the literature, it is clear that women and wives were working for pay, and that some analysis of popular artefacts from the time period evidence an undercurrent of ambivalence, or even rebellion, by women and girls against the social expectations of their gender. In this period of shifting gender roles, questioning how education resources conveyed women's roles in society is important. While schools began to educate the "whole child" to foster healthy mental hygiene, the educational resources they used to teach these lessons are essential to analyse for their content about "proper" gender expectations. As explored in the following section, gendered

⁶⁸ Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing up Female in the Fifties* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

expectations most certainly fell within the realm of mental hygiene and normalcy, as it was determined that to be considered normal was to fall into one's appropriate gender role—which was an idea not only supported by psychologists, but portrayed in the textbooks as well.

Writings by psychological experts particularly focused on a patriarchal ideology to underpin their guidance to Canadians to find normalcy after a crippling Second World War. As Mona Gleason summarizes in *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada*, psychologists urged Canadians to preserve traditional gender roles, and as such, “defined normal women not only as primarily middle class, but also as mothers, constitutionally bound to the domestic realm, and only truly fulfilled when mothering.” In contrast, men were told by psychologists to be the “stabilizing, white-collar guardians of heterosexuality, powerful correctives to the neuroses of women, and heads of middle-class families.” By “psychologising” gender roles, Gleason argues, psychologists reaffirmed patriarchal and heterosexual values of what it meant to be a “man” and a “woman” in the post-war era, and furthermore, framed these gendered notions within the concept of mental normalcy.⁷⁰ Just as with the textbooks and some sources of popular media, psychologists supported patriarchal values in a time when in actuality, women were continuing to break the housewife mould and become more visible in the workforce over the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.

Among other ideas, psychologists pronounced that normalcy in the home was based on heterosexual gender separation, and reinforced the traditional notion that men and women should occupy separate spheres in life. Men were to inhabit the working world while remaining the rational head of the household. Women, in contrast, were told

⁷⁰ Gleason, 53.

to embrace their role as domesticated mothers by attending to the home and family needs. Social commentators presented mothers who worked outside of the home as destabilizing forces who could destroy the family unit. Ultimately, psychologists determined that working mothers put their children at higher risk for mental health issues and juvenile delinquency, and that working outside of the home should be reserved for exceptional cases where there was financial necessity.⁷¹ Although social writers at the time began to promulgate the idea of “democratic marriages”—based on the notion that wives were equal partners to their husbands—the separate spheres ideology remained intact. Indeed, as Gleason argues, the promotion of democratic marriages further cemented the view that men should work in the public world, while women should remain at home, raising the children, taking care of the household, and maintaining their physical appearance—these responsibilities were defined as their end of the marriage bargain.⁷² One of the roles thought to be primarily the wife’s responsibility, taking care of the children, was deemed by psychologists to be a learned ability, not an innate process. Mothers were therefore urged to listen to the advice of male social engineers and medical experts to guide them in childrearing in order to raise well-adjusted, normal children.⁷³ In this vein, if children were not mentally normal, the mother was to blame.⁷⁴ She could be targeted for being too over-bearing and zealous, or as a single or working mother who contributed to her children’s confused understanding of the sexes, or even to her child’s homosexuality.⁷⁵

Social engineers determined that fathers must also play an active role in raising the children, primarily because they were thought to bring a calming and rational

⁷¹ Gleason, 56-57.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 60-61.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-71.

presence to the household, effectively counterbalancing the mother's over-bearing tendencies.⁷⁶ Writers in the field maintained that mothers were necessary—particularly for young children—to provide the basics of life, including learning “how to love and be loved,” while fathers were viewed as necessary in a child's life to teach qualities of wisdom, maturity and rationality.⁷⁷ Fathers were encouraged to spend more time with the family to demonstrate to the children heterosexual interactions between men and women. This modelling of heterosexual interactions, psychologists believed, would ensure that children were raised with a proper understanding of their sex roles.⁷⁸ At the time, homosexuality was considered by those in the psychological field as pathological—so to be normal, children had to learn how to be in happy, heterosexual relationships by seeing their parents engage in these behaviours.⁷⁹

Indeed, as Mary Louise Adams demonstrates in *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, children and adolescents in 1950s Canada were taught that heterosexuality was considered a key marker of being normal. Through an examination of sex-education resources written for youth and adolescents, in conjunction with a look at predominant sexual discourses in other public avenues at the time, Adams argues that the regeneration of the domestic ideal combined with the wide influence of psychology in the post-war period helped to re-establish a clear separation of genders and a reaffirmation of heterosexuality as the marker of adult achievement and maturity.⁸⁰ Adams determines that the discourses of normalization rendered heterosexuality the only possible form of sexual expression, while other options were

⁷⁶ Gleason, 66-67.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 69.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 66-69.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 69-70.

⁸⁰ Adams, 3-13.

pushed outside of the boundary of acceptability. In other words, to be anything but heterosexual did not even exist as an option in the dominant sexual discourses at the time.⁸¹ These dominant discourses were projected on youth and adolescents through sex-education materials that were used to teach young people how to maintain a normal, heterosexual, gender-separate lifestyle.

Joan Sangster offers a complementary analysis of normalcy and delinquency in *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada*. Deconstructing the dominant discourses of delinquency and law regarding young girls, Sangster argues in her chapter “Defining Delinquency” that the fundamental definition of a “normal” child was one who was from a “white, middle-class, [and] patriarchal family.”⁸² Sangster uses legal case studies to support her argument, such as the story of two “delinquent” girls who were taught how to embrace their femininity, including how to be clean, demure and polite, in order to improve their behaviour. The real turning point of the story, Sangster suggests, is when the girls’ mother remarries and reinstates the nuclear family ideal, a point that helps the girls to change their delinquent ways.⁸³ Further reinforcing the heterosexual, nuclear family ideal, Sangster shows how many Canadian social commentators looked to American studies of delinquency to delineate the causes of such behaviour. Among the causes noted in American studies of girls’ delinquency was “rejection of their gender roles relating to sexuality, domesticity, and motherhood.”⁸⁴ It is clear from Sangster’s documentation that normalcy was tied to a conventional sense of gendered behaviour.

The post-war era was thus a time when normalcy and stability were central to

⁸¹ Adams, 13.

⁸² Joan Sangster, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 24.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

Canadians as they recovered from the volatility of the preceding two decades. A dominant feature of this normalcy was a greater focus on good mental hygiene and how to achieve it in one's family and life. This emphasis on normal mental hygiene became a concern in society in general, and more specifically, in schools as evidenced with the introduction of textbooks such as the *Health and Personal Development* series as part of a more progressive push in education. These textbooks operated in a society that looked to psychologists and medical professionals to define the baseline for normalcy. These experts in turn relied on notions of patriarchy and heterosexuality to guide Canadians back to a "normal" way of living. In these parameters, the textbooks worked to teach students about normalcy and mental hygiene to help them mature into suitable members of Canadian society.

The series used for analysis in this thesis, *Health and Personal Development*, was recommended for use in Ontario schools during the 1950s and early 1960s. I chose to analyse textbooks instead of other educational materials, such as curricula or other teacher resources, because as Teun A. van Dijk notes, textbooks "play a prominent role in the reproduction of society."⁸⁵ In other words, textbooks contain hidden curricula that reproduce dominant societal ideologies, and as such, can provide a window into what society believed to be important and essential to communicate to their children.⁸⁶ Micheal Apple and Linda Christian-Smith further promote the perspective that textbooks "participate in creating what a society has recognized as legitimate and truthful," and thus

⁸⁵ Teun A. van Dijk, "Racism, Discourse and Textbooks: The Coverage of Immigration in Spanish Textbooks," (paper for a symposium on Human Rights in Textbooks, organized by the History Foundation, Istanbul, April 2004), accessed January 13, 2012, <http://www.discourses.org>.

⁸⁶ van Dijk. Arthur Woodward, David L. Elliott, and Kathleen Carter Nagel, *Textbooks in School and Society: An Annotated Bibliography and Guide to Research* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), 1.

an analysis of their content can reveal what ideologies were deemed important to highlight to children being educated in a given society.⁸⁷ In the case of the health textbook series, this analysis sheds light on what society during the 1950s determined was necessary to communicate to children regarding the gendered expectations placed on them as they developed and matured into adults.

Not only do textbooks reflect what a society wants conveyed to students, but they also reveal the processes of power and the creation of knowledge in society. As Ken Montgomery discusses in his analysis of history textbooks for racist content, textbooks represent a selected version of reality,

...highlighting particular events, issues, and concepts, while deemphasizing or omitting others, and creatively developing plots that inevitably include and exclude the perspectives and histories of certain peoples and groups...⁸⁸

As such, textbooks can represent a highly essentialized version of a nation and its peoples, while ignoring the dynamism that exists therein.⁸⁹ Timothy Stanley posits a similar argument in his analysis of textbooks used in British Columbia, determining that textbooks represent a curriculum that is controlled by elites who strive to communicate a particular worldview to students.⁹⁰ While Montgomery and Stanley discuss this issue in relation to racism in textbooks, the same holds true for the health textbooks examined for

⁸⁷ Michael W. Apple and Linda K. Christian-Smith, "The Politics of the Textbook," in *The Politics of the Textbook*, ed. Michael W. Apple and Linda K. Christian Smith, 1-21 (New York: Routledge, 1991), 4.

⁸⁸ Ken Montgomery, "Imagining the Antiracist State: Representations of Racism in Canadian Textbooks," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 26, no. 4 (December 2005), 427.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 427-28.

⁹⁰ Timothy J. Stanley, "White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Educational Indoctrination: A Canadian Case Study," in *Children, Teachers and Schools: In the History of British Columbia*, 2nd ed., ed. Jean Barman and Mona Gleason (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003), 113-116.

this thesis. The representational uniformity of women and girls in the textbooks present only one image of life in Canada in the 1950s, but one that was held in regard by those in the position of power to create educational content and selectively choose what to represent—and to not represent—to students. Thus, the stories of working women, immigrant families, blue-collar and single-parent families, among others, are left out from the textbooks in favour of a homogenous representation of a patriarchal, middle-class, white, and heterosexual ideal.

Moreover, during the twentieth century, textbooks were an integral resource for instruction in schools.⁹¹ As Sharon Anne Cook notes in her study of textbooks recommended and approved for use in Ontario between 1890 and 1960, textbooks' content and messages were likely highly respected by educators and students at the time. Teachers had less formal education in the early and mid-twentieth century and therefore likely heavily depended on the textbook as a source for educational content as compared to their use today.⁹² Indeed, Tomkins notes that throughout the 1950s, textbooks regulated by the Department of Education were the basis of instruction. Only one textbook was approved for each subject at every grade level, making it the primary source of information for students and teachers, and rendering its content the foundation for tests and examinations.⁹³ It is therefore reasonable to assume that the *Health and Personal Development* series was an important resource for teachers in the 1950s, and was likely used to a high degree in many classrooms throughout Ontario. However, one

⁹¹ Penney Clark, "'A Nice Little Wife to Make Things Pleasant': Portrayals of Women in Canadian History Textbooks Approved in British Columbia," *McGill Journal of Education* 40, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 242.

⁹² Sharon Anne Cook, "From 'Evil Influence' to Social Facilitator: Representations of Youth Smoking, Drinking, and Citizenship in Canadian Health Textbooks, 1890-1960," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 40, no. 6 (2008): 4.

⁹³ Tomkins, 409.

must be cautious about the conclusions drawn from such a study, as Cook also notes, it is impossible to know how the textbooks were used in the classroom, or how students and teachers created meaning from their content.⁹⁴ It is possible though to compare the textbooks to other trends in schooling and society at the time to determine their probable role in the given time period. And, during a time when there were a record number of children passing through the education system, many likely came into contact with this textbook series at some point during their school years.

The series consists of six titles, including *Good Times with Our Friends*, *Three Friends*, *Five in the Family*, *The Girl Next Door*, *You*, and *You and Others*. They were published in the United States in Chicago by Scott, Foresman and Company, and in Canada by W.J. Gage and Company. All of the textbooks are lengthy, running approximately 250 to 300 pages, and are structured unlike textbooks we see today. They appear like novels, divided into chapters, and use short stories and scenarios to elucidate lessons on personal development, mental hygiene, health, physical activity, and safety. As Sharon Cook's study of hygiene textbooks suggests, the texts recommended for use in Ontario during the early twentieth century focused on healthy living through good diet, exercise, avoidance of tobacco and alcohol, and good cleaning habits.⁹⁵ While health textbooks from the first half of the twentieth century did include some points about psychology, the focus on mental hygiene in the textbook series under examination in this thesis is unprecedented. This emphasis renders the series particularly illustrative of the Canadian post-war concern over psychology and how these concerns were adopted for a student audience. The health textbooks were written for use with both boys and girls and

⁹⁴ Cook, "“Evil Influence,”” 4.

⁹⁵ Sharon Anne Cook, *Sex, Lies, and Cigarettes: Canadian Women, Smoking, and Visual Culture, 1880-2000* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 117.

as such contain advice and lessons directed at both genders. None of the chapters are specifically designated for either gender, and therefore girls learned about the challenges boys faced growing up, and vice versa. This feature is important to note, as the content directed at girls, as demonstrated throughout my analysis, was also used with boys, showing them not only what was expected of them as they matured, but what they could expect of their eventual wives and daughters as they developed as well. The families in the textbooks are illustrative of a narrow representation of Canadians in the post-war era, as they are all white and middle-class, living in a suburban-type setting typical for this class in the 1950s.

The process of analysis that I undertook with the textbooks involved a layered interpretation that took place over several readings. I initially read the textbooks for all content regarding personal development and gender. I then coded the content into sections: content on mental hygiene and girls, and content on mental hygiene and boys. This thesis was initially designed to be an analysis of the depictions of both boys and girls as they relate to mental hygiene, but as I continued to discover an abundance of content, I made the decision to focus on content about girls exclusively, while keeping in mind that, as Adams notes, categories like race, gender, sexuality, and class are relational.⁹⁶ In this sense, one cannot analyse the representations of girls and women without considering the opposite, the portrayals of boys and men. My reading for content on both genders therefore informed my understanding of the representations of females, as it gave me a basis from which to differentiate them.⁹⁷ However, in order to keep this thesis a manageable size, my analysis focuses on women and girls and only highlights

⁹⁶ Adams, 7.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

important and relevant aspects of the male experience in the textbooks. Certainly, boys and men are also subjected to stereotypes in the textbooks, and a future in-depth study of these representations would be a worthwhile pursuit.

