

THE DOUBLE BED: SEX, HETEROSEXUAL MARRIAGE AND
THE BODY IN POSTWAR ENGLISH CANADA, 1946-1966

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ABSTRACT

Sex and sexuality are embodied experiences that are highly constructed by society. Sexual acts are subject to varied historical meanings, both dominant and subversive, which change over time and space. This dissertation explores how embodied heterosexual married sexual experiences were constructed for, and by, women in the immediate postwar era (1946-1966) and how that sexuality interacted with related social paradigms such as gender roles, motherhood, and femininity within English Canada. Using the body as a lens, this dissertation explores how three main sites of authoritative discourse attempted to police postwar sexual bodies through the creation of ideal, or Leviathan, bodies and associated systems of encoded knowledges and mores called “body politics.” The first case study examines the medicalized body, using the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* demonstrating how mothers were constructed as the keystones of their families; it reveals the intimate ties between familial gender and sexual role deviance and reproductive illnesses in women’s bodies. The second case study examines how the Anglican, United and Roman Catholic Churches reframed sex as sacramental for English Canadian married couples encouraging them to engage in sexual coitus to both strengthen their marriages and renew their spiritual connection to God. The third case study uses *I Love Lucy* to interrogate how mass media created and reflected postwar sexual and gender norms while simultaneously subverting them, generating a carnivalesque situation of tightly contained deviance. This dissertation then moves on to examine how the discourses of the previous three chapters affected actual women as demonstrated by a series of eighteen interviews with women who married between 1939 and 1966. The oral histories establish that actual corporeal bodies were at best distorted, or “fun house,” mirrors that only ever reflected imperfect copies of the ideal bodies they were supposed to emulate. In addition to making significant contributions to the historiographies of each of the case studies contained therein, this dissertation adds new knowledges about the ways that “normal” bodies work throughout history, creating simultaneous continuity and change, as well as how sexuality and gender norms are intimately connected within the realm of the body.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AID Artificial Insemination
AAC Anglican Archives of Canada
CBS Columbia Broadcasting System
CMAJ Canadian Medical Association Journal
IUD Intrauterine Device
KLS Kelly Longitudinal Study
LAC Library and Archives Canada
PPD Postpartum Depression
PTS Premenstrual Tensions Syndrome
WAAF Women's Auxiliary Air Force
UCAC United Church Archives of Canada

CHAPTER ONE

Breaking Free from the “Nostalgia Trap”:

Historiography, Methodology, and the Paradox of Postwar Sexuality

Present-day sexual conservatives like to remember the 1950s as a lost era of family values and solid, ‘traditional’ morals. In contemporary sexual politics, the 1950s are the standard against which some conservatives measure changes to the organization of sexuality. The mores of that decade sit as a kind of benchmark, a symbol of how far North Americans have travelled since morality was ‘as it should be,’ with clear gender roles in every household and heterosexual conjugal monogamy as the primary form of sexual partnership.¹

To the normal go considerable spoils.²

Between *Bomb Girls* and *Mad Men*: The Idealization of Postwar Sexuality

Most North Americans envision the period between the end of World War II and the sexual/feminist revolution as a golden age. In this supposed historical oasis the complexities of modern life did not invade the tranquillity represented by, and within, the heterosexual, monogamous, nuclear family unit. These images, created through nostalgia and fuelled by reruns of *Leave it to Beaver* and *I Love Lucy* on channels such as “TV Land,” have captured the collective consciousness as bucolic, uncomplicated, and often desexualized.³ Moreover, recent popular cultural representations which have “resexualized” both the wartime years and the later sixties – in particular *Bomb Girls* and the incredibly popular *Mad Men*, both of which feature a myriad of sexual opportunities for their characters, within and outside of marriage – have reinforced the intervening period as a “break” within history.⁴ Such an idealized image has also served to make the “fifties” a powerful rhetorical weapon wielded by social conservative groups eager to return to “morality as it should be.”⁵ In invoking this image those groups

¹ Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 3.

² Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Between the Lines Press, 1999), 228.

³ See: Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Daniel Marcus, *The Fifties and the Sixties in Contemporary Culture and Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Mariana Valverde, “Building Anti-Delinquent Communities: Morality, Gender, and Generation in the City,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr, 19-45 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

⁴ *Bomb Girls*, Muse Entertainment and Back Alley Film Productions. Originally aired CTV, 2012-2013; *Mad Men*, Lionsgate Television. Originally aired AMC, 2007-present.

⁵ In this dissertation the term “fifties” is used to denote the immediate postwar period between World War II and the sexual and feminist revolutions. Though actually encompassing the late forties and early sixties, it is often colloquially referred to as

use the very bodies of the women who lived and married before the sexual revolution as artillery to protest a multitude of issues from gay marriage, to the reframing of abortion rights, to the teaching of religious-based content in public schools throughout the United States and Canada.