Each chapter of the thesis is structured to first discuss the representation of women in relation to the topics of domesticity, physical appearance, community involvement, and scientific mothering, and then to discern how the girls in the textbooks mirror and practice the mothers' roles in their own lives. It is structured in this way in order to elucidate what characteristics and skills girls were expected to practice and improve upon as they matured into women. As such, mothers throughout the textbooks represent the ideal to which the girls are meant to aspire. The textbooks were written for students in grade four, five, and six, and as such, not only demonstrate the general theme of proper mental hygiene overall, but also through the gradation of advice among the textbooks themselves. The grade four and five texts work to introduce and outline for girls the behaviours expected of them, while the grade six text shows more detailed content on how girls practice and perfect these behaviours. The textbooks therefore work to support the notion that as the girls mature, the more they should resemble their mothers' femininity in a mentally healthy manner.

Chapter Two: Domesticity in the Female Sphere

Although there is some evidence that society was beginning to accept women in the paid labour force,¹ and that indeed women were working for wages during the 1950s,² the opinion among psychology experts upheld that it was unhealthy for women to pursue work outside of the home. As Gleason notes, writings by social scientists and other professionals working in the field projected a “stereotypical separate-spheres ideology” during the post-World War Two period. This ideology restricted women to a separate, female-dominated sphere, away from the male world.³ Strong-Boag argues that this “gendered landscape” relegated women to female-dominated suburban communities and men to the “male-dominated, market-oriented world of modern cities.”⁴ Writings by social workers, psychologists and other professionals pointed to a number of reasons why women, particularly mothers, should not work outside of the female domain. Firstly, they proclaimed that a life of domesticity was the natural and normal role for women.⁵ Psychologist Samuel Laycock asserted that separate spheres meant that, while men were to go out and earn a salary, women were expected to “accept the responsibility of managing the household and of building a happy home.”⁶ Working mothers were also charged with being “mental health and juvenile delinquency risk[s] for children”; that in the period of post-World War Two, when people were searching for a sense of stability, having a mother who pursued work outside of the home would be a destabilizing force

¹ Strong-Boag, “Wage-Earning Wives,” 5-25.

² Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 18.

³ Gleason, 54.

⁴ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960,” *Canadian Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (1991): 471.

⁵ Gleason, 54. Breines, 33. Owrap, 116. Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams,” 475-78.

⁶ Gleason, 60.

that could disrupt family unity.⁷ Other studies furthered that it was only acceptable for mothers to work outside of the home if there was financial need; otherwise, they maintained that mothers should be in the home.⁸

The idealized notion of separate spheres for men and women was not only projected by professionals writing at the time, but is also represented as an ideal in the health textbooks used for junior students in Ontario. Most of the women featured throughout the three textbooks fulfil the expectation that mothers will occupy a female-dominated sphere, which included taking care of the domestic duties and the children. Any deviation from this model is treated as an exception from the norm, and implicitly, as an undesirable option for mothers. Girls in the textbooks are also shown practicing their future roles as stay-at-home mothers by learning and doing the domestic chores and taking care of their younger siblings or babysitting for a neighbour. They are never described as aspiring to any profession outside of the home, and as such, are relegated to future lives working without pay, as housewives. The ways in which the textbooks represent women and girls reveal the social expectation that they would occupy the domestic sphere, and as girls developed and matured into women, they would be required to embrace this position. The textbooks project that only this type of behaviour would be considered normal and indicative of healthy personal development for young women of the 1950s.

Throughout the three textbooks, most of the women are depicted as housewives, and those who are not are relegated to female-dominated jobs. Out of the seventy individual adult women who are portrayed in images or in content throughout the

⁷ Gleason, 56-57. Strong-Boag, 481-82.

⁸ Gleason, 56-57.

textbooks, there are twenty-one examples of women who work outside of the home; however, these women are restricted to positions as nurses, teachers, clerks, housekeepers, waitresses, lab technicians and social workers.⁹ Furthermore, among these women working outside of the home, only one is clearly described as a mother. Likewise, only one working woman is addressed as a "Mrs." denoting that she is either married or a widow. This character, Mrs. White, is Doctor Williams' housekeeper, signifying that even though she is working, she does not deviate far from the domestic position expected of her gender.¹⁰ As noted earlier, these representations did not correspond with the realities faced by many women who did indeed participate in the labour force, and particularly those married women who worked outside of the home in the 1950s. In contrast, three of the working women in the textbooks are addressed as "Miss" to denote that they are not married—Miss Thompson and Miss Peters, who are teachers, and Miss White, a clerk at the Department of Health—while the rest of the women who work outside of the home remain anonymous to the reader, and are certainly not implied as being married or having children.¹¹ The fact that there is only one clear example of a working mother reveals much about the expectations that the authors strove to convey to students at the time: being a good wife—and implicitly a good mother—meant committing oneself to a life of domesticity in the female-dominated sphere.

⁹ See Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 131-32, 219; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 37, 45, 195, 213, 243, 251; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 19, 178-79, 207, 215, 247.

¹⁰ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 85.

¹¹ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 18, 215. Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 138. It is very difficult to determine the age of the women who work in the male sphere, either because they are not illustrated or the image does not contain enough detail to accurately estimate the woman's age. Nonetheless, since they are not described or pictured as being married or as mothers, it is reasonable to assume that they are young adults and would subsequently leave their job once they marry and start a family, as was the expectation.

Conversely, adult men are portrayed in a variety of working situations throughout the textbooks: they have jobs as store clerks and owners, butchers, businessmen, farmers, waiters, lifeguards, construction workers, office clerks, lumberjacks, lab workers, garbage collectors and so on.¹² Men are also the only ones described and pictured as being professionals in the fields of medicine, dentistry, science, and government.¹³ In contrast to the limited number of positions that women are shown to occupy, men are portrayed as being active in a separate male sphere, away from the predominantly female domestic sphere. The dichotomy of men being shown primarily in the working world while women are described largely in unpaid, domestic work in the home reinforces the message in the textbooks that once women married and became mothers, they were expected to stay home.

The view that mothers should not work in the male sphere is highlighted by the sole example of a working mother found in the textbooks. Her situation is an anomaly, pointing to its undesirability according to the authors of the textbooks and experts in psychology from the time. Moreover, her situation is “saved” by the presence of a stand-in mother who ensures that the children receive the mothering that they might otherwise miss while their mother is at work. In *You and Others*, Jane’s mother works outside of the home, but enlists the help of a live-in grandmother to take care of the children. In effect, the grandmother acts as a surrogate mother for Jane while her mother is at work. The

¹² See Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 22-23, 24, 29, 33, 47, 79, 203, 226; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 8, 10, 20, 61, 64, 119, 189, 195, 196, 212, 213, 233; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 8, 75, 147-48, 159, 178-79, 207, 224, 232, 235, 238, 247, 249, 250-51, 252-53.

¹³ See Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 12, 69, 76, 89, 122, 139, 198; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 37, 53, 123, 148, 165, 172, 204-05, 212, 243, 245-46; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 171, 173, 176, 179, 192, 209, 212-13, 214-15, 219, 236, 259, 270.

young girl begins to resent her grandmother's presence in the home because she cannot have an ice cream party when her grandmother is not feeling well—"Grandma spoils everything," grumbled Jane. "Things haven't been the same since she came here to live"—but is later convinced that it is the best thing for her and the family once her mother reminds her that, without their grandmother around to help, she would be lacking in a mother figure:

She took the trouble to make you an Indian costume for Paul Willis' party. And you were very glad to have her here two weeks ago, when you were in bed with a cold. She was the one who made you your favourite custard, and she was the one who showed you so many interesting ways to amuse yourself.¹⁴

Jane begins to understand that without her grandmother's help, her childhood would be at stake, as the textbook implies that a working mother cannot properly fulfil her obligations as a caretaker, and must supplement her mothering with another female parental figure like a grandmother as a result.

The textbook establishes it as outside the realm of normal and desirable for mothers to work outside of the home, as exemplified by Jane's mother, who notes that "things like this happen now and then in families. Our plans don't always work out just the way we'd like them to."¹⁵ This quote suggests that the situation is a case of "making-do" in difficult circumstances, reinforcing the notion that the normal and desired situation is for her to stay at home. The implied recommended plan for families to ensure proper childhood development is to have the ideal nuclear family, with a mother at home taking care of the children full-time and a father working in the male sphere. Jane's mother's situation renders this point clearly: instead of describing a successful working mother

¹⁴ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 131-32.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.

who balances her home life with her work, the textbook portrays a mother who is in essence saved by the children's grandmother who lessens the negative impact that a working mother and the absence of a father could have on the children and the household.

In *You and Others*, the emphasis on mothers working inside the home is also underscored in a questionnaire meant for the student reader to complete. The survey illustrates how mothers were not expected or encouraged to work outside of the home. The first question under the heading "Your Family" asks the student, "What does your father do?" Immediately below, the second question inquires, "Does your mother work?"¹⁶ The wording of these questions implies the expectation that fathers were normally going to work outside of the home, while it was assumed that the opposite was true of mothers. Moreover, the questionnaire suggests that it is normal and expected that fathers be defined by their professions, while mothers be defined by their roles as mothers. They might work, but not in a position that is considered "work" by society or the textbook creators, as their labour as mothers takes place inside the home and is not associated with pay. That there is only one example of a mother working for money shows how the textbooks strive to convey the message that the expectation of mothers was to stay in the home. Mothers working outside of the home for an income is established as an abnormal situation, and certainly not one that the young female reader should aspire to for the future.

One of the women's obligations throughout the textbooks is to ensure that the family is happy and comfortable inside the home. Mothers and wives are charged with making the house suitable for everyone, as shown in *The Girl Next Door*: "Your mother

¹⁶ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 102.

knows that a clean, neat home makes you feel happier and more comfortable.”¹⁷ This note is followed by a sequence of images of a mother cleaning the kitchen and bathroom. Further along in the textbook, while the men and children on the block build a neighbourhood pool, the mothers ensure that their families have clean clothes during the project:

‘My, my!’ said Mrs. Hunt to Mrs. White and Mrs. Foster. ‘Working on that pool surely gets the clothes dirty, doesn’t it? But I don’t care as long as my family wears clothes that can be washed!’¹⁸

They also make sure that their families are well fed, indicating that they “surely [are] kept busy cooking for them.”¹⁹ In addition to preparing the food, mothers are also expected to make the family’s dining experience a pleasurable one. In *You and Others*, it is noted that Elizabeth’s mother always says that “Meals taste better when the table looks pretty.”²⁰ Putting this concept into action, while he recovered from the measles, Bob’s mother “brought his meals to him on a tray, and she made each tray of food look as attractive as she could.”²¹ It is clear that while mothers do not work outside of the home, they have various domestic duties and responsibilities inside the home that keeps the family content and nurtured.

Mothers are not only described as completing chores in the home, but they are even physically confined to the domestic sphere in most of the images contained in the textbooks. They are pictured completing an array of domestic duties within the home, including cleaning, cooking, serving food, doing laundry, and taking care of the children. In fifty of the sixty images of mothers throughout the textbooks, they are shown inside

¹⁷ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 101.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁰ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 81.

²¹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 196.

the home—particularly in the kitchen—or in the yard or neighbourhood.²² In *The Girl Next Door*, one chapter starts with an image of the Foster family in which Mrs. Foster is physically separated from her children and her husband by the door to the house. She is shown inside, looking out, as her children greet her husband who is arriving home with a briefcase, implying that he has just come from work.²³ In the same way, in the chapter “Saturday at the Foster’s,” the textbook notes that “Father and Grandfather were busy washing the car, and Bill was hard at work washing some windows,” while “*inside the house* Mother and Grandmother were cleaning the kitchen, and even little Nancy was hard at work,” followed by a picture of the three generations of females working in the kitchen.²⁴ In both of these examples, women are physically restricted to their houses, and thereby confined to their roles as homemakers as well.

There are only ten out of sixty instances where mothers are portrayed away from their homes, and in these examples, they are always connected back to their domestic responsibilities. In nine of these images, the mothers are with their children outside of the home, usually providing for them in some way. For example, in *The Girl Next Door*, Ellen’s mother Mrs. Hunt is pictured taking Ellen and Ann downtown on the bus to shop for bathing suits.²⁵ Similarly, *You and Others* shows a mother accompanying her daughter to the shoe store to purchase comfortably fitting shoes and, in a second instance, another mother taking her child to the doctor because of an earache.²⁶ In *The Girl Next*

²² See for example Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 8, 13, 18, 36, 50, 59, 96, 101-102, 129, 199-200, 202, 206, 229, 234, 237; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 53, 66, 75-76, 155, 188, 192-93, 247-48, 263; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 53, 74, 107, 109, 131, 142, 149, 152, 219, 238.

²³ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 199.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 96. Emphasis mine.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 218.

²⁶ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 157; 173.

Door, Ellen's mother is illustrated taking her daughter home from an appointment at the hospital.²⁷ Although these mothers are pictured away from their homes, they are still very much tied to their roles of domesticity, taking care of their children's needs. Even the single example of mothers pictured away from the home without their children show them at school learning how to properly feed their family.²⁸ These few examples make it clear that although mothers do leave the home, it is almost always to do errands that sustain the family and ensure the mental and physical wellness of the children. Mothers were therefore assumed to naturally fulfil a domestic role while remaining separated from the male-dominated realm of paid work.

Mothers are also shown throughout the textbooks as the primary caretakers of the children. Although fathers show some connection with the children, the majority of parent-child interactions occur between children and their mothers. Among the sixty-one images in the textbooks displaying a parent and child together, forty-four of these show a mother with the children, while only seventeen illustrate a father with his children.²⁹ In addition, fathers are pictured wearing suits in three quarters of these images, denoting their association with the male-dominated realm of work.³⁰ Their clothing signals that they are either on their way to work or have just arrived home. In four of the seventeen

²⁷ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 168.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁹ See for example Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 8, 50, 59, 79-80, 96, 102, 129, 139, 168, 199, 204, 218, 229, 234, 237, 241; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 29, 53, 66, 75-76, 188, 193, 195, 230, 233, 247-48, 263, 265; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 7, 29, 59, 74, 79, 100, 107, 109, 131, 135, 142, 152, 159, 173, 207, 219. Some pages contain more than one image, or an image of a father and a mother together with their child(ren).

³⁰ In thirteen out of the seventeen images, fathers are shown wearing suits. See Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 8, 199, 200, 229, 237, 241; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 77, 230, 265; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 59, 109, 135, 219.

images with their children, the fathers are busily engaged with reading the newspaper.³¹ The newspaper serves as a representation of the world of work, economics, and politics, and effectively maintains the fathers' link to this separate sphere while they are in the home with their children. Furthermore, despite being physically home with their children, these images highlight the male's passivity in the female sphere. Instead of interacting with the children in an active way, fathers remain detached and inactive. In contrast, mothers are pictured actively engaging with their children directly, or while fulfilling their domestic responsibilities such as cooking meals, doing the laundry, or taking the children to doctors appointments. These images reveal how mothers were expected to be the primary caretaker in matters regarding the children, while fathers were assumed to take a passive, secondary role in this duty.

While mothers are depicted as housekeepers and caretakers, girls are also shown throughout the textbooks practicing their roles as future mothers by learning the skills necessary to keep a proper and clean household, and how to take care of the children. For the students in grade four, *The Girl Next Door* introduces the young reader to the girls' responsibility of assisting their mothers with cleaning the house. In *You*, this advice shifts to the inevitability of childcare and motherhood by showing girls babysitting their younger siblings. By the sixth grade, in *You and Others*, girls are expected to assume a more dominant role in the home by balancing both household management and childcare, effectively mimicking the role that their mothers play. More is required of them at that age, as they are one step closer to adulthood and a family of their own. This progression also helps to underscore the notion that this development from girl to mother and

³¹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 8; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 265; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 29, 219.

homemaker is a natural and normal process. Although boys are sometimes shown helping with the household chores, it is always implied that it is a girl's—and ultimately a wife's—job to maintain the inside of the home. Likewise, older brothers are never illustrated taking care of their younger siblings, clearly denoting whose duty it was considered. The textbooks thereby deem it a sign of maturity for girls to accept their roles as mother's helper to keep the home clean and to help take care of their younger siblings, and that part of healthfully maturing into a young woman meant accepting—and in fact embracing—these responsibilities.

In *The Girl Next Door*, the grade four students are introduced to the idea of household duties being the woman's responsibility. In a segment about Saturday chores, Ellen learns a valuable lesson about helping her mother and grandmother with the inside jobs. She cannot understand why her grandparents are upset with her, until she realizes that she has left her room messy while her mother, grandmother and younger sister clean the house. By the end of the chapter, she realizes her mistake and addresses the mess.³² The progression of the chapter indicates that Ellen has learned her lesson—and has shown her maturity—by assuming the responsibility of making sure that the house is clean alongside the other female members of the family. In this textbook, stories like Ellen's serve to establish the foundation of understanding that the household must be maintained by the female members of the family.

The focus on domestic responsibilities in *You* shifts from cleanliness to childcare, in which the authors demonstrate how young women should practice and accept their future role as mothers. The chapter entitled "People are Alike, Too" illustrates this type of lesson. Jane is cross because while her mother goes shopping, she has to babysit her baby

³² Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 96-99.

brother.³³ She complains to her friend Ellen, lamenting, "That's all I ever do—just stay home and watch the baby. Sometimes I wish we didn't have that baby around here anyway!"³⁴ Jane's mother overhears her complaints, and sympathizes with her: "I know how you feel, Jane dear. Sometimes you love the baby and other times you think you don't."³⁵ Jane's mother not only comforts her for feeling the way she does, but shows her how to accept the reality of being a mother by teaching her that she can do things with the baby, such as "put[ing] the baby in his buggy and walk[ing] over to the park."³⁶ Her mother further reinforces Jane's role as a practicing mother by insisting that Jane is a big help with the baby, and that she does not "know what [she would do] without a big girl like [Jane] to help."³⁷ After talking with her mother, Jane says that she feels "good inside again."³⁸ In this example, the textbook seeks to convey that although they may resist their roles as future mothers, it is a part of healthy normal development for girls to accept and embrace this natural role.

Taken together, the lessons on domestic responsibilities in *The Girl Next Door* and *You* lay a foundation that is underscored in *You and Others*. In this textbook, girls are shown how to manage a household, both in terms of cleaning and childcare. In effect, the sixth grade text provides the most complete picture of how girls ought to have practiced for eventual wifhood and motherhood. The character Elizabeth in *You and Others* very clearly demonstrates how the authors sought to convey the message that it was a female's responsibility to know how to manage a household. Elizabeth is the oldest female child in

³³ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 28.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 29.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 30.

her family, which means that she is most relied on to help with the household chores. Aside from assisting with the childcare, she also helps her mother with cleaning and organizing the home. Her story is highlighted in a chapter entitled “Being the Oldest Girl Is No Fun!”—a title that cues the reader that being the oldest daughter in a family requires special tasks of her that only she performs, while none of the other children are required to do these jobs. The chapter opens with an image of Elizabeth and her mother wearing matching aprons, working in the kitchen. Meanwhile, Elizabeth’s younger sister Jo Ann is pictured playing in the background.³⁹ Elizabeth laments that being the oldest girl is “no fun” because all she does is “work” while her younger sister only has to “dry the dishes and dust a little.”⁴⁰ Her mother insists that as female children get older, their responsibilities around the household increase, implying that as girls become women, they must prepare to run their own household when they eventually become wives and mothers. This point is reinforced further on in the chapter, when the narrator indicates that Elizabeth must embrace her role as housekeeper because she will need to use these skills later in life: “And so it was that Elizabeth discovered another advantage in helping around the house—she was learning the kinds of things she would need to know when she grew up and had a home of her own.”⁴¹ To reject this role would thereby be a sign of unhealthy personal development in a young woman at the time.

Elizabeth’s responsibilities as a future wife and mother are further highlighted in the section “What Do You Think?” at the end of the chapter. One of the questions invites the reader to think about Sally Freedman, who “never has to do any work at home. ...

³⁹ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 74.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

Her mother and the maid do all the work.”⁴² The question indicates that Jane thinks that Sally is “awfully lucky” because she does not have to do any household chores. However the narrator probes, “*Do you think Sally is ‘awfully lucky’? What makes you think as you do?*”⁴³ Given that these questions are posed directly following the chapter discussing Elizabeth practicing all of the various household chores that she will be required to know as a wife and mother, the implied answer would be that Sally is not lucky because she will lack the proper training and practice for managing her own household when the time comes. The textbook therefore not only represents what is normal and healthy for a young girl through the example of Elizabeth, but invites the reader to engage with these representations in an unambiguous way. There is the semblance of open discussion through this question, but in reality, the textbook promotes only one “right” answer: that for Sally, by not participating in the duties with her mother and the maid, she is going to struggle as a wife and mother—and that she ought to involve herself with these responsibilities in order to develop into a woman in a proper and healthy way.

On the other hand, boys are exempted from much of the housework. Throughout the textbooks, it is implied that although they can sometimes assist the women in doing the chores, it is still reserved as the responsibility of the mother and girls in the family. The narrator notes that “it takes a lot of work to keep a home running smoothly. It isn’t fair to expect Mother to do all the work.”⁴⁴ This advice is presented within the context of Elizabeth’s obligation as the oldest daughter in the family to help her mother with the

⁴² Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 90.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

housework, indicating that it is the mother's—and by extension—the daughter's obligation to keep the household "running smoothly."⁴⁵

To further highlight the notion that household chores are the responsibility of women and girls, the section "What Do You Think" asks the young reader, in reflection of what he or she had just read about Elizabeth learning how to do housework, whether or not "doing dishes is women's work."⁴⁶ The question reads:

When Edward's class was talking about correct ways to wash dishes, Edward said, 'I'm not interested in things like that. Boys and men don't need to know those things. Doing dishes is women's work!' *Do you agree that 'doing dishes is women's work'? What are some reasons why brothers or fathers are often needed to help with such work as doing the dishes?*⁴⁷

Given the phrasing of this question, it is made clear that although boys and fathers should *help* with household chores, the ultimate responsibility remains that of the female members of the family. Once again, the pedagogical implication of this question gives student readers the opportunity to artificially debate the idea that "doing dishes is women's work," when the answer is implicitly supplied in the second part of the question: that doing dishes is indeed the woman's responsibility, while men are simply there to help. This point is further supported in a montage of images showing different ways to be safe around the house.⁴⁸ The girls are shown practicing proper care while doing the laundry, vacuuming the carpets, and taking care of young children, while the boys are displayed brushing their teeth, taking a bath, and plugging in a lamp.⁴⁹ The girls are performing tasks that help the whole family, while the boys are illustrated taking care

⁴⁵ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 78.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 88-89.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

of their own needs. The textbook therefore reemphasizes that girls and mothers are responsible for the maintenance of the household, and that it is a sign of healthy personal development for a young girl to embrace this role.

Indeed, a willingness to accept the household chores is deemed a sign of maturity and healthy personal development throughout *You and Others*. Elizabeth shows her keenness for accepting her duties as a daughter, wife and mother—and as a result, reveals her ability to mature and develop—in the sections on proper homemaking. She not only shows that she is ready to take on these responsibilities, but is excited that she has learned so much about managing a household, as she exclaims while reading the chapter “Homemaking” in her *Girl Guide Handbook*, “Why, I know about lots of things in this chapter! I’ve learned about setting the table and making the table attractive just by helping Mother do it. And I’ve learned from her some of the very things this book tells about cooking and dishwashing.”⁵⁰

Elizabeth is not only shown practicing how to clean a house, but also how to make it a happy place for the rest of the family. Girls are most notably taught how to make the meals and food presentation more appealing in order to make the rest of the family feel cheerful. For example, the reader is presented with a picture of a table set for one, with the caption indicating that “One morning little Jo Ann set the table. This picture shows how she set one place. *Would you call Jo Ann ‘a good table setter’? What hints could you give her about setting a table?*”⁵¹ The way in which this question is presented implies that Jo Ann should indeed be “a good table setter” and should practice this skill in

⁵⁰ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 80.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

order to perfect it.⁵² Further on, Elizabeth's mother also reminds her that "meals taste better when the table looks pretty," so Elizabeth practices making the table look nice. The authors reiterate the importance of girls learning to present food in an attractive environment, noting:

When you eat your meals in pleasant surroundings, you are more likely to feel cheerful—and cheerful, happy feelings help you digest your food more easily. That is why pretty dining tables and attractively arranged platters of food are important. And that is why you should try to make mealtimes as pleasant as possible—and avoid quarrelling or getting upset at the table.⁵³

In an image following this advice, a young man is pictured showing what happens to the stomach during different phases of emotion, such as how the stomach works slowly when he is sad or afraid, or how it produces more digestive fluids when he is angry or excited, which makes him uncomfortable.⁵⁴ Given that it is a male figure in the images, the lesson reveals the implication that girls like Elizabeth should know how to make the male's—and implicitly the husband's—dining experience more pleasurable by learning how to arrange meals more attractively while avoiding confrontation.⁵⁵ These skills, the authors suggest, will be essential for Elizabeth to understand once she has a husband and family of her own.

Elizabeth also learns what it means to be an older sister and a future mother. She is upset that her mother asks her to do so many chores around the house, including watching the baby.⁵⁶ Her mother insists that she would not know what to do without her help, and that with increasing age comes more responsibility. These increasing duties are

⁵² Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 90.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

highlighted when, during the conversation, they are interrupted by a telephone call from a neighbour who asks if Elizabeth could take her young niece to a play. Her mother insists that the neighbour "wanted someone a little older—and dependable... Someone she could trust to take care of her niece."⁵⁷ Elizabeth feels much better after discussing her misgivings of being the oldest sister, as she "grinned" and felt "secretly pleased" that she was a big help.⁵⁸ This story reinforces the idea that as young girls develop and mature, their responsibilities—such as taking care of the children—will increase, and that their mothers are there to help prepare and guide them to accept the inevitability of motherhood.

The expected future of girls becoming wives and mothers is made explicit in the three textbooks. They are shown to follow their mothers' examples, who commit themselves to a life of domestic work in the home. Mothers are rarely shown to deviate from this domesticity, suggesting that this model is one to which girls should aspire. As such, in *The Girl Next Door* and *You*, girls are introduced to domestic work, and in *You and Others*, Elizabeth rehearses the skills and tasks that she will need to be familiar with as a wife and mother. She practices how to keep a neat, clean and calming home, and how to accept the inevitability of motherhood. These lessons reveal much about the expectations of the junior-level girls who were meant to read these texts: to show a willingness to understand their domestic duties and to accept them with maturity and pleasure. The absence of girls who do not eventually accept this role points to one overarching implication, that for healthy personal development, young girls at the time should have wanted—and anticipated it as a natural progression—to become stay-at-home mothers like their own mothers once they matured into women. Just as the mothers

⁵⁷ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 76.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

throughout the textbooks exemplify the proper role for wives and mothers, the textbooks imply that girls should follow in their example in order to demonstrate healthy mental hygiene and proper personal development.

Chapter Three: Advice on a Feminine Appearance

In psychological writings of the 1950s, writers put forward the notion that marriage should be a relationship based on “physical and spiritual equality.”¹ However, what becomes apparent, Gleason argues, is that women were responsible for maintaining their physical desirability, while their spiritual equality was largely left overlooked.² Part of a wife’s share of the marriage partnership was to keep a clean, neat and attractive look that aligned with notions of femininity.³ Physical beauty was also linked to fair skin, hair that could be tied back, and attractive facial features.⁴ Moreover, as Korinek summarizes in her study of the popular *Chatelaine* magazine during the fifties and sixties, articles on beauty and fashion—particularly the ubiquitous “make-over” stories—taught women how to make themselves more attractive through the use of makeup, a good haircut, and popular looks in fashion and accessories.⁵

This advice to women on keeping up their physical appearance is present in the textbooks as well. Women are presented as traditionally feminine in their apparel and physical beauty, and are always illustrated as slim, neat, attractive, and white. Most importantly, attractiveness is not reserved solely for the women in the textbooks. Both boys and girls in the textbooks are targeted with the expectation of not only being physically healthy, but socially healthy as well; to understand that society will judge them for their appearance, and that as a result, they should present themselves in an attractive way. Boys and girls are thus shown throughout the textbooks how to be clean and hygienic in order to achieve an attractive appearance; however, for the girls, this

¹ Gleason, 61.

² Ibid.

³ Breines, 161.

⁴ Ibid., 97.

⁵ Korinek, 199.

advice extends beyond basic elements of cleanliness and conventional dress into specific and detailed guidance on how to improve and maintain their appearance. Moreover, they are described as being greatly concerned with their looks, while boys remain detached from these concerns. In effect, the textbooks work to convey the message that for girls, it was not enough to be clean and presentable in order to be attractive; they had to be aware of all of the ways in which they will be assessed by others, and as a result, take extra steps to ensure that they were considered appealing. To be conscious of one's attractiveness was thereby deemed a sign of healthy personal development in young girls, particularly for as they grew into women and had husbands of their own.