Caught between the eras of “khaki fever” and “sex, drugs and rock and roll” the bodies of the women who actually lived during this time period have been reduced to straw avatars – at best, intermittently sexual (after all the baby boom had to come from somewhere).⁶ However, beyond “birthing the boom” these women’s sexuality, the knowledge they had about their bodies and the way they understood the intimate relation of their gender and sexual roles, has become reduced in the public mind to the pop culture image of the housewife cheerfully vacuuming in pearls and high heels, her sexuality encompassed by the contradiction of separated twin beds in the master bedroom.⁷

The great paradox of this bucolic image is that the postwar period – encompassing the late 1940s through the early 1960s – was neither sexually dormant nor sexually quiescent. In the wake of two World Wars and the Great Depression, and spurred on by fears of a postwar spike in divorce and the outside threat of Communism, the social leaders in both Canada and the United States looked to the heterosexual nuclear family as the bedrock on which to rebuild Western civilization and, at the same time, worried it was too fragile to bear the weight. Authorities from the state, the medical and psychological professions, the dominant churches, and other sources of postwar power focused intense scrutiny on the postwar family and, in particular, the postwar couple as they endowed experts with the duty to define the parameters of what was “normal” and “healthy,” and having defined those boundaries, to rigorously police them. As Michel Foucault and others have demonstrated regarding Victorian sexuality, the combination of a need for stable sexuality – inevitably seated with the heterosexual couple – and fears over that stability actually serves to create more sexual discourse than comparatively sexually “liberal times.”⁸ As Foucault notes, while on the one hand there is the creation of silences about

the fifties. This label of course is another way that the postwar era is cast as homogenous and static – truncated to a single, easily defined decade.

⁶ For works on gender during World War II see: Jeffry Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004); Ruth Roach Pierson, *Canadian Women and the Second World War* (Ottawa: Historical Association Booklet, 1983); “*They’re Still Women After All*”: *the Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).

⁷ The inspiration for the title of this dissertation comes from the way that “sharing a double bed” was used as a polite euphemism for sex in the post war era.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction Volume I* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 17-18. (Emphasis in original). See also: Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

sexual practices deemed illicit or crude, the very process of creating a repressive system of sexuality is an “incitement to discourse” which creates:

the multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself: an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause *it* to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail.⁹

What Foucault observed in the Victorian era, and what I argue was also present in the postwar era, was that by attempting to confine sexuality within a particular standard of normal, social authorities created an archive of both “normal” and “abnormal” sexualities as they codified sex, debated it, studied it, and inevitably, policed and punished it. Far from being a sexually dormant era, the postwar time period saw an explosion of sexual discourse by newly endowed sexual experts and authorities who gave power to, and drew power from, the central place of sexuality within society.

This dissertation is an archaeology of that discourse. It ultimately seeks to understand the ways that the paradox of the postwar era – as both sexually conservative and sexually explosive – affected the experience of sexuality of one particular group: heterosexual married women. How did the different authorities use discourse to create values of normality and abnormality and, in turn, impose them or coerce postwar women to accept them? How did postwar women engage with the ideal bodies created by these authorities and how did that engagement, whether positive or negative, shape their own embodied experiences? Did the negotiation of these valuations create a spectrum of normality or were the boundaries more rigid and binary? The answers to these complex questions shatters the popular mythos that paints the postwar era as a sexually dormant time and instead demonstrates the ways that the fifties was an era of sexual production, both repressive and positive, that can be connected to both the sexual advances of World War II and the sexual revolution of the late 1960s and the 1970s. The relationship between authorities in the creation of this discourse is also important: it demonstrates how competing sites of discourse negotiate the creation of a single dominant discourse (in this case the importance of married heterosexual coitus) while simultaneously reinterpreting that ideal to reflect each authority’s individual messages and to increase the power of their own individual power structures. Further, this dissertation demonstrates the important links between sexual and gender roles in the postwar era and the way that both roles contributed to the image of the female body and women’s understanding of their own corporeality. The ways in which individual women negotiated authoritative

⁹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 17, 18.

ideals also shed important light on how dominant groups benefit from, as well as subvert and thus weaken, the dominant discourses that both empower and constrain their experience.

Dominant discourses are by their nature raced and classed. They were both aimed at, and legitimized, the dominance of white, middle-class bodies as the ideal mean to which all citizens should aspire. This is especially true in the postwar period when white middle class morality held a great deal of social capital.¹⁰ Historicizing the postwar dominance of white, middle class bodies should not be seen as a further celebration of that dominance, but rather as an acknowledgement that all bodies have a history and through historicizing white middle-class legitimization we can challenge any claims to the naturalness of that embodied authority. Therefore, as authors such as Mary Louise Adams and Jonathan Ned Katz have demonstrated, historicizing dominant bodies opens the doors to further studies of how non-dominant bodies negotiated classed, raced, and sexualized ideals.¹¹ It should be remembered throughout the text that while the focus of this dissertation is on sexuality, and thus the relationship between heterosexual dominance and homosexual “deviance” maintains a primary place in the analysis, that non-white and non-middle class bodies were also in a contested relationship with Leviathan bodies that disenfranchised and delegitimized their corpuses. Theorists such as Homi Bhabba have demonstrated racialized bodies, and to a lesser extent classed bodies, were and are, exhorted by social authorities to conform to white, middle class ideals both by the overwhelming dominance and normalization of those bodies in society and by more direct pressure. At the same time, however, such non-dominant bodies are also simultaneously denied social acceptance and the ability to ever fully achieve the status of white, middle class bodies; they can only ever “mimic,” and never replicate, dominant standards.¹² Indeed, racialized and classed bodies in immediate postwar English Canada were used as “others” whose subordinate status reinforced the white, middle class ideals, and the rare description of non-white, non-middle class, bodies in authoritative texts confirms this hierarchy.

One of the main struggles that contemporary historians face is navigating a surfeit of potentially relevant sources all clamouring for attention; this is especially true in the study of sexuality as it reaches almost every person’s life in one way or another. In order to avoid pasting together a pastiche of wide-ranging sources, this dissertation uses a case study approach focusing on an in-depth analysis of three

¹⁰ See Doug Owsam, *Born at the Right Time: A History the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

¹¹ Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*; Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹² Homi Bhabba, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” *October* 28 (Spring 1984): 125-133.

particular sites of authoritative discourse: a triad of power created by the medical community, the dominant religions, and popular culture. Though by no means the only sources of authoritative discourse, these three groups dictated much of the flow of information with the first two creating many, if not most, of the postwar experts on postwar marriage and sexuality. These experts then competed with public sources of popular entertainment/information for the public's attention.

My analysis of these discourses begins in Chapter Two. It examines the ways that the English Canadian medical community represented the married sexual body – both to themselves and their patients – through an analysis of the bodies in *The Canadian Medical Association Journal*, Canada's primary general medical magazine, from 1946 to 1966. Chapter Three investigates the ways in which the dominant Christian religions in Canada framed and reframed married sexuality throughout the same time period. The Catholic, Anglican, and United Churches were all deeply concerned about married sexuality and generated an archive of advice via special bureaus on marriage and sexuality. These bureaus not only produced advice manuals and pamphlets for the laity but also discussed and debated issues of married sexuality in their conferences and meetings. Chapter Four examines the role that media had to play in influencing embodied married sexuality using the immensely popular television show *I Love Lucy* as a case study. Chosen for its popularity during the postwar era throughout the United States and Canada, *I Love Lucy* is a particularly fruitful source in its own right and as one of the first examples of an “imagined reality” show as it deliberately paralleled (as well as normalized and subverted) the real-life marriage of its stars and creators Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Each of these sites of dominant discourses – medical, religious, and popular culture – created idealizations of what married sexuality should be. These ideals often overlapped, increasing the strength of a particular facet of discourse, but at other times they contradicted each other creating weaknesses in the dominant message. The effectiveness of those ideals in policing the bodies of real women is assessed in Chapter Five, which contains an analysis of eighteen oral history interviews conducted with women who lived and married during the relevant time period. In contrast to the dominant discourses which are national and international in scope, these interviewees were drawn solely from Western Canada. Not only was this geographical limitation practical for conducting interviews, but it serves several important academic purposes. The first is to counteract the (unintentional) appropriation of general Canadian history by central Canadian (often Ontario- or Toronto-centric) voices. As the following historiographical discussion demonstrates, the majority of “general” scholarship, wherein the conclusions are supposed to be extrapolated as applying across Canada, is centred in Central Canada. While in some cases this

extrapolation is justified, the unique spatial and ideological geographies of the West (encompassing British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), form different patterns of discourse creation and distribution.¹³ In particular, dominant discourses are by nature urban entities, created within institutions such as universities and central offices which are almost always located in larger cities. However, the analysis of the oral history conducted for this project, as many of the women interviewed lived in a rural areas for at least part of their lives, demonstrates that dominant urban discourses were often weakened in isolated or small town situations. The lack of medical specialists, denominational choices, and a general sense of “making do” altered the ways that idealized and dominant bodies were received and incorporated by rural women. The spatial relations between rural and urban bodies, Western and Central bodies, and Canadian and international bodies adds another axis of analysis to this dissertation. Thus, while the interplay between the dominant discourses and the corporeal bodies of the interviewees are not intended to be conclusive, either for the region or across Canada, this dissertation still makes a significant contribution to our currently underdeveloped understanding of postwar sexuality and gendered relations.

Centring the Body: Methodologically Placing the Body at the Core of Discourse Analysis

On the surface, the advice of the Roman Catholic Church to young parishioners, the scripts of *I Love Lucy*, and medical prescriptions seem to have little in common. Yet, in the case of postwar married sexuality the gazes of these and other authorities were firmly fixed on creating and defining the ideal married sexual body. Rather than merely breaking down the discourses presented by these groups and then comparing and contrasting those to the corporeal or “real” bodies of the interviewed women, this dissertation answers the call of various authors to make the body the central focus of analysis and to write an “embodied history.” Scholars such as Moira Gatens, C. W. Bynum, and Joanna Bourke have all sought to move bodies from the margins of history by engaging in what Bourke terms an “aesthesiological history” wherein bodily feelings and processes are viewed as “cultural artifacts” in the same way writings or material goods are.¹⁴ Aesthesiological or embodied histories make links between

¹³ For historical discussions of Western spatial and ideological geography see: Alan F. J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1975); J.M.S. Careless, “The Rise of Cities in Canada Before 1914,” *CHA Booklet* 32 (Ottawa: Love Printing Source, 1978); Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960,” *Canadian Historical Review* LXXII, no. 4 (1991): 471-502; Bill Waiser *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 2005).

¹⁴ Joanna Bourke, “Sexual Violence, Marital Guidance, and Victorian Bodies: An Aesthesiology,” *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 3 (March 2008): 419-436; Joanna Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (Emeryville, CA: Publishers Group West, 2006); Joanna

the imagination or discourse and actual corporeal bodies, thus noting the ways that history has shaped the embodied experience as well as how bodies work as historical actors in their own right. Currently a much more popular theoretical point of view in European histories, especially in time periods such as the early modern era, where the contemporary world view invited the blurring of the lines between the body and the imagination (or soul/spirit), embodied histories, by forcing the body to remain at the centre of analysis, illuminate different avenues of inquiry about the relation of the body to the state and other authorities.¹⁵

Bourke, in her work on marital rights and masculinity, demonstrates that placing the body at the centre of analysis illuminates how “bodies” are used as symbols for larger concepts – such as the way that Victorian women lost both their legal rights and their control over their own corporeality through their “absorption” in their husband’s personhood – and how discourse changed the way that people experienced bodily sensations. In Bourke’s work, men who “raped”¹⁶ their wives in the Victorian era were pathologized as weaker, more animalistic, and, if they were constant rapists, would suffer symptoms such as wasting strength and idiocy – the same symptoms suffered by habitual masturbators. That is, because upon marriage a man’s wife’s body was absorbed into his own, by raping his wife a man was in the legal, moral, and medical sense abusing himself.¹⁷ Thus, Bourke exhibits that, by establishing the body at the centre of analysis, we gain a deeper understanding of the concept of the wife as part of the husband that goes far beyond a legal definition.