The look to which girls were meant to aspire is modelled by the women throughout the textbook series. All of the images of women in the textbooks portray the same feminine appearance. Out of the ninety-nine pictures of women among the three textbooks, women are never shown wearing pants or shorts. Instead, they are displayed wearing dresses and skirts in the same general style: knee-length, lightly-coloured, with a modest collar and gathered at the waist to accentuate a slim yet feminine figure.⁶ Even the aprons that they don while completing their domestic duties mimic this shape of narrowing at the waist, ensuring that the slim feminine figure is emphasized.⁷ Their feminine dress is in stark contrast to the masculine clothing that the men are depicted

⁶ See for example Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 13, 18, 36, 48, 50, 59, 77, 85, 96, 101, 102, 129, 131, 199, 200, 206, 229, 234, 237; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 45, 53, 66, 75, 76, 155, 192-93, 247, 251, 263; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 22, 53, 66, 100, 109, 131, 149, 163, 219, 238.

⁷ See for example Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 48, 59, 85, 96, 101, 129, 234; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 45, 53, 66, 75, 76, 155, 192-93, 263; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 74, 149, 219, 238.

wearing, including slacks, a button-up shirt, a sport jacket or suit, and usually a tie.⁸ Further highlighting their femininity, women wear their hair either curled or pinned up, and are certainly never shown with a short, boyish hairstyle. Their hair is always neat and tidy, revealing a sense of consciousness regarding their appearance.⁹ Lastly, as Breines observes, the commonly accepted sense of beauty in the fifties in the United States included a fair complexion,¹⁰ and Canada was likely no exception. Indeed, in the textbooks, all the women are fair-skinned, pointing to an emphasis on whiteness as the standard of beauty during the post-war era. Women in the textbooks were thus used to model the type of beauty girls at the time were expected to attain in order to show a healthy sense of personal development as they matured into women.

Not only do the women show the ideal of feminine beauty, girls in the textbooks are shown practicing and modelling these standards with their appearance as well. Girls resemble their mothers in their dress and appearance, and are shown being taught how to make themselves more attractive. The textbooks for grades four and five contain lessons directed at girls about how to keep their hair clean, and about how to deal with issues such as braces and glasses that may affect their attractiveness. In this sense, the first two textbooks are meant to define the parameters of attractiveness as defined by society's standards. In *You and Others*, this advice is applied to a real situation in which girls are invited to a party. The grade sixes are thereby taught the ways in which they should put

⁸ See for example Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 8, 12-13, 18, 22-24, 29, 30, 69, 76, 79, 84-85, 89, 139, 198-99, 200, 202, 204, 229, 237, 241; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 77, 119, 123, 148, 195, 212, 265; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 59, 109, 135, 159, 212-15, 219, 224, 235, 247.

⁹ See for example Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 18, 36, 48, 50, 59, 77, 85, 96, 101, 102, 129, 131, 199, 200, 206, 229, 234, 237; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 45, 53, 66, 75, 76, 155, 192-93, 247, 251, 263; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 20, 22, 53, 66, 100, 109, 131, 163, 219.

¹⁰ Breines, 96-97.

into practice the advice contained in the first two textbooks in order to be as attractive as possible for the party—and to thereby impress others in attendance. The message represented to the young readers is evident: to be a normal and healthy maturing girl, it is not only common to worry about her appearance, but it is in fact a necessary concern for a girl as she grows into a woman. She must learn the ways to make herself attractive, as society (such as those in attendance at the party) will judge her for her looks.

Girls are most notably mirroring women throughout the textbooks in their apparel and hairstyles. The girls appear like mini-women, wearing a similar shape of dress as the women do, with a slightly higher than knee-length skirt, pastel colours, a modest neckline and a cinched waist.¹¹ Unlike the women, however, girls are also illustrated wearing shorts and pants, although the numbers and age groups reveal much about the acceptance of these garments. Out of three hundred and sixty images of girls in the three textbooks, only twenty-four are shown wearing pants or shorts.¹² It is also significant to note that twenty-three of these pictures are found in *The Girl Next Door*, the textbook intended for the grade fours, and only one is found in *You*, the textbook written for grade five. Meanwhile, none can be found in *You and Others*, the textbook for the grade sixes. The gradation of these ages shows that while still young, it was acceptable for girls to wear boy-like garments such as pants and shorts, but as they grew closer to becoming women, it became less acceptable to dress in an unfeminine way. They also assert their femininity with their hair, which is worn in a shoulder-length hairstyle like the women in the textbooks. It is always combed neatly and often tied back with a ribbon or bow, showing their healthy attention to their appearance.

¹¹ See for example Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*,

¹² Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 20, 21, 87, 168, 171, 172, 180-81, 204, 212, 220, 223; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 121.

The lessons in the textbooks written for grades four and five centre around defining what is considered attractive by society's standards. In *The Girl Next Door*, one story underscores and normalizes whiteness as the feminine ideal. In the story, Ellen and her friends are overheard by the crossing guard, Jack Williams, calling out to another girl:

Funny Gertie,

Go away!

Dirty Gertie,

You can't play!¹³

Jack scolds Ellen for saying such a mean chant, but Ellen defends herself by saying that they are “just having some fun” and that “Gertie IS a funny girl. Her dresses are always too long. ... Her mother and father are funny, too. Patty says they are. They came from some other country.”¹⁴ Ellen and her two friends are all uniformly dressed in pleated skirts and pastel sweaters, with lightly-coloured hair at shoulder length. In contrast, Gertie is shown wearing a longer skirt, and has long black braids down her back.

Although at the end of the scenario Ellen realizes that she was unfair for judging Gertie, the story reveals the dichotomy between what was considered beautiful at the time—a white sensibility of dress and appearance—and what was considered “funny” or “dirty,” as Ellen frames it.¹⁵ The lesson of the story is one of tolerance of difference, teaching the girls to accept Gertie as she is, but ultimately conveys the view that Gertie is indeed different from them. As this is the only example of a child in the textbooks with an appearance that does not fall within the “white” parameters, it is clear that the textbooks work to establish whiteness as the ideal for beauty. Moreover, this storyline shows how

¹³ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 112.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 112-13. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 112-17.

the young girls accepted this standard in their own view of beauty, and in effect, revealed to the students reading the textbooks in the 1950s what should be considered beautiful.

In addition to identifying whiteness as the ideal of beauty, the early textbooks also describe ways that girls should keep up their appearance in everyday life. Nowhere is the necessity of everyday maintenance more clearly exemplified than in the discussions of girls' hair in *You*. In this section, the narrators appeal to the young female reader, indicating:

As you know, the hair on your head is one of the first things that everyone sees about you. If your hair is dirty or uncombed, your good looks are spoiled even if all the rest of you is clean and your clothes are attractive. That is one reason why you want to take good care of your hair.¹⁶

The narrator further notes that it is important to brush your hair everyday, and to clean your brush and comb often. Below this advice is a picture of a young girl with thick, shoulder-length hair cleaning her hairbrushes in the sink.¹⁷ On the following page, a girl is pictured washing her hair in the sink, with the accompanying text asserting that “Clean hair makes you look and feel better.”¹⁸

At the back of the chapter, the suggestions to girls about keeping their hair clean and brushed in order to maintain their looks is underscored. The writer poses this scenario to the reader: “Jean had a very pretty way of wearing her hair. ... Then she read in the paper about a new style for girls to use in doing their hair. So right away Jean wanted to change her hair style. ... *What are some things Jean should think about before she changes the way she has been doing her hair?*”¹⁹ The framing of this question implies that, since Jean already has very pretty hair, she does not need to change it to

¹⁶ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 72.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 79. Emphasis in original.

another hairstyle because she has already achieved an attractive look. Helen, on the other hand, considers buying hair oil in order to improve her hair. The narrator asks the reader, in light of what they had just read about achieving pretty hair through regular combing and washing, if “*Helen need[ed] the hair oil right away, or were there some things she might have done first that would have made her hair look more attractive? What things might she have done?*”²⁰ In both instances, the girls want products or processes that would make their hair more attractive, but the authors indicate that these steps are unnecessary. These scenarios highlight that not only should girls learn frugality when it comes to managing a household, but that one can maintain pretty hair through proper care, with the end goal always being not simply hygienic hair, but attractive hair with which to make a good impression.

Aside from advice regarding pretty hair, girls in *You* and *The Girl Next Door* are also targeted with stories about other ways to maintain their good looks, such as through proper maintenance of their teeth. In *You*, the section on teeth cautions that young boys and girls should take care of their teeth, as they might otherwise lose them. The narrator notes that losing one’s permanent teeth could result in poor speech and a malformed face. The former effect is illustrated by a picture of a young boy who is missing some front teeth, while the effect of an improperly formed face is exemplified by a young girl, with the text asserting that “if you lose too many permanent teeth, your lower face will not keep its proper shape—and certainly you will not be so attractive if a great many of your teeth are missing.”²¹ While the young boy could be afflicted with speech problems because of his poor dental hygiene, the young girl is at risk of looking less attractive—a

²⁰ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 80. Emphasis in original.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

concern that is once again considered appropriate for the female sex. Moreover, the message being presented here implies that it would be bad for a young boy to lose his active ability to speak—an asset for when he is older and working—while the young girl need only worry about how other people view her and her perceived marriageability.

In the proceeding section in *You*, the necessity of attractive teeth for girls is further emphasized. Betty Hill is described as being very conscientious about brushing her teeth daily, as “[s]he says she wants to have pretty, shining teeth like her older sister,” but neglects to eat the foods that will also keep her teeth in good health.²² The narrator questions the reader, asking, “*Do you think as Betty did that all you need to do to keep your teeth healthy and attractive is to brush them often?*”²³ The scenario and corresponding question work to convey that not only is it important to have healthy teeth, it is essential to keep them looking attractive as well. Teeth that are “pretty” and “shining” will contribute to overall good looks that are constructed as crucial for young girls to consider, especially as they grow into women.

Likewise, Ellen has a tooth dilemma when she has to get braces in *The Girl Next Door*. When she returns home from the dentist with braces on, she is upset, crying “I don’t like these old braces! . . . I would just as soon have crooked teeth as to wear these things. If I have to wear them, I won’t open my mouth enough for anyone to see them!”²⁴ Although not overtly expressed, it appears that her aversion to the braces involves the look of them, as she does not want to open her mouth for people to see them. Ellen is slightly consoled, however, by her father and grandfather who assure her that she will not have to wear them forever—and that most importantly, they will straighten her teeth. Her

²² Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 170.

²³ *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

²⁴ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 120.

grandfather illustrates on a piece of paper what crooked teeth would do to her face, drawing a malformed mouth and improper jaw alignment.²⁵ Although Ellen still feels upset about having the braces, the intervention by the male adults in her life implies how men will assess and validate her appearance once she is a woman, and that she ought to accept that she will have to take the proper steps to secure her attractiveness through things like wearing braces. Moreover, this scenario underscores the classist standpoint of the textbooks: rather than showing Ellen's family worrying about whether they can afford her braces, they discuss the implication of the braces on her appearance, representing a largely middle- to upper-class financially viable feminine ideal.

Eye glasses are another corrective measure that renders girls in the textbooks insecure about their appearance. In *You*, Ellen has glasses and feels upset about wearing them. After a note is sent home from school indicating that Ellen has been forgetting to wear her glasses, her mother approaches her about the issue. Her mother also wears glasses, and makes Ellen feel more at ease about wearing them:

I know just how you feel. I felt that way myself once, when I was just about your age. I thought my glasses made me look funny. And they did, because years ago glasses weren't so attractive as yours and mine are today.²⁶

Ellen's mother's story shows that glasses will not necessarily ruin girls' looks because there are "attractive" options, so that they can indeed wear glasses and retain their attractiveness and marriageability. Stressing this point, in the back of the chapter in the section "Things for You to Think About," Sally Smith is upset because she thinks that her glasses "spoil [her] looks!"²⁷ The narrator inquires, "*Do you think the glasses spoiled*

²⁵ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 120.

²⁶ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 246-47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

*Sally's looks? What makes you think as you do?*²⁸ This question makes it clear that ruined looks is a valid concern for Sally, with the implication being that glasses (thankfully) do not spoil them. Attractiveness is once again at the forefront of the girls' concern, and the textbooks affirm that these worries are valid and important.

Size is also established as an issue regarding attractiveness. Throughout the textbooks, the girls are all thin and slight, just like their adult counterparts. There is only one instance where a girl is illustrated as overweight, and she is singled out because of it. In *You*, the chapter "Your Muscles" begins with a description of a back-yard circus that Tom and his friends have organized. The apparent highlight of the circus is Don "the strong man," who has been playing a lot of tennis which has resulted in strong muscles. The accompanying picture shows a flexing Don surrounded by two thin girls and a boy, and Tom at the circus stand collecting an admission of two cents. In the background sits a girl who is rounder than the other two girls, with a sign placed at her feet that reads "Fat Lady"—just as a real circus would have had.²⁹ She is wearing an ankle-length dress without the typical cinched waist that the other girls are sporting. Her weight and shape are thus clearly established as undesirable and out of the anticipated norm—a norm that requires girls to be thin in order to be considered attractive, as fatness is made to be seen as unnatural, just as a "freak" would be perceived at the circus.

While the textbooks for grades four and five illustrate the types of features society finds attractive for females to display, the textbook for grade sixes, *You and Others*, demonstrates how girls should not only have this knowledge, but put it into practice. In *You and Others*, a number of children are invited to a party, and the scenarios that follow

²⁸ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 250. Emphasis in original.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

this invitation show how girls were expected to be concerned about their appearance, while it was acceptable for boys to remain detached from these worries. For the boys, the lessons revolve around maintaining a "clean and neat" appearance for the party, as demonstrated by Allen's mother's admonishing—"You'd better go back and wash behind your ears. And use the little hand brush to get the dirt off your hands. You just aren't clean enough to go to a party!"³⁰ Countering Allen's resistance, his mother says further that "when you're going to school or to church or to a party, [being clean] *does* matter. People expect you to be clean and neat then, and they don't think so well of you if you aren't."³¹ Further on, the idea is reinforced that both boys and girls should present themselves as clean and neat at social gatherings with a picture contrasting a neat girl and boy against dishevelled ones.³² The accompanying text asks the reader, "Are *you* usually clean and neat when you go to school or to church or to a party? If not, how might you help yourself improve?"³³ In these lessons, boys and girls are reminded that being clean and neat is the most desirable way to attend a social event because others will notice and judge them harshly for their appearance.