Moira Gatens’s *Imaginary Bodies* also argues that the imagination and the corporeal experience cannot be separated; Gatens, however, focuses most of her attention on the creation of what she terms “Leviathan” bodies or the idealized bodies created by societal authorities. Drawing heavily on Dutch philosopher Spinoza, Gatens argues that ideal Leviathan bodies are created and used to disenfranchise those who do not live up to their inevitably impossible standards; imaginary bodies thus have immense power over corporeal bodies – a process which she names a “body politic.” Gatens, writing from a

Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); Caroline Bynum, “Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist’s Perspective,” *Critical Inquiry* 22, no. 1 (Autumn 1995): 1-33; Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁵ See: Bynum, “Why All the Fuss About the Body?,” 1-33; Edward Berhrend-Martinez, “Manhood and the Neutered Body in the Early Modern Spain,” *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 4 (Summer 2005): 1073-1093; Sharon Howard, “Imagining the Pain and Peril of Seventeenth-century Childbirth: Travail and Deliverance in the Making of an Early Modern World,” *Social History of Medicine* 16, no. 3 (2003): 367-382.

¹⁶ This is a contemporary definition denoting a forced sexual interaction. In Victorian England it was legally and morally impossible to rape your wife as the marriage was seen to grant the husband lifetime use of his wife’s body. Bourke, “Sexual Violence, Marital Guidance, and Victorian Bodies,” 421.

¹⁷ Bourke, “Sexual Violence, Marital Guidance, and Victorian Bodies,” 423-424.

feminist perspective, limits this model to gender relations by arguing that Leviathan bodies are inherently male, creating a model of citizenship tied to sex which inevitably disenfranchises women. If the body politic is dominated by Leviathan male bodies, female bodies are inherently defined as “others,” who, even if they imitate the male Leviathan, are disenfranchised as grotesque or “wrong.”¹⁸

This dissertation uses Gatens’s model to examine how different authorities create different Leviathan bodies (which are not always male) in the creation of body politics which are used as frameworks to discipline the bodies of their constituents. However, it also expands on her theory by analyzing how Leviathan bodies interact, and compete, with each other, even if the overall ideals of the body politic remains the same. Gatens also notes all Leviathan bodies have an Achilles heel – despite their societal authority they can never encompass the range that is individual human experience. Just as no person can ever live up to a Leviathan body politic, neither can the Leviathan body fully discipline the individual. Again, as Gatens is focused on sex relations she demonstrates the way that the individual female body can subvert the male dominated body politic. However, she does not examine the ways in which individual male bodies – partially congruent with the dominant body politic – might also be subversive. This final point of view opens up new analytical potentialities.

What Gatens terms a “body politic” Michel Foucault labels an “episteme,” which he defines as the body of authoritative ideals that dominate during a particular period.¹⁹ This dissertation answers Foucault’s call for “archaeologies of the episteme” as it illuminates and analyzes the ways in which authorities create dominant discourses that are used to police an era’s citizens. Authorities invested with the power to control bodies create “organized systems of knowledge”²⁰ that constrain the ways that bodies are understood at a particular point in time; they often accomplish this by evoking the image of objective scholarship, frequently “science,” to normalize ways of thinking as “true.” Such truths as the normality, and thus, the dominance, of heterosexuality prior to the 1960s create binaries between bodies that are normal (and also usually useful and productive) and those who are, in direct contrast, abnormal (not useful or productive). Abnormal bodies are both silenced, in that they are deemed illegitimate, and at the same time showcased as every definition of the “normal” is necessarily a definition of the binary “abnormal.” Foucault argues that the true power of such epistemes derives not from their ability to

¹⁸ Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies*, 21-27.

¹⁹ For Foucault’s explanation of episteme see: Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge of the Discourse on Language* trans. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

²⁰ Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, 6. Adams provides an excellent discussion of how to use Foucaultian discourse theory in her introduction.

punish malcontents through material structures such as prisons or insane asylums but to create in each person the desire to conform to those ideals and self-police their own bodies and those close to them.²¹

These three frameworks – embodied history, Leviathan bodies, and archaeology of epistemes – together provide an analytical structure that breaks down and examines the discourse that creates idealized bodies as well as evaluates the relationship between different dominant bodies and between corporeal bodies and ideal bodies. Discourses, whether textual, oral, or visual, in this framework are not merely abstract thoughts that can be used by authorities to justify the policing of bodies, they are social scripts that, to varying degrees, influence the way individuals experience their bodies in different situations and then conceptualize those experiences.

Love (North) American Style: Relevant Historiography

Medical, religious, and popular culture historiographies rarely interact; conference papers addressing those topics are much more likely to occur in competing sessions than together on a panel. This is unfortunate as these seemingly disparate historiographies often ask similar questions and use similar methodological viewpoints. However, for the sake of clarity, I have placed the majority of the historiography, as well as any specialized methodological considerations, in the relevant case study chapters with a more generalized historiographical overview here in the introduction.

While currently the public eagerly consumes any sartorial or household fashion labeled “fifties retro” a relatively small number of scholars have sought to understand the social makeup of that era; it was not until the late 1980s that the first monographs appeared. Two works, both published in 1988, Elizabeth Tyler May’s *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* and Beth Bailey’s *From the Front Porch to the Back Seat: Courtship in the Twentieth-Century America* demonstrate the divide that has occurred in many postwar works: between those scholars who characterise the immediate postwar era as a unique time, a break in history, and those who argue for more social continuity between eras.²² May uses her primary source, the Kelly Longitudinal Study (KLS), an open-ended questionnaire published out of the University of Michigan, to argue that in the Cold War era women’s sexuality was “contained” within the heterosexual nuclear family. This containment, she argues, was not a return to a

²¹ Foucault discusses this process extensively in: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception* trans. A. M. Sheridan (New York: Routledge, 1989).

²² Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Beth L. Bailey, *From the Front Porch to the Back Seat: Courtship in the Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

patriarchal past but “[r]ather it was the first wholehearted effort to create a home that would fulfil virtually all its members’ personal needs through an energized and expressive life.”²³ That is, though women were confined to the domestic roles of wife and mother, they were supposed to find satisfaction in those roles aided by unlimited access to consumer goods, and, more importantly, by an abundant and satisfying sex life with their husband. In this way, May argues, contemporary social and political concerns such as the newly recognized sexuality in women, the return of veterans to the work world, communism, and political instability were “solved” in the creation, and maintenance, of each heterosexual family unit.²⁴ The family was a microcosm of the state with stability moving from the ground upwards, an argument echoed in a Canadian context in Annalee Gözl’s 1993 article, “Family Matters: The Canadian Family and the State in the Postwar Period.”²⁵

In contrast, Bailey argues that we cannot see the postwar era as unique because sexual activity remained largely consistent throughout the World War II era and into the sexual revolution, though the meaning of those acts fluctuated, and also because the seeds of the sexual and gender revolutions of the late 1960s and the 1970s were established much earlier. For Bailey the sexual revolution was more of a sexual evolution. For example, she contends that while American heterosexuality was highly codified in youth courtship rituals, which were intended to end in marriage, those rituals did change over time and that occurrences, such as the increased availability of automobiles, which increased both mobility and privacy, allowed for agency. Teenagers with access to cars could use that mobility and privacy to engage in forbidden pre-marital sexuality away from the prying eyes of authority figures. Bailey, and later critics including Joanne Meyerowitz in *June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar American, 1945-1960*, have further argued that May’s “containment theory” is too constrictive in reducing postwar women to one strategy – acceptance – in the management of gender relations.

Despite the growing body of literature supporting continuity, the containment theory has remained attractive to many scholars. Sociologist Wini Brienes, who wrote her own experiences into her work, *Young, White and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties*, argues that acceptance of sexual and gender role containment was a woman’s lot during that decade and something that she and other women had to break free from as they took up the mission of second wave feminism. Other scholars,

²³ May, *Homeward Bound*, 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁵ Annalee Gözl, “Family Matters: The Canadian Family and the State in the Postwar Period,” *Left History* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 9-50.

while still accepting the overarching theme of containment, have attempted to add nuance to the idea.²⁶ In *To Have and Hold*, Jessica Weiss attempts to refine May's containment theory by investigating what she terms the "carrot" and the "stick." That is, she examines how containment within the heterosexual nuclear family was made attractive to young women thus invoking the element of choice that May often downplays.²⁷ For example, Weiss argues that women accepted the idea of domestic containment in exchange for:

A greater stake in family decisions and shared authority from the experts' perspective, added incentive for women to choose family and marriage over other options, which would not only contain women's independence, but it was hoped, provide a safe arena in which to exercise it.²⁸

Thus, Weiss argues that the acceptance of containment was more of a negotiation for young married women who realized they could gain more from acceptance than through direct defiance – a conclusion also reached within this study.²⁹

In addition to criticizing the way that "containment" is a confining construct, Meyerowitz and others also suggest that while the above works provide worthy descriptions of what occurs within the boundaries of normality, they do not adequately interrogate normality itself and the ways that different and new systems of normalcy are created. After the linguistic turn, and in correspondence with the rise of gay and lesbian scholarship, several historians, most using some form of discourse analysis, attempted to fill this historiographical gap by creating what Michel Foucault terms "archaeologies" of the postwar status quo.³⁰

Mary Louise Adams, in *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, states that she originally intended to write a Canadian history of gay and lesbian activism before gay liberation.³¹ Instead she found herself writing about the postwar fixation on heterosexuality and its effect on youth because she felt that the dominant norms of sexuality had to be mapped before those sexualities regulated to the margins could be fully understood. She notes: "Without an understanding of the dominant sexual culture, it is impossible to understand the depth of the

²⁶ Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Mention should also be made of Nancy Cott's more structural discussion of marriage in her book *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). In it Cott argues that despite popular understanding marriage has, and continues to be, intertwined with ideals of state and statehood.

³⁰ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge of the Discourse of Language*.

³¹ Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, 4.

resistance engaged in by lesbians, gay men, and others who were unwilling or unable to conform to the prevailing definitions of sexual normality.”³² In many ways Adams’s work, published in 1997, demonstrates a more theoretically sophisticated analysis than earlier works by authors such as May and Brienes and even Bailey and Weiss. Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, Adams interrogates the ways that various sets of societal norms are created in discourse-based binaries, women in relation to men, heterosexual in relation to homosexual. The creation of such “truths” was deeded to various postwar “experts” who wielded great power in the creation of discourse and in the general shaping of our everyday perceptions. For example, Adams demonstrates the increasing influence of psychology in postwar life and the way that members of the psychological profession became arbitrators of morality.³³

This focus on experts would bring together histories of gender, normalcy, and sexuality with professionalization histories which previously, especially in the North American historiography, had been relegated to non-historians.³⁴ Mona Gleason’s *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* combines these disparate streams to demonstrate how Canadian psychologists, working with, and within, the school system codified heterosexuality as normal and how they and their related professions used this process to gain legitimacy and power for their fledgling occupations.³⁵ Thus, Gleason demonstrates the dialogical relationship between experts and the creation of “normal,” showing what the experts themselves had to gain from promoting a conservative social culture rather than leaving them as faceless oppressors. Together Gleason and Adams demonstrate the way that heterosexuality was created as the standard in child and youth culture. However, the question on how adult heterosexuality was created and enforced remains largely unexplored in the Canadian context.³⁶

Historian Valerie J. Korinek explores the creation of normalized heterosexuality and the affiliated gender roles in her work *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*. Korinek’s arguments demonstrate that a careful examination of seeming bastions of postwar normality can illuminate centres of activism and deviance in the most unlikely places.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 6-7. See also: Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

³⁴ Medical history prior to the 1970s was usually undertaken by medical doctors who wrote their own history based on the narrative of positivist scientific achievement.