The advice directed at girls further indicates that not only should they be clean and neat to be attractive, but that they should be particularly concerned with the style of their hair in order to achieve a more attractive look. They are provided with extensive details on how to make their hair appealing for the party: "If you are a girl," the narrator notes, "the pictures above may help you. They show an easy way to pin up your hair so that it will curl the way you want it when it is dry." At the top of the page is a step-by-

³⁰ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 53; 60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 53. Emphasis in original.

³² *Ibid.*, 60.

³³ *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

step picture guide of a girl pinning her hair.³⁴ Not only are the girls told to consider how to style their hair, they are also advised to contemplate the overall cut, as "[hair] can be done in different ways and ... some ways may be more becoming to you than others. For example, if you have a very round face, you may find that parting your hair in the centre is not the most becoming style for you."³⁵ What follows is a picture of the same girl with four different hairstyles, with the question: "Which ones do you think are most becoming?"³⁶ These suggestions about hair are reinforced in the "Things for You to Do" section at the back of the chapter, in which it is noted:

...some of the girls might enjoy trying different hair styles on each other. They might also try to discover which colors are most becoming. Pieces of colored paper or cloth might be held up to a girl's face to find which colors seem to look best.³⁷

Evidently then, girls are targeted with specific advice on how to be "becoming" for a party with particular hairstyles, while boys need only to worry about being neat and clean in order to be considered attractive.³⁸

Not only are the girls told to consider how to wear their hair in an attractive way, they are also shown worrying about their physical appearance before the party—and subsequently given advice on how to be more attractive by their family members. When the children receive their invitations in the mail, the boys begin to wonder about what games will be played and who will be attending, while the girls immediately consider what they will wear: "I don't know what to wear," Elizabeth thinks, while Jane is excited by the prospect of wearing "[her] blue dress with the white trimming" or a pioneer

³⁴ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 62-63.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

costume so that she can "go dressed in a way that will surprise everyone."³⁹ While Jane is not worried that she will have nothing to wear, she is concerned that her mother will not let her get her hair done at the beauty shop. Her mother determines that "there isn't a thing the beauty shop can do that you can't do yourself."⁴⁰ Her mother pins her hair on the day of the party, and the narrator notes: "Jane looked as pretty as if her hair *had* been done at a beauty shop!"⁴¹ Although Jane is confident about her apparel, she was concerned that her hair would not be attractive enough without being done at the salon. This scenario reinforces not only the frugality required by a woman while managing a household, but also the notion that girls should be aware of their physical attractiveness, particularly when attending a social gathering.

Elizabeth also seeks the guidance of her family to help her look her best for the party. Once she puts on her dress, she criticizes herself: "Well ... I don't look so very glamorous, do I? Do you suppose some of Mother's lipstick would help?"⁴² Her siblings Jo Ann and Ned offer her some ideas on how to make herself look better. Jo Ann indicates that she should clean her shoes, while her older brother Ned declares: "if you want to know what I honestly think, I'll tell you. You can't be glamorous with unshined [sic] shoes and dirty fingernails and hair flying all around. Why don't you fix up a bit more and see how much better you'll look?"⁴³ Representing the male point of view—and revealing what the authors determine an eventual husband would think—Ned makes it clear to Elizabeth that appearance is important. His opinion has an effect, as she subsequently "combed and brushed her hair, cleaned her fingernails, and shined her

³⁹ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

shoes."⁴⁴ Concluding the paragraph, the narrator notes: "Then she *did* look better."⁴⁵ Like Jane, Elizabeth shows an understanding of the social expectation that girls should know how to make their appearance more attractive, and how to respond to the criteria established by male figures concerning attractiveness.

Elizabeth also struggles with how to make her feet look more attractive in *You and Others*. Her mother asks her why she is not wearing her new shoes, to which Elizabeth replies that they are too big, and "make [her] feet look a mile long!"⁴⁶ Instead of telling Elizabeth that the size of her feet does not matter, her mother points out the ways in which the shoe design keeps her feet looking small: "They are dark, and dark shoes always make feet look smaller. The cut-out pattern helps, too."⁴⁷ She assures Elizabeth that she does not "think that they make [her] feet look much bigger."⁴⁸ Elizabeth responds that she really hopes that what her mother has said is true, as she "worr[ies] all the time about [her] feet."⁴⁹ Her mother's feedback puts Elizabeth's worries to rest, and she decides to wear her new shoes. Although the scenario is designed to teach young readers about how their bodies grow, the latent meaning conveys to the female reader that something like the size of one's feet is important, and that there are ways to mitigate the effect larger feet have on one's appearance, as Elizabeth's mother outlines.

The guidance provided in the textbooks about how girls should be attractive and feminine reveals much about the intention of the textbooks. For girls, it is implied that a good physical appearance is essential, and that as some stories showed, males will notice.

⁴⁴ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 55.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

The Girl Next Door and *You* reveal how girls should be dressed in a feminine way, should keep their hair shiny and pretty, and should be conscious of other aspects of their body that will affect their appearance like their size, teeth and eyesight. Like the women in the textbooks, girls are described as both aspiring to and fulfilling a notion of beauty that promotes whiteness and homogeneity. The texts convey that it is not only natural for girls to be concerned with their physical appearance, it is expected of a normal, maturing girl who will one day inevitably become a wife. As girls grow into women, even by grade six, the textbooks anticipate that they should be striving for an attractive appearance to please others. Any disregard for personal attractiveness, by omission, would thereby be construed as unhealthy and undesirable behaviour of a young girl in the post-war era.

Chapter Four: Playing the Role of Community-Maker

While women were expected to fulfil their domestic responsibilities in the home and maintain attractiveness for their husbands, mothers were also encouraged by psychological writers in the 1950s to pursue community work in order to “help round out her life, enable her to feel that her own activities are important and that as an individual she has value.”¹ Samuel Laycock and other writers admonished mothers who did not participate in the community, as he warned that a mother would take “[her personal frustrations] out on the other members of her family” because household duties were not satisfying enough.² Although pushed to take part in community life, Tillotson notes that women and mothers were given responsibilities in community organizations that resembled the domestic work that they would complete at home, such as kitchen preparation work, maintaining lounge areas, and entertaining out-of-town guests,³ effectively keeping their community involvement related to the female sphere. The positions of authority and policy-making were thereby reserved for male members of the organizations.⁴ Nevertheless, mothers were encouraged to be active in their community in order to lessen their potentially negative impact on the rest of their family and to prepare themselves for “emancipation” from motherhood once their children had grown up.⁵

The push for female community involvement is evident in the textbooks as well. Although mothers are not shown participating in distinct organizations,⁶ they are

¹ Gleason, 65.

² Ibid.

³ Tillotson, 129.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Gleason, 65.

⁶ Although women and girls in the textbooks are shown as community builders, they generally are not shown as active in community organizations or associations. For more on women and philanthropy, see James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second*

described as acting as the community-makers within their neighbourhood, maintaining their secure place inside the female-dominated sphere. They welcome new mothers and children into the neighbourhood, help with new projects for the community, maintain friendliness and graciousness towards others, ensure community safety, and impart a sense of community-giving in their female children as well. Girls are shown practicing what their mothers exemplify, ensuring how to politely greet people and make them feel welcome in a new environment, along with advocating for public safety and wellness. Through these instances, the textbooks establish the expectation that women will participate in the community in a way that expands their activities the female sphere. Indeed, they are certainly not shown as leaders of community organizations, but are instead described as the conveyors of community togetherness through conventional female avenues.

One of the ways that mothers exemplify their involvement in the community is through welcoming new neighbours, as described in *The Girl Next Door*. At the beginning of the textbook, a new family moves onto the street. Upon hearing that the little girl in the new family is sick, Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Hunt call on the White family right away. They indicate that they were “going to wait a little until [they] got settled,” but they determine that since the little girl is sick, they must visit quickly to see if there is anything that they can do to help.⁷ The mothers are pictured walking over to the White’s house with gifts in hand, and when they arrive, they strive to make Mrs. White feel

World War: Continuities of Class (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts: Canadian Women, Child Safety, and Global Insecurity* (Waterloo, ON.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), Peter A. Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution? Gender and Wealth in English Canada, 1860-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008).

⁷ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 49.

welcome: “They told her how pretty the gray house looked now and how glad they were to have some good neighbours living in it.”⁸ In this scenario, the women of the neighbourhood act as the greeters and community-makers by ensuring that the new family feels welcomed and comfortable in their new surroundings. Moreover, it is the mother of the new family who is at the receiving end of the greeting, elucidating how all of the women in the neighbourhood are together in their own separate sphere, while implicitly the men—including the new neighbour Mr. White—are in their own sphere of paid work.

Also in *The Girl Next Door*, the men spend time in the female sphere with the women working on a project for the community, however the division of labour for the project reveals clear separation between female-related tasks and male-dominated duties. In order to make the young Susan White feel better because she is sick, the Hunt family decides to get the community together to build a neighbourhood pool in which Susan could swim during the summer months. The idea for the pool arose from a conversation between all of the Hunt family members, and it was decided that Mr. Hunt should discuss the family’s idea with the rest of the neighbours.⁹ Mr. Hunt does approach the neighbours about the pool, but only the male members of the community weigh in regarding safety, cost, and work distribution. At the outset of the project then, the male members of the community take command of the plan, taking the lead on health regulations, cost, and sourcing labour—while the women in the neighbourhood are not given such leadership roles.¹⁰ Indeed, instead of helping with the plans or construction of the pool, the mothers ensure that their families have enough to eat and clean clothes to wear during the long

⁸ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 51.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 200-01.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 201-02.

days of labour. Thus, just as Tillotson notes in her analysis of recreation services in Ontario in the 1950s,¹¹ while the women participate in community activities, they are still relegated to secondary roles with regards to management, and to duties that are typical of their everyday domestic chores in the domestic sphere. In contrast, the men take leadership roles that maintain their connection to the world outside of the neighbourhood.

In another instance, Mrs. Arthur Williston exemplifies the type of community activities that a woman was expected to pursue after her children had left home, as the psychologist Samuel Laycock had advised.¹² In *You and Others*, Mrs. Willis' hometown is celebrating its 100th anniversary, and in honour of the occasion, she decides to hold a "Pioneer Party" for the children of the town to celebrate with her grandson Paul.¹³ The whole town is buzzing as they prepare to celebrate the city's anniversary with "speeches, a big parade, and parties" like that of Mrs. Willis'.¹⁴ However, her party takes place at her home, well within the female sphere—even though her family helped to establish the town of Williston and acts as its namesake.¹⁵ She therefore contributes to the community in a way that maintains her conventional place as a woman in the town, acting as hostess for a party that celebrates the city.

Mothers are described as being a source of guidance to their children with regards to how to be welcoming and courteous to other people. For instance, in *The Girl Next Door*, Ellen, Ann, Nancy, Bill, and Tom try to visit the new girl, Susan, to introduce themselves. They are surprised that Susan is not very receptive to their visit, and run to their mothers for advice. Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Hunt help the children put themselves in

¹¹ Tillotson.

¹² Gleason, 65.

¹³ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

Susan's shoes, as a child who cannot play outdoors because of her illness. The children realize that Susan is sad because she does not have a normal childhood, and they thereby devise a plan to help her laugh and make her feel better.¹⁶ Similarly, in *You and Others*, Kenneth does not want to attend a party to which he has been invited, but he knows that "Mother will make [him] go when she hears about it," presumably because it is what she believes is the polite and courteous thing to do.¹⁷ In *You*, as well, Helen's mother helps her to make cookies for a friend who Helen believes is mad at her, enabling her to repair their friendship.¹⁸ Fathers, on the other hand, are never shown imparting advice to their children regarding how to be open and friendly to others. Mothers throughout the textbooks thereby act as the dispensers of courtesies, goodwill and community togetherness along with their other domestic duties.

In addition to ensuring a sense of community belonging, mothers are also shown being involved in ensuring community safety and health. In *The Girl Next Door*, Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Hunt initiate the mission to address the "old gray house" on the lane that they deem to be unsafe. The children on the lane like to play hide-and-seek in the old house, but after Bill hurts his leg playing there, the mothers decide it must be addressed: "Something must be done about this old house. It just isn't safe. ... and it isn't healthful to have on our lane. ... It's time we did something about the house, all right!"¹⁹ While concerned about the health and safety of the community, and involving themselves in these types of discussions, it is the grandfather who determines that he will talk to the health officers. The women thus remain inactive in the male sphere, as the grandfather

¹⁶ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 56-61.

¹⁷ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 12.

¹⁸ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 263.

¹⁹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 14-17. Spelling of "gray" as found in original source.

acts as a liaison between their community and the government.²⁰ Likewise, throughout the textbooks, men act as the authorities in community safety, performing roles as health inspectors, sanitation experts, and other government officials, while mothers are the ones who raise the concerns about community well-being. They are the ones who react and raise concern when there is the risk of contagious disease,²¹ ensure that the community eats healthfully and safely,²² and safeguard the cleanliness of the neighbourhood.²³

Girls are also shown throughout the textbooks practicing their roles as community-makers, modelling their behaviour after their mothers. In the grade four textbook, *The Girl Next Door*, they are shown extending greetings to new neighbours, while in the grade six textbook, *You and Others*, girls practice ways to be pleasant guests and hostesses. There is a clear progression from girls helping their mothers greet new people in their neighbourhood, to learning how to be appropriate at social events, especially those that involve the opposite gender. This transition marks girls leaving the guidance of their mothers to practicing how to be polite and sociable on their own. Lastly, girls throughout the textbooks inherit the role of ensuring the community's health and safety. The girls' community involvement, like that of their mothers', is firmly entrenched in the female-dominated sphere. It is thereby constructed throughout the textbooks as an indicator of healthy personal development when girls practice their community involvement in order to prepare themselves for motherhood, when they will need to seek out activities in the community that will enrich their lives.

²⁰ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 14-17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

²² Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 132; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 192-93.

²³ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 17-19, 206.

In *The Girl Next Door*, readers are exposed to the idea that girls should be willing to greet new neighbours in order to make them feel welcome and part of the community. For example, when Susan White and her family move onto Driftwood Lane, it is the female children who take the lead in the activities that help Susan feel welcomed. When Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Foster decide that they should visit the new family, Ann and Ellen are the children who express their desire to accompany them: ““Take us with you,”” said Ann. ‘Oh, yes, take us,’ cried Ellen.”²⁴ When they do get to visit Susan, the two girls are also the children who attempt conversation with Susan, while the boys remain silent. Ann presents Susan with a basket of fruit that she has collected, while Ellen brings Susan a toy, saying, “I have one of my dolls here... You may keep it and play with it for a week or so.”²⁵ After this first visit seems unsuccessful because Susan appears unreceptive, Ellen and Ann are the children who lead the discussion with Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Foster regarding what they could do to make her feel more welcome.²⁶ Ellen continues this extension of neighbourliness further on in the textbook, when on a Saturday of cleaning she states: “I am helping Mrs. White take care of Susan... You would be surprised to see how much help I am.”²⁷ Just like their mothers, the girls try to extend goodwill towards others and practice their community-making abilities.

While the girls in the younger textbook learn about helping their mothers greet new people in the neighbourhood, the textbook directed at grade sixes, *You and Others*, provides advice on how girls should be able to evidence good, feminine behaviours on their own in social settings. Moreover, the advice in *You and Others* transitions to

²⁴ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 49.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

situations in which girls socialize with boys, and illustrates how girls should exhibit their good social skills when interacting with the opposite gender—intimating the types of skills they will need in the future to be considered marriageable. Some of the particular skills that they are implied to need include “being a pleasant guest” and “being a good hostess.”²⁸ Elizabeth is feeling apprehensive about going to Mrs. Willis’ party, as she tells Nancy that she does not know how to act while they are there. Nancy replies that Elizabeth should not worry, because after Girl Guides that afternoon, she will “know everything [she] need[s] to know.” The Girl Guides session that afternoon included a dramatization of some of the things the girls had been learning to get their “Hostess Merit Badge,” which includes knowing how to be a good host and guest.²⁹ On the following pages, the girls are shown practicing polite ways to introduce themselves, courteous things to say while at a party, and what they should do with their belongings. The chapter is entitled “The Courteous Thing to Do or Say,” suggesting that girls must show these proper manners while socializing with others.³⁰ Boys, on the other hand, are not included in these dramatizations, suggesting that they do not need to concern themselves with learning these habits. It is a female responsibility to extend a civil hand to others and to make people around them feel comfortable.

The girls at the party also demonstrate their abilities to be helpful in community settings by assisting Mrs. Willis in the kitchen. As Tillotson notes, females were given jobs in the community that mirrored the duties they completed at home, and in this instance, the party is no exception.³¹ After the spelling bee and a photo presentation, Mrs.

²⁸ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 47.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 48-50.

³¹ Tillotson, 129.

Willis declares that Jane can be her “special helper in getting the refreshments ready.”

Mrs. Willis also asks Jane to pick another person to help, and she chooses Elizabeth. The girls help Mrs. Willis with hostess-type chores, as the narrator notes:

How busy Jane and Elizabeth were! They helped some children start popping corn. They put plates of sandwiches and cookies and glasses of apple cider on a table where the children could help themselves. And some of the girls helped Mrs. Willis make taffy candy for an old-fashioned taffy pull.³²

Evidently then, the girls at the party were expected to help with the hostess duties, while the boys are pictured in the background stoking the fireplace. The party scenario reveals the expectation that girls, especially as they mature into women, should know how to host a party with refreshments and food in order to make people in the neighbourhood and community feel welcomed. Thus, to show an unwillingness to participate in such activities would be a poor sign of personal development in a young girl.

In the next section, “Think Less About Yourself and More About Others!” four different scenarios show how to be more pleasant at a party. Three of the scenarios demonstrate girls extending pleasantries to others at the party, such as “My, but that’s a pretty dress you have on,” while one illustrates a boy who does not want to attend the party because he does not think he will enjoy it.³³ The concern for the girls, therefore, is to be pleasant and agreeable to others, while the boys are not targeted with this advice. Indeed, at the party it is the girls who go out of their way to make attendees feel comfortable and welcome in a new environment. In particular, Elizabeth is shown practicing her skills of interacting with boys, a way of preparation for her future prospects of marriage. Elizabeth can see that Kenneth is not enjoying himself, so she

³² Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 67.

³³ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

approaches him and compliments him on his costume, questioning, “How did you ever think of such a clever costume for a pioneer party?”³⁴ In the reflection section at the end of the chapter, the narrator notes that Elizabeth helped Kenneth “feel more at ease” by giving him “a well-deserved compliment,” implying that this was the right behaviour for Elizabeth to exhibit.³⁵ Further showing a friendly disposition, Elizabeth is asked to choose her team for the spelling bee at the party. Instead of choosing the best speller first, Elizabeth decides to choose Paul, who is not necessarily a good speller, but someone she worries will “feel queer if he’s chosen last.”³⁶ Elizabeth’s gracious behaviour is directed towards the boys at the party, in order to make them feel welcomed. This kind of behaviour is evidently the type that she will need to practice in order to be considered marriageable in the future.

Girls in the textbooks also show a similar concern to that of their mothers for community safety and health. In *You and Others*, the final chapter “You and Your Community” discusses the ways that students can help make their community a better, safer, and healthier place to live. In the chapter, Miss Thompson’s class is preparing posters for a Health Exhibit for the people of the town of Williston. The initial posters they create show basic health necessities such as the need for proper sleep, exercise, a good diet, keeping happy feelings and not spreading germs.³⁷ Everyone in the class is satisfied with the posters except Jane, who points to the need for posters on what the community needs to do for the people to help keep them safe and healthy, such as good

³⁴ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 64.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 204-05.

drinking water, keeping health records, sewage treatment, and garbage collection.³⁸ After Jane brings up these points, the teacher Miss Thompson agrees with her and has the class investigate different ways that the community helps its people. These investigations, though initiated by Jane's concerns, are performed by the boys. Philip suggests that he and a committee should go to the health department, while Kenneth heads a committee to find out about garbage collection. Lastly, Bill indicates that his uncle is on the city council and that he could ask him for ideas on better ways to get rid of the city's garbage.³⁹

Like their mothers, girls are relegated to inactive roles in community safety: they voice their concerns, but the male students act as the connections to the public. This point is emphasized by the images of girls holding or creating community safety signs throughout the textbooks. In *You*, a young girl is pictured holding a poster that says "Safety Week," while another girl paints a picture of fruit, vegetables, and milk, with the message "Eat plenty of food and be healthy."⁴⁰ Likewise, in *You and Others* a young woman who looks very concerned is pictured on a poster that reads "This community is what YOU make it! What are you doing to make it a safer, pleasanter, healthier place in which to live?"⁴¹ The girls are thereby made to be inanimate objects imploring people to act to have a better community, but the people who do act are the male members of the community. Although the girls, like their mothers, participate in the community, this participation is not one that involves them with leadership or decision-making, which are roles designated for the male members of the community.

³⁸ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 204-07.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 209-36.

⁴⁰ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 103, 175.

⁴¹ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 265. Emphasis in original.

In the post-war era, mothers were advised by psychologists to participate in their communities in order to enrich their domestic lives. However, the types of community work they were given kept them closely tied to the female sphere, performing domestic duties like cooking, cleaning, and entertaining. Likewise, in the textbooks from the *Health and Personal Development* series, mothers are shown participating in the community in ways that are aligned with their domestic lives. They act as community-makers within their neighbourhood, perform female-related tasks for the community, and advocate for the health and safety of its inhabitants. In the same vein, girls throughout the textbooks imitate their mothers' community involvement by learning how to be courteous, welcoming, polite, and concerned for the community welfare—all of which are pursuits that keep them squarely aligned with their future as wives and mothers in the domestic sphere. They are introduced to the concept of community in *The Girl Next Door* by assisting their mothers in greeting new neighbours, and transition to an understanding of how to socialize independently while at a party in *You and Others*. Moreover, their socialization in grade six includes interactions with boys, suggesting that as they mature, they will need to have the skills to interact with men in order to become a wife. Meanwhile, boys and men perform community tasks related to leadership and decision-making, effectively acting on behalf of females outside of the immediate community. The textbooks therefore establish these divisions of labour as expected and normal, and convey the importance for young girls to understand how to supplement their roles as mothers. To know how to be a well-balanced mother, with a good sense of community, is thereby determined to be a sign of healthy maturation and mental hygiene in a young girl at the time.

Chapter Five: Scientific Mothering

According to historians on motherhood Apple, Arnup, and Baillargeon, parenting experts in the United States and Canada from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century started to see mothering less as an innate ability women possess and more as a learned skill based on the advice dispensed by authorities such as physicians, psychologists, educators, and other social commentators.¹ These social experts advised that mothers, albeit the “natural” caretakers of children, could no longer rely on intuitive mothering: they required scientific and medical guidance to ensure that they were providing the best possible care for their children.² In the post-World War Two period in particular, child-rearing advice was predominantly dispensed by experts in the field.³ Gleason notes that psychologists like William Blatz and Samuel Laycock denounced “mother instinct or mother love” as the basis for good parenting—that “natural instinct does not tell mothers how to look after their children.”⁴ Women in both the United States and Canada were thereby encouraged to look to experts in childrearing, medicine, and psychology to inform their role as mothers.

Apple maintains that the experts who supplied this information were mostly men, while women and mothers participated alongside in the dissemination of this advice.⁵

That the recommendations came from men is a point not lost in the textbooks.

Throughout the texts, men and boys are established as scientific authorities who supply

¹ Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood: Science and Childrearing in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 1-10. Arnup, *Education for Motherhood*, 3-9. Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation*, 1-2.

² Apple, *Perfect Motherhood*, 1-10.

³ Arnup, 9.

⁴ Gleason, 62-63.

⁵ Rima D. Apple, “Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *The Society of the Social History of Medicine* 8, no. 2 (1995): 161-178.

women and girls with answers regarding how the body works and how to protect it from illness and harm. As Apple shows, mid-twentieth century, women and girls were deemed responsible for the health and welfare of the family, but were charged with deficiencies in the skills necessary to parent on their own; mothers and girls were required to seek male scientific advice to ensure proper care of their children.⁶ Likewise, all through the textbooks, this dichotomy of female versus male knowledge is highlighted: females are responsible for the health of the family—as evidenced by their sole involvement and decision-making in matters regarding the children’s health—but are shown receiving information on how to accomplish this role from male sources such as husbands, sons, government representatives, and the medical community. Through the textbooks’ reinforcement of the validity of scientific mothering, the message being conveyed highlighted that young girls should understand that they too would have to consult medical and scientific experts when they become mothers, as the textbooks indicate that women could not rely on their own intuition to provide good care to their children.

In all three textbooks, mothers are shown taking steps to ensure the health of the family. Among their main preoccupations is the prevention of illness through cleanliness. In *The Girl Next Door*, Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Foster discuss the state of disrepair of one of the houses in the neighbourhood, indicating that “The house isn’t fit for people to live in. It’s so very, very dirty! ... It wouldn’t be healthful to live in a house like that.”⁷ In the same textbook, the chapter “Clean Homes” contains a picture montage of a mother cleaning the kitchen and bathroom, with the surrounding text asserting: “Your mother knows that a clean, neat home.... Is more healthful to live in....By cleaning often with

⁶ Apple, “Constructing Mothers,” 161-178.

⁷ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 18.

soap and hot water we can help to keep our houses as safe as possible from germs that might make us sick.”⁸ Likewise, in *You*, a number of mothers and daughters are pictured cleaning the refrigerator and properly storing and handling food. The images are prefaced with a cautionary tale about the rules that restaurants must obey in order to pass a health inspector’s scrutiny, ending with: “But all these rules protect you only while the food is in stores or restaurants. When it comes into your home, your own family must keep it clean and safe.”⁹ As the pictures indicate, this responsibility clearly falls on the female members of the family. Mothers and daughters are urged to take care with leftovers and foods that can easily spoil, as the germs that may grow on them “can make you very sick.”¹⁰ Mothers—and their daughters as mothers-in-training—are established as the ones concerned with and responsible for the cleanliness of the home to prevent illness in the family.

Mothers are also shown in the textbooks as the liaisons between their families and the medical community: they make the doctor, dentist, and specialist appointments, and take their children to the visits. Of course, it is likely that given the perception of mothers at home during the day while their husbands work, that they were the ones simply available to take the children to appointments. However, they are also the ones shown worrying and making decisions about their children’s health, while fathers remain detached from these concerns. Likewise, they consult male experts in medicine to provide them with answers regarding their children’s health, further underscoring the notion that men were the authorities in these fields. One of the mothers’ primary worries is

⁸ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 101.

⁹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 191-92.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 192-93.

prevention of illness through regular checkups. In *The Girl Next Door*, Ellen, Bill, and Nancy go to see Doctor Williams at the beginning of the school year, because,

...[their] mother wanted to be sure her children were strong and healthy so that they could do their best work at school. She wanted to have their eyes examined to see if they needed glasses. That is why she was careful to have her children see the doctor before school began.¹¹

Similarly, in *You and Others*, it is noted that mothers can take their babies to clinics “for weighing and measuring and for health examinations.”¹² And when Ann Hunt mentions that a girl at school has diphtheria, Mrs. Hunt replies:

My goodness! ... I am going to call Doctor Williams right away. I want him to see you and Tom this very afternoon if he can. ... Doctor Williams can give you a test called the Shick Test. That will tell us whether you or Tom can get diphtheria.¹³

Mothers are thus shown to be the parent most concerned with making sure that the children receive regular examinations to ensure that they remain in a good state of health.

As another preventative measure, the mothers worry about their children getting the proper nutrition to maintain good health. This is evidenced most clearly by a section in *You* in which the authors discuss how one’s emotions can affect one’s appetite, noting that if you are upset, “[t]he next thing you know you may be refusing to eat this food or that food.”¹⁴ And as the authors indicate, it is the child’s mother who would be concerned: “...your mother may be getting more and more worried about [your refusal to eat].”¹⁵ Mothers are certainly given the responsibility to ensure that their children are given the proper foods to eat, as in *The Girl Next Door* the narrators ask the young

¹¹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 88.

¹² Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 210.

¹³ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 221.

¹⁴ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 154.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

reader: “Why is it important that mothers know about foods that are good for us to eat?”¹⁶ The text follows with an explanation of what mothers learn about food to ensure healthy bones and teeth. Likewise, in a section “Things For You to Do” in *You and Others*, the narrator suggests that students could make a chart to post in the kitchen showing what foods they need to eat daily, and the student “and [their] mother can use it to check on [their] daily diet.”¹⁷ Indeed, throughout the textbooks, mothers are shown to encourage their children to eat their food, such as Joe’s mother who says “Eat your meat and vegetables,” Jane’s mother who “was coaxing her to eat her meat and vegetables,” and Ellen’s mother who encourages her to drink her milk.¹⁸ Throughout the textbooks, mothers are the sole parent who are responsible for ensuring that the children are properly nourished and worry about their health in this regard.