³⁵ Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 4-5.

³⁶ Especially with regards to those who persons who reached adulthood prior to the development of the postwar youth culture demonstrated by Adams and Gleason. For a work focused on sexual education in the United States see: Susan K. Freeman, *Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education before the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.)

Dismissing the “common sense” idea that women’s magazines, replete with recipes and cleaning tips, were essentially antifeminist, Korinek argues that Canada’s *Chatelaine* could simultaneously support and subvert postwar gender norms.³⁷ She demonstrates that while the advertising department and features such as the “Mrs. Chatelaine” contest promoted the heterosexual, nuclear, suburban family ideal, the editors, especially Doris Anderson, also ensured the insertion of feminist content and debate. Further, Korinek demonstrates that readers could, and did, subvert the original meanings of the text to fit the circumstances of their own lives. One of the clearest examples of this is the Mrs. Slob letters, written in protest to the Mrs. Chatelaine contest which heroized the typical accomplishments of the perfect housewife – cooking, cleaning, childcare, and volunteer work. The Mrs. Slobbers claimed space in *Chatelaine*, via the letters pages, for women who chose to read or relax rather than clean, or for those who did not have the luxury of volunteer work because of a need to work for money.³⁸ Alternative readings could also go beyond gender role subversion to threaten the “heart” of postwar families – the heterosexual relationship. In her article “Don’t Let Your Girlfriends Ruin Your Marriage: Lesbian Imagery in *Chatelaine* Magazine 1950-1969,” Korinek argues that *Chatelaine* offered explicit characterizations of lesbians which, though heterosexually biased, were not always completely negative thus allowing lesbian readers a place of positive self-identification and community. Other articles, while not directly about lesbians, allowed for “perverse readings” where readers with different points of view could apply an alternative, even “queer,” eye to reinterpret the text. For example, articles about how close friendships between women were a “threat” to heterosexual marriage were, on the surface, addressing potential issues such as the need for couples to spend leisure time together; however, the ambiguous “threat” that girlfriends could pose to heterosexual marriage created a discursive space that allowed for reader agency.

Karen Dubinsky also demonstrates how sites of heterosexual normality can simultaneously be sites of deviance and resistance. In *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism in Niagara Falls*, she examines how Niagara Falls came to be “the greatest theme park of heterosexuality.”³⁹ Dubinsky tracks the “imaginary geography” of Niagara Falls and how it became a noted honeymoon destination while, at the same time, she traces the changing meaning of

³⁷ See also: Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.)

³⁸ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2000), 87-93.

³⁹ Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment*, 3.

heterosexuality from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries and heterosexuality's dialogical relationship with class, race, and alternative sexualities.

In public, a single, coherent honeymoon script was emerging. Travel, privacy, service industry and hospitality, consumption, romance and sex were all becoming an integral part of the honeymoon, and these were exactly the ingredients that tourist entrepreneurs began to commodify and promote in the 1930s and 1940s. Those who could not afford the package, or whose sex lives placed them outside it, were not invited, but they could, and did, crash the party. The Northern Ontario couple spending their wedding night at Niagara in a tent in a vacant lot or the four gay men laughing together over a beer reminds us of the often uneasy fit between representation and practice.⁴⁰

This dissertation draws from both the more descriptive, and predominantly American, works on postwar gender, marriage and sexuality, and the more theoretically sophisticated, and predominately Canadian, interrogations of postwar normality to fill the much needed historiographical niche for a Canadian examination of married sexual norms in the postwar period. It thus extends Adams and Gleason's analysis of child and youth culture forward into an examination of adulthood. Using the years of the statistical height of the baby boom as a temporal limiting device, this dissertation examines the ways that different authoritative groups constructed ideal married sexual bodies in order to frame the way that male and female bodies interacted with each other, their families, society, and the state.⁴¹ No such study currently exists for the United States or Canada.

While the above works provide the clearest framework, albeit a patchwork one, for this dissertation, the topic of postwar married sexuality necessarily overlaps with, is influenced by, and contributes to, other historiographies. These historiographies, though not necessarily focused on marriage or the postwar period, need to be explored. One of the most crucial of these is the more generalized historiography of sexuality and desire in which gay and lesbian scholarship has been a driving force. These works are defined by their basic assertion that sexuality has a history. Many early works such as Jonathan Ned Katz's *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.: A Documentary Anthology*, Gary Kinsman's *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities*, and John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman's *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, were

⁴⁰ Ibid., 168.

⁴¹ See Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time*, 3-84. Owsram's book is primarily focused on the baby boomers themselves rather than the generation which birthed it. However, his first four chapters which look at boomer childhood are useful to this dissertation.

dedicated to filling in historiographical gaps and returning homosexuality to history.⁴² The major weakness of these works is that they are bound by the very structure which they hoped to disrupt, namely, the heterosexual-homosexual binary – a fact that Katz would draw attention to in his later works.⁴³ However, other early authors including Carol Smith-Rosenburg were able to use language to destabilize the image of naturalness contained within the binary between heterosexuality and homosexuality and its implied hierarchy.⁴⁴ After the linguistic turn, in 1995 Jonathan Ned Katz published *The Invention of Heterosexuality* which interrogated the history of the concept of heterosexuality and ultimately demonstrated its social constructedness from a discursive standpoint.⁴⁵

At present there is only one sustained examination of lesbianism in Canada prior to the 1960s, though others are in progress.⁴⁶ Cameron Duder's *Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada 1900-1960* is important because it is currently the only source of its kind and for the ways that Duder engages with the two tricky questions of sexuality that has plagued homosexuality scholars, particularly lesbian scholars, since the creation of the genre: did they do "it" and does it matter if they did? Building on an earlier work examining bisexuality in archival records, Duder uses discourse analysis – paying special attention to the class, gender, and racial bases of language and slang – to decode expressions of desire allowing him to label historical female relationships as sexual. The lesson that Duder advances,

⁴² Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Crowell, 1976); Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987); John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

⁴³ See: Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*. For other works focused on desire, both heterosexual and homosexual see: Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Brett Beemyn ed. *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community Histories* (New York: Routledge 1997); Angus McLaren, *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004); Paul Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy: Freud to Madonna* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). There are also several important works which focus on sexuality from a more legal perspective, see: Constance Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and the Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: Osgoode Society by Women's Press, 1991); Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family and the Law, 1920-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁴ Carroll Smith-Rosenburg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).

⁴⁵ Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, 1995. See also: Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), in which Katz puts the theories discussed in *The Invention of Heterosexuality* into practice by discussing self-identification of homosexual men before the term homosexual and its binary relationship to heterosexuality was codified. See also: George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994). Chauncey, like, Katz discusses homosexuality prior to its codification as such and thus demonstrates the plurality of expression open to gay men before World War II.

⁴⁶ Cameron Duder, *Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900-65* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010).

the way that he argues for the presumption of sexual contact – something that scholars of heterosexuality already presume – while at the same time focusing on the meaning of those lived experiences, provides important lessons for this dissertation.

A common theme amongst many of the works in both the postwar sexuality historiography and the more general histories of desire is the way that the influence of the medical community, especially the physiological professions, grew over time in regards to creating and maintaining sexualized discourses. Originally, medical history was undertaken largely by non-historians within the medical profession. However, coinciding with the rise of second wave, feminist authors such as Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English in *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women*; Linda Gordon's *Woman's Body: Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America*; and the famous self-help health manual *Our Bodies, Ourselves* edited by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, were among the first to use historical examination to criticize and destabilize medicine's claim to authority over female bodies and their health.⁴⁷ In the same way that gay and lesbian scholars challenged the naturalness of the heterosexual-homosexual binary, these authors called into question the positivist claim of medical science to progressive discovery and their authority over women's bodies.

Subsequently, Canadian historians such as Angus McLaren in works like: *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Abortion and Contraception in Canada*; and *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945*; and Wendy Mitchinson in *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada*; and *Giving Birth in Canada: 1900-1950*, while being influenced by the above critiques, moved away from a narrowly focused feminist voice and narratively explored the ways that medicine and society have interacted.⁴⁸ Due to their narrative structure, however, their analysis is limited to describing what happened within particular power structures rather than examining those power structures themselves. Their works, important in their own right, also laid the groundwork necessarily for more theoretically-based examinations of Canadian medical history though themes of abortion, birth control, and female patient-male doctor relations, all of which remained

⁴⁷ Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1979); Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Grossman, 1979); Boston Women's Health Book Collective ed., *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book by and for Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976).

⁴⁸ Angus McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: the Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990); Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Wendy Mitchinson, *Giving Birth in Canada, 1900-1950*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

common sites of analysis. Christabelle Sethna, for example, explores the relationships between gender, the medical community, student activism, and wider concerns about population control in her articles “The University of Toronto Health Service, Oral Contraception, and Student Demand for Birth Control, 1960-1970” and “The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook: From Student Peer Education Manual to Feminist Self-empowerment Text, 1968-1975.”⁴⁹ In both works Sethna focuses on the particular character that New Left student activism brought to worldwide discussions about population control and the role of birth control in policing predominantly white, middle and upper class student bodies as opposed to developing world, racialized bodies.⁵⁰

Other works such as Elise Chenier’s *Strangers in Our Midst: Sexual Deviancy in Postwar Ontario* examine the complex historical interrelationships that medical science has had with other forces of bodily surveillance and control such as judiciary and penitentiary systems. Chenier illuminates the complex ways that psychological authority was mediated in postwar society demonstrating that while members of the psychological and psychiatric professions saw their social capital increase exponentially in the days after World War II, their increased popularity did not translate into an ability to create effective treatments for sexual criminals or an ability to substantively change the punitive world view of most prison administrations. Further, Chenier establishes how social factors inevitably shape the contours of “scientific” praxis. Despite the fact that the majority of sexual offences against children were committed by either family members or persons closely associated with their victims, the familial ethos that dominated postwar Canadian and American societies created the dangerous sexual offender as an unknown, uncontrolled, lurking menace – a “stranger danger” that still remains key to our social conception of pedophilia and other sexual perils.⁵¹

Though the relationship of bodies and religion is quite robust for earlier eras, the field of postwar religious history has increasingly stagnated in recent years, abandoned by the majority of historians who

⁴⁹ Christabelle Sethna, “The University of Toronto Health Service, Oral Contraception, and Student Demand for Birth Control, 1960-1970,” *Historical Studies in Education* 17, no. 2 (2005): 265-292; Christabelle Sethna, “The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook: From Student Peer-Education Manual to Feminist Self-empowerment Text, 1968-1975,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 23, no. 1 (2006): 89-118.