Just as mothers in the textbooks are shown concerned with preventing illness, they also take their children to see medical experts when they are feeling ill or exhibiting symptoms of a health issue, while fathers are not shown being involved with these visits. In *You*, it is noted that “now and then there may be a certain food that makes you sick or makes a rash on your skin.” The narrator indicates that if this is the case, “you and your mother might want to talk to your doctor about it.”¹⁹ Likewise, in *You and Others*, little Johnnie Smith has a fever and a rash that has his mother worried, and “[she] decide[s] to call the doctor right away.”²⁰ There is also a picture of a mother taking her daughter to an ear, nose, and throat specialist because she has symptoms of an ear infection.²¹ Jim’s

¹⁶ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 132.

¹⁷ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 150.

¹⁸ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 109, 152, 157.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

²⁰ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 256.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

mother also has to take him to a medical specialist, the dentist, after he experiences many toothaches. It is noted that she frequently tries to take him to the dentist—as she is “always buying [him] toothache medicine to stop the pain”—and only after the pain becomes too unbearable can she convince him to visit the dentist.²² In *The Girl Next Door*, Susan has a lingering illness that she is recovering from, and part of her treatment requires that she go to the hospital for physiotherapy. On her first visit there, she is pictured in the car with her mother coming home, while she tells the other children on the lane about the ice cream the nurses gave her.²³ Not only do mothers therefore worry about the children’s health, they are also the parents responsible for taking them to see medical experts when they are ill, while fathers do not take part in these visits.

There are two examples in which fathers do demonstrate some involvement in the health of the children, but they are exceptional cases that do not show them taking on the role of primary caretaker. Instead, they remain detached from the care of the children. In *You*, the section “Preventing Injuries to the Skin” shows first aid treatments for damage to the skin from burns/scalds, blisters, splinters, and cuts. Under the headings burns/scalds and blisters, a mother is shown giving the child first aid. Under splinters, a father is pictured removing a splinter from a girl’s hand. The mother is wearing an apron and is thereby presumably at home, attending to her domestic duties—including taking care of the children when they hurt themselves. On the other hand, the father is wearing a suit and tie, linking him to his life outside of the home. His apparel indicates that he is not typically at home helping with first aid, and that this would be an exceptional

²² Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 168.

²³ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 168.

circumstance.²⁴

Similarly, in *You and Others*, Kenneth is upset because his mother will not allow him to go for an overnight at the Boy Scout Cabin because he has a cold. The section opens with a conversation between Kenneth and his mother, where she reiterates: “Ken, I’ve told you over and over that it wouldn’t be safe. You’d be sure to get chilled and make your cold worse.”²⁵ Kenneth pleads with her, but to no avail, as his mother asserts, “I’m sorry, Ken. . . . I don’t like to see you disappointed. But when you have a cold, home is the best place—”²⁶ Ken is not pleased with his mother’s response, so he runs to his father, asking “Can’t you persuade Mother to let me go on the hike?”²⁷ It is clear from Ken’s question that his mother is the parent in charge of issues regarding health and safety, while his dad plays a secondary role in these matters. As in the example above, Ken’s father is also wearing a suit, maintaining his link to the world outside of the home. He indicates that he and his wife “talked it over early this morning. It’s too bad about your cold, but since you have it, the best thing for you to do is to stay home.”²⁸ Ken’s father therefore supports his wife’s decisions when it comes to the health of the children, but ultimately it is the mother’s judgment that guides this care. Moreover, as these two examples are the only instances in which fathers show any involvement in the well-being of children, they support the notion that these situations rarely occur, and that it is most common—and expected—that mothers will be responsible for the family’s health.

While females are demonstrated as the ones who are most involved and responsible for the health and well-being of the family in the textbooks, it is the males

²⁴ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 74-78.

²⁵ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 107.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

who provide the scientific and medical information that informs women and girls on how the body works and what to do to prevent it from harm. Men and boys are established as the scientific and medical experts throughout the three textbooks, implicating that although women are responsible for these issues, they do not possess the knowledge to successfully care for children on their own; they require male guidance to provide them with the tools to properly take care of their children. Moreover, girls are also shown receiving information from male sources, effectively preparing them for their eventual roles as mothers who will also, according to the textbooks, need to follow the principles of scientific mothering to fulfil their eventual duties as mothers appropriately.

Throughout the series, males are established as scientific and medical authorities. All of the doctors, dentists and health specialists are male, while female nurses assist in their work.²⁹ Likewise, when it comes to public health, men occupy the positions as health inspectors and other government workers.³⁰ The most explicit example of the notion that men are the authorities on science and medicine is in *You and Others*. In the section called "Health Heroes," there are pictures and descriptions of famous men who have made significant contributions to the fields of medicine and science, such as Louis Pasteur, Walter Reed, and Robert Koch. The caption reads: "You and your community are safer today because of these health heroes of yesterday."³¹ It is not until one reaches the questions hidden at the back of the chapter that female contributions to research in disease are briefly mentioned from women such as Marie Curie, Bela Shick and Florence

²⁹ See for examples Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 12, 89, 122; Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 148, 172, 204-05, 243, 245; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 171, 176, 192, 212-15, 270.

³⁰ See for examples Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 22-24, 203; Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 212-15, 224, 247.

³¹ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 258-59.

Nightingale—without any accompanying pictures.³² It is made clear, then, that males are established as the experts in medicine and science while females are considered much less authoritative in these fields.

Because men are the reputed experts of the body and how it works, women are shown throughout the textbooks deferring to male knowledge when it comes to raising their children.³³ Aside from the examples described above that illustrate how mothers seek out male doctors and specialists for a range of maladies and preventions, mothers also learn how to take care of their children through other male avenues. In *The Girl Next Door*, the mothers in the neighbourhood attend a session at the local school on “Canada’s Food Rules” to learn what foods they should serve to their families, telling them what “growing children need to eat ... if they are to have strong bones and healthy teeth.”³⁴ The class is led by a female nurse, and all of the attendees are female as well. As Apple notes, women were often the conveyors of scientific and medical advice to other mothers, while the information that they were giving came from male sources.³⁵ Similarly, in the textbook, although the information is being provided by a female instructor, the materials and advice comes from the Canadian government. At the bottom of the poster describing what foods one should eat, the source can be partially made out: “Division of ... [illegible] Department of National ... [illegible] Ottawa.”³⁶ Given that women did not typically possess policy-making positions during this period, it is likely that the

³² Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 273.

³³ It is also interesting to note that while the primary authors of the textbooks are female, all three texts were written either with or in consultation with William W. Baruch, an M.D. who wrote many instructional articles throughout the post-war years. See <http://www.unz.org/Pub/JenkinsGladys-1949> for examples.

³⁴ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 131-132.

³⁵ Apple, “Constructing Mothers,” 161-178.

³⁶ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 131.

documents were written by men, for mothers.

In a similar example, Elizabeth's mother in *You and Others* has a poster on her kitchen wall, noting: "Get the Good...From your Food: Heat, Air, Water Take Their Toll, Keep All Three Under Control."³⁷ The accompanying text asserts that "In cooking foods such as fruits and vegetables, you should see that you lose as little as possible of the valuable vitamins and minerals."³⁸ The poster is thus meant to remind Elizabeth's mother daily, while in the kitchen cooking, of how to ensure that she is cooking food properly so that she retains the good parts that will nourish her family. Just like the materials used in the nutrition class mentioned above, the poster also has a government-looking stamp, linking the information back to male-dominated sources in the government.

Mothers are also shown being uninformed about how the body works, and rely on males to supplement their knowledge. In the section "How Do You Grow?" in *You*, Ellen is surprised to find out that one of her dresses from last year no longer fits, to which her mother remarks, "Really, Ellen, I didn't know you had grown so much."³⁹ This comment sparks Ellen to ask what happens when humans grow, and her mother replies:

Well... you know some of the things that help you grow—things like getting plenty of sleep, exercise, and good food. Let's ask your Uncle Bill just what happens when you grow. It's an interesting story, and he can tell you better than I can, because he's a doctor.⁴⁰

Ellen's mother defers to a male doctor to explain to her what happens when she grows, as she appears hesitant in her ability to explain the process. The following pages outline what Uncle Bill would have told Ellen about how cells work in the body.⁴¹ Not only does

³⁷ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 84.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 53.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 54-58.

Ellen's mother rely on a male source for information about her child's growth, it is clear that she is also reliant on medical and scientific expert advice to inform her understanding about Ellen's body and how it grows.

Ellen's mother also relies on her son for information about bones in the body and how to keep them strong. In the segment "Foods That Build Strong Bones," Ellen's mother declares "Drink your milk, Ellen. ... It makes your bones strong."⁴² Ellen responds that people are always telling her to drink her milk, but that she does not understand why, questioning, "how does anyone really *know* what milk does when it gets inside us? We can't see the milk building our bones!"⁴³ Instead of her mother replying to the inquiry, her brother Tom steps in, relating a story about an experiment he had learned about from a science textbook in which one rat was given milk from birth, while the other was not. The former rat grew strong and big, while the latter became weak and mangy.⁴⁴ Just like in the instance where Ellen wonders what happens when the body grows, Ellen's mother is again shown being uncertain about the facts of the body. In both examples, male characters are presented as the experts about the scientific aspects of the body, leaving Ellen's mother to rely on their knowledge to compensate for her apparent ignorance and hesitancy.

Just as mothers are established as reliant on male sources of information regarding children's health and bodies, girls throughout the textbooks are also shown consulting male sources for advice about health, illness, injury and prevention. In *The Girl Next Door* and *You*, girls are shown depending on male scientific and medical know-how in order to inform them of how the body works. Apple notes that in the mid-twentieth

⁴² Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 109.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 109-11.

century, girls were trained to be mothers, and mothers were taught to be passive learners who heeded advice from male experts.⁴⁵ Mirroring this view, the textbooks for grades four and five establish girls as passive learners who absorb information from their brothers, fathers and male neighbours about how their bodies work and how to protect them from harm. As the texts transition to the oldest grade, *You and Others* shows how girls should apply male knowledge to taking care of their own children. Thus, as girls mature, the textbooks indicate that it is important for them to know how to not only accept male expert advice, but integrate it into their own mothering. As mothers-in-training, the young girls in the textbook learn what it means to be a “proper mother” by grasping the principles of scientific motherhood early on.⁴⁶

The idea of the passive female learner is made clear in *The Girl Next Door*. In this text, Doctor Williams’ son Jack is an aspiring doctor who likes to impart knowledge to the rest of the children in the neighbourhood. However, this knowledge sharing is always directed at the girls on the block. The young girls reveal a great deal of ignorance when it comes to how human bodies work and how to take care of them. For instance, one day Ellen and Ann go to Doctor Williams’ house because Ann has something in her eye. The doctor is not home, but Jack tells Ann and Ellen that he knows a “secret” about eyes that will help her with her problem.⁴⁷ Jack has Ann sit still and not rub her eye, a treatment that has both Ann and Ellen sceptical. Soon enough, “Ann’s eyes began to fill with tears and then to wink. Before long she [says], ‘I don’t feel anything in my eye now. I guess there’s nothing in it any more.’”⁴⁸ Jack explains that “eyes can often help themselves

⁴⁵ Apple, *Perfect Motherhood*, 8-9, 111.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁷ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 147.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

when something is wrong with them,” but the girls do not believe him, exclaiming “Oh, you are just fooling!”⁴⁹ It is not until Doctor Williams returns and confirms Jack’s reasoning that the girls understand. They initially cannot believe that “eyes are so smart [that] they can help themselves.”⁵⁰ Both Doctor Williams and Jack have to teach the girls about the features of the eye that protect itself from harm, while the girls display their lack of knowledge.

Jack also has to explain to Nancy why one should not put things in one’s ears. During a game of “Hide the Bean,” Nancy thinks she is very clever for hiding the bean in her ear. When she reveals to Jack where she hid it, Jack admonishes “In the upper part of your ear! Oh, Nancy, that’s really not a good place to put it.”⁵¹ Nancy does not understand why it is unsafe to put a bean in her ear, so Jack has to explain how the “ear has parts inside that can get hurt if you get anything in it. . . . And you should never put anything in your nose or mouth that doesn’t belong there, either.”⁵² Similarly, when all of the children in the neighbourhood are sitting around the kitchen table with Doctor Williams’ housekeeper Mrs. Valentine, Nancy tries to sit her rag doll at the table in order to share her milk with the toy. Ellen informs Nancy that the doll “will never sit up straight,” but when Nancy asks her why, Ellen responds with a cursory “Oh, just because it won’t.”⁵³ Mrs. Valentine and the rest of the girls remain silent, and it is Jack who says, “I’ll tell you why.” He proceeds to explain how skeletons in the body help humans sit and stand straight.⁵⁴ Near the end of the textbook, Jack also has to inform Ellen why it is not

⁴⁹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 148.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 148-49.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 175.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 159-161.

safe to sunbath for hours—as she would like to do—because “parts of your body aren’t used to so much sun, and they might get badly burned.”⁵⁵ Throughout *The Girl Next Door*, Jack and his father Doctor Williams are established as the experts on scientific and medical information. They impart this information to the girls only, as they are characterized as oblivious to the workings of the body and how to protect it from injury.

In *You*, Tom is also set up as the young expert on all matters related to health and the body, and he communicates his knowledge with the female characters. At the outset of the text, Ellen is shown lacking any understanding of human anatomy, and Tom has to help her learn about her body. Tom comes across Ellen attempting to draw a picture of herself for the school bulletin board, to which he remarks,

Goodness, Ellen! ... What are you doing now? ... Why don’t you go over to the mirror and look at yourself? You forgot your neck and shoulders. And look at your arms. They don’t come out of your head as you have them doing in your picture!⁵⁶

He guides Ellen through analyzing her body’s shape and size, resulting in a much more accurate depiction of herself. Likewise, in the section “How Do You Look Inside?” Tom gives Ellen a puzzle that requires her to place all of the internal organs in the right place. Ellen starts to assemble the puzzle, but is quickly interrupted by Tom: “What a minute there! ... You had better not do any more guessing. You’re all wrong so far.”⁵⁷ Tom shows Ellen the answer key, and Ellen exclaims, “My goodness! ... I had no idea that’s how I look inside!”⁵⁸ Ellen shows a real lack of awareness of anatomy and Tom has to act as an expert to teach her these scientific aspects of the body.

Further along in the textbook, Ellen finds Tom’s magnifying glass and holds it

⁵⁵ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *The Girl Next Door*, 227.