⁵⁰ Mention should also be made of Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain, 1918-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Fisher examines the connection between gender, discourse, and birth control usage by British couples primarily during the First World War and interwar period. Her work provides context for this dissertation especially in regards to the upbringing of the British war brides whom I interviewed.

⁵¹ Elise Chenier, *Strangers in Our Midst: Sexual Deviancy in Postwar Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). In addition to her examination of the contours of sexual deviancy, Chenier’s work provides a nuanced overview of the growth of the psychological and social work professions in the postwar era as well as the development of those professions’ sexual theories and the relationship between Canadian and American authorities in created dominant narratives. This proved invaluable in the drafting of Chapter Two of this dissertation.

see it as largely irrelevant. Yet this dissertation demonstrates that not only did the majority of oral history respondents interact with religion in some way but also that religious content and context were present in understanding the points of view emerging from the medical and popular cultural discourse sites. Though the relationship of religion, sexual morality, and sexual practice is much more complicated than it might have been in more puritan times, religion and religious authorities still had a large role to play in defining the character of the postwar sexual landscape. Outside of those problematic histories created from within religious institutions, which usually follow the same positivist trajectory as internally produced medical histories, Canadian religious historiography has become paralysed by the dual questions of secularization in Anglophone Canada and the contentious role of the Catholic Church in the Quiet Revolution; these works primarily focus on elites within religious structures and are of limited use to this dissertation. However, there is a small emerging stream of religious critical history which, though it treats religion respectfully, situates religion alongside other discourse-creating entities. In Canada this trend is represented by authors such as Lynne Sorrel Marks, who in her 1996 book *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario*, examines how religion, which she situates within a spectrum of free-time or leisure activities, helped to shape both gender and class identities for Ontario Protestants.⁵² Marks also notes the ways that different groups move between religious sects in a free market religious environment in order to facilitate different needs at different times. She notes, for example, that youths drawn to the pomp, ceremony, and relative freedom of the Salvation Army rarely stayed in the sect into middle age.⁵³ Though such discourse- and social history-based analyses of religion are scarce, they form the framework for the religious sections within this dissertation.

One area that is virtually untouched in North American historiography is the history of media; most of the available historical scholarship comes from non-historians trained in media studies or English literature. Canadian media history has largely been limited to issues of communication theory raised by Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, a major theme being the ability of Canada to maintain control over its own media in the face of American competition.⁵⁴ For example, both Mary Vipond in

⁵² Lynne Sorrel Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century Small Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). For the American context see: Catherine A. Berkus, *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁵³ Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 180.

⁵⁴ See: Harold A. Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951); Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: New American Library, 1966); Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967).

The Mass Media in Canada and Paul Rutherford in *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada* track the continuous struggle of Canadian television to survive in the face of a larger American market.⁵⁵ One of the major weaknesses in Canadian media historiography is the fact that almost no studies discuss American television as an integrated viewing experience for Canadians. Though Rutherford provides statistics demonstrating the prevalence of Canadians viewing American-made commercial programs in the postwar period, he confines his analysis to homegrown television.⁵⁶ Susan J. Douglas' *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female in the Mass Media* is one Canadian exception to this rule.⁵⁷ Douglas comes to many of the same conclusions about American television programs as Korinek does about *Chatelaine*; she views television as a permeable media that both effected and was affected by viewer response and thus could contain both constraining and liberating possibilities for women and sexuality.

The media, of course, urged us to be pliant, cute, sexually available, thin, blond, poreless, wrinkle-free, and deferential to men. But it is easy to forget that the media also suggested we could be rebellious, tough, enterprising and shrewd. And much of what we watched was porous allowing us to accept *and* rebel against what we saw and how it was presented.⁵⁸

Other works such as William Douglas's *Television Families: Is Something Wrong in Suburbia?* are crucial to this dissertation in that they demonstrate ways in which discourse analysis can be broadened to be used for visual and textual media such as television.⁵⁹ For example, Douglas notes that in the baby boom era women in sitcoms were filmed in communal family spaces such as the dining room and living room – indeed this comprised almost all of the set shots for the *Dick Van Dyke Show* – because in these communal spaces their personal claims to power were the most visually ambiguous. In contrast, fathers and sons are filmed in spaces that are clearly their own and often male-identified, though this changed over time and in relation to class and race differentials.⁶⁰

The final historiographical tradition that this dissertation draws from is those works examining the historical use of oral history and the assessment of oral history memory. Oral history at its inception was meant to be a tool for bringing forward the narratives of the disenfranchised and has been

⁵⁵ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1989); Paul Rutherford, *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952-1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

⁵⁶ Rutherford, *When Television Was Young*, 76.

⁵⁷ Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female in the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books 1994).

⁵⁸ Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 9.

⁵⁹ William Douglas, *Television Families: Is Something Wrong in Suburbia?* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 2003). See, also: Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on T.V.: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); Mary Beth Haralovich and Lauren Rabinovitz, eds. *Television, History, and American Culture: Feminist Critical Essays* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

⁶⁰ Douglas, *Television Families*, 97-99.

successfully used to illuminate Aboriginal histories, histories of sexual minorities, especially gay men and lesbian women, and women in particularly marginalized situations such as those working within male-dominated trade unions.⁶¹ However, there is almost no oral history methodology that demonstrates how to engage in oral histories with a dominant group such as the women within the white, heterosexual majority as interviewed for this dissertation. Of the existing methodological examples, the latter two are the most useful as, unlike Aboriginal