⁵⁶ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 40-41.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

against her hand, hoping to see her skin cells. Tom dispels her expectations though, noting that his magnifying glass is not powerful enough to see skin cells. Her father intercedes, agreeing that although she will not be able to see her skin cells, she will be able to “see lots of other interesting things” like the folds of the skin, pores, and calluses.⁵⁹ Tom also teaches Ellen about her muscles. While outside one day with some other children in the neighbourhood, they see that Mr. Hunt’s car will not start. Tom indicates that it is because the car has been sitting for “weeks and weeks” in Mr. Hunt’s garage, just like when humans do not use their muscles, they will get smaller. Ellen responds that Tom is “just fooling,” but Tom insists that “It is true ... If you don’t use them for a long, long time, [muscles] may be no good to you at all.”⁶⁰ Once again, Ellen shows her ignorance to matters of science and the body, and Tom has to inform her understanding, fulfilling the role of male expert.

Ellen also learns from Tom about the health risks associated with food. She and Tom discuss why the Bluebird Tearoom was shut down. Ellen notes that although she knew it “wasn’t very clean,” she thought that since Mr. Jones owns it, “he could do whatever he wanted.”⁶¹ Tom has to explain to Ellen why it is unsafe to eat in a restaurant that is unclean, and why the Bluebird Tearoom should have been shut down as a result of the health risks it imposes on the public.⁶² This explanation is followed by a section on mothers and daughters storing foods properly in the home. Ellen is thus shown to be taught by Tom the reasons why unsanitary conditions are not appropriate for preparing and storing food, but is also charged with being ultimately responsible for this health

⁵⁹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 59-61.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 190-91.

measure in the home.

Girls are not only illustrated as being uninformed about the body and how it works, they are also shown to be passive learners. Throughout the examples above, boys and men teach the girls about different aspects of the body, while the girls simply listen and absorb—often with a sense of disbelief that the boys are fooling them. Girls are never shown looking up information for themselves, further fulfilling the position as the passive learner. In *You*, Ellen asks Tom why people can cut their nails and hair without hurting themselves, but they cannot cut their skin without feeling it. Tom replies that he does not know the answer, but that they could look the answer up in a book that he owns.⁶³

Although Tom is not the expert in this instance, he shows an active willingness to learn, while Ellen remains a passive recipient of information. Tom is also expected to be an active learner by adults. For example, on a camping trip with Cub Scouts, Tom wonders what happens to food once it is eaten. Henry, one of the Scouts leaders, responds that “it’s a long story, and a very interesting one. Look up the story for yourself when you get home—just find a good health book there or at the library. You’ll be surprised to find what an interesting story it is.”⁶⁴ Once again, boys are revealed to be active learners who are capable of seeking out scientific information, while girls are never shown throughout any of the textbooks to do research on their own. The only example of a girl teaching another girl about some aspect of the body appears in *You*, where Ellen’s friend Nancy tells her that not everyone can stand up straight without the proper nutrition and care. Nancy declares that she knows this “because [she] learned about [it] at school last

⁶³ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 68-69.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 134-35.

week.”⁶⁵ Instead of showing a sense of confidence as the boys have done throughout the examples—where they simply ‘know’ the answer or have researched it on their own—Nancy validates her knowledge through a reference to school.

In the textbook written for grade sixes, the advice on scientific mothering progresses from establishing males as experts and females as passive learners, to knowing how to apply this knowledge in their own home. In *You and Others*, girls are shown following their mothers’ example by consulting male sources for information regarding food and how to properly nourish their own families. As mothers-in-training, girls are expected to understand how to properly store, prepare and serve food for the health benefit of the rest of the family, as these skills will be essential once they have children of their own. Elizabeth is described consulting the poster that her mother has posted on the kitchen wall regarding how to properly prepare foods to retain their vitamins and minerals. The text explains that “Another thing Elizabeth has learned by helping at home is that there are correct as well as incorrect ways to cook foods”—information which will be essential for “when she [grows] up and [has] a home of her own.”⁶⁶ As already demonstrated with her mother, the poster appears to come from a government source, denoting its link to male scientific and medical information.

Mid-twentieth century, mothers and girls as mothers-in-training were regarded as the primary caretakers of children. They were responsible for protecting their children’s health and physical well-being, but were also assumed to lack the scientific and medical knowledge to accomplish this duty properly. They were told by experts in science, medicine, and childrearing that they should consult male sources to inform their roles as

⁶⁵ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 116-17.

⁶⁶ Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 80, 84.

mothers. As demonstrated, the junior textbooks from the *Health and Personal Development* series also reflect this view. Mothers are shown as the sole parents responsible for and concerned about the health of the children, but are demonstrated consulting male sources of information to strengthen their mothering abilities. Likewise, girls in *The Girl Next Door* and *You* are shown as ignorant to the ways in which the body works and how to protect it from illness and harm—information that is supplied to them by male characters in the texts. The textbooks therefore project the message that girls as mothers-in-training should learn how to consult male scientific and medical experts to ensure that as they grow into women and mothers, they will know how to protect their children and provide them with the best possible environment in which to grow strong and healthy. This message is underscored in the textbook *You and Others*, highlighting how as girls mature into women, they will need to know how to appropriately care for their future families. Fulfilling the image of the ignorant female was thereby expected of young girls, while boys and men were expected to occupy the roles as expert sources of information. According to the textbooks, to deviate from these roles would thereby be considered a sign of unhealthy mental hygiene in young children at the time.

Conclusion: Representing the Ideal:

The Natural Progression to Wife, Mother, and Homemaker

As the narrator notes in *You*, “glands cause boys, as they grow, to become men, ready to be husbands and fathers; and they cause girls, as they grow, to become women, ready to be wives and mothers.”¹ Amid a scientific discussion about how the body grows and works, the narrator points to an important, yet latent message of the *Health and Personal Development* textbook series: in order to show healthy development both socially and physically, boys should mature into husbands and fathers, while girls should mature into wives and mothers. Not only is this represented as the ideal transition from childhood to adulthood, but it is implied as the natural, biological way. As an anatomical feature of the body, the textbooks suggest that glands help boys and girls develop into the social roles of husbands and wives. It is this ideal that the textbooks strive to convey, effectively representing the realm of choices that girls and boys both possess: either accept and fall in line with this “natural” progression, or risk the alternative of an unhappy, unwell future. To understand and fulfil this natural maturity was to show normal mental hygiene in a time when stability and normality were considered paramount to Canadians.

Mental hygiene was an increasing concern for educators and many Canadians overall in the post-World War Two period, and as a result, the *Health and Personal Development* textbook series was recommended for use in Ontario schools until 1963. The series was recommended for use to not only teach students about their physical health, but about how to achieve good mental health as well. Students were thereby exposed to the social anxiety of mental hygiene and of how to cultivate normality in their

¹ Baruch, Montgomery, and Bauer, *You*, 256.

lives through educational resources like the health textbook series examined in this thesis. Mental hygiene was inherently linked to a sense of normality as it was understood in the post-war era, and as this thesis demonstrates, to an understanding and fulfilment of a preconceived societal notion of what it meant to be a “boy” and “girl” and a “man” and “woman” in the 1950s. In particular, the textbooks convey the didactic message that for healthy personal development, girls should mature into wives, mothers, and homemakers. The alternative, as the textbooks imply, would be a life marred by poor mental hygiene for the girls as they grow into women. In order to be considered appropriately feminine and marriageable, the textbooks suggest that girls should follow in their mothers’ footsteps.

Mothers in the textbooks model the behaviour and skills expected of girls. They are experts in their own sphere, managing the household, taking care of the children, and ensuring the stability and happiness of the family. They are shown constantly working to create a life in which their children and husband can flourish—an environment that is healthy, safe, and happy. Mothers also maintain an attractive feminine appearance and help to create a sense of community. However, this vision of life is where expectations of mothers both begin and end. Normal mothers are not shown as active members of the paid labour force, and do not play a part in the male-dominated world of work, politics, and the economy. While some mothers may have hypothetically chosen a life of domesticity, the textbooks suggest that this is the *only* truly acceptable occupation for mothers. The textbooks establish that while women could work before marriage and children, it would not be healthy for the family if they pursued work for pay after a husband and children came along.

This limited realm of choices is projected onto the girls in the textbooks as well. Like their mothers, they are expected to become experts in the domestic sphere. The textbooks convey that they may have agency in their roles, including the responsibilities of managing the household and making important decisions regarding their future children's welfare; however, they could not anticipate or hope to participate in the paid labour force or step outside of these gendered notions of femininity, without the risk of poor mental hygiene as a result. The gradation of content throughout the three textbooks confirms this point: as in the grade four and five texts, *The Girl Next Door* and *You*, girls are introduced to the ideas of domesticity, feminine appearance, community involvement, and scientific mothering. By the sixth grade text, *You and Others*, these notions are put into practice, as girls act like mothers-in-training, learning how to manage the household while babysitting younger siblings, to socialize with boys in an appropriately feminine way, to look to male sources for expert advice on preparing food for the family, and lastly, to maintain an attractive appearance in order to please society and be considered marriageable.

The progression that girls in the textbooks experience, from young girls to mothers-in-training, demonstrates a seemingly natural evolution from girl, to wife, to mother, and homemaker. The suggested naturalness of this maturation is rendered clearly by the textbooks. There exists no hint of rebellion against this progression, and in fact, there exists instead an outright acceptance of this process as a biological reality. Just as the body grows from childhood to adulthood, so too does a girl's ability to fulfil the social roles anticipated of her. Granted, one requires adequate nourishment and physical activity to grow into a physically healthy adult, and so too, girls require guidance and

practice to enable them to become mentally healthy adults as wives, mothers, and homemakers. The excerpt from the beginning of this thesis, about Young Elizabeth and her experience reading her *Girl Guide Handbook*, exemplifies this process: “as she was learning the kinds of things she would *need to know* when she grew up.”² The advice in the handbook on being a housewife and mother was not information she possibly needed, or would be helpful to know, but knowledge that was deemed imperative for her development. Thus, the textbook series’ function, is to among other objectives, guide girls through their maturation toward their natural, healthy roles as adults. And therein lies the inherent contradiction of these textbooks: if becoming a domesticated wife and mother was such a natural process, why did the textbooks need to teach girls how to achieve this at all? Should they not have had, perhaps with help from their female glands, progressed naturally into these roles?

Given the contradictory function of the textbooks, one can ascertain the highly political and social function of educational resources like textbooks in a given society. The maturation from girl to mother and wife was not an inherently natural process for all women in all circumstances, but instead an ideal representation that delineated what was expected and desired of girls and women at the time. Marrying a man, performing motherly duties, dressing a certain way, being a community maker, and deferring to male experts were not necessarily natural behaviours to all females, and were thus identified as necessary to teach in order to cultivate mentally healthy, happy, and productive women society desired to have. Given that textbooks reflect and reproduce dominant ideologies,³ it is clear that society determined that this was a discourse essential to communicate to

² Shacter and Bauer, *You and Others*, 80. Emphasis mine.

³ van Dijk.

children of the decade. The textbooks therefore did not reflect reality for everyone in the 1950s, but sought to promote it through an idealized lens. Mothers who participated in the paid labour market, women who joined labour movements, and those who had a greater influence in the male sphere than is implied,⁴ are all ignored in the textbooks in favour of an idealized representation of reality.

The function of the textbooks to teach a certain ideal also confirms and reflects the shift from the eugenic thinking that predominated the early part of the mental hygiene movement, during which time psychologists blamed heredity for the inheritance of poor mental hygiene, to the focus on prevention and remediation that began to take shape over the 1930s and 1940s.⁵ By the post-World War Two era, psychologists had generally changed their focus to preventing poor mental hygiene by intervening in a child's life as early as possible.⁶ Thus, textbooks written for elementary students such as those under examination in this thesis sought to teach young children about the ways by which they could prevent abnormality in adulthood—i.e. by falling into their prescribed gender roles. No longer were psychologists overly concerned with who mated with whom, but instead, with how to target and inculcate the values deemed essential to portray in order to be considered mentally normal in society.

Moreover, the textbooks represent only a limited sample of Canadian people of the 1950s. The families portrayed throughout the pages on Driftwood Lane and in the town of Williston are all white, heterosexual, and middle-class. As such, the textbooks do not speak to myriad of family types, including immigrants, minorities, homosexuals,

⁴ Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 17-18.

⁵ Richardson, *The Century of the Child*. McLaren, *Master Race*.

⁶ Gleason, 24.

single-parent families, poor or lower-class families, and working mothers. The textbook series was the only one recommended for use throughout Ontario in the 1950s, which means that many children who were exposed to these texts likely did not relate to them on a personal basis. One can only speculate the effect textbooks may have had on a student population; however, it is important to reflect on whether those children whose families were not represented in the pages of the *Health and Personal Development* series, or whose goals and ambitions did not line up with the ideal representations of men and women, were made to feel targeted for being “abnormal” through texts that promoted homogeneity and the domestic ideal as the pinnacle of normality and of good mental hygiene.

This study helps to contribute to the growing body of literature on textbook analysis and their latent and covert meanings. Just as van Dijk, Montgomery, Stanley, Apple, Christian-Smith, and Cook have suggested,⁷ textbooks reflect the dominant ideologies of the time, and often gloss over or miss completely what is going on underneath the surface. They use the tactics of essentialization and generalization to convey a particular point of view that may not be accurate or reflect the real lives of many Canadians. Just as current history textbooks continue to ignore the “banal racisms” upon which Canada was founded and continues to operate today,⁸ the health textbooks of the 1950s ignored the multifaceted role of women in Canada in favour of an idealized representation that signified good personal adjustment and mental hygiene.

This study certainly opens the possibility for further analysis into the use and content of health textbooks during the 1950s, including a thorough examination of the

⁷ van Dijk, Montgomery, 427-28. Stanley, 113-116. Apple and Christian-Smith, 4. Cook, ““Evil Influence,”” 4.

⁸ Montgomery, 427-442.

representation of boys and men to discern the specific types of gendered roles that they were also expected to fulfil. Likewise, one could approach this series through a different social lens, examining its middle-class, white, and/or heterosexual point of view. An oral history project on this topic could also yield some worthwhile perspectives on how girls and/or boys interpreted, remembered, and received the content on mental hygiene and personal development. Perhaps one could uncover a growing sense of discontent among students of the 1950s, or whether it was only over time that some adopted a more democratic and egalitarian understanding of gender relations, leading into the second wave of feminism in the western world. Ultimately, this study provides us with one window into what content was available for use in Canadian classrooms during a dynamic and fascinating decade in Canadian history, and can help to contribute to our understanding of mental hygiene, gender roles, and education in Canada.

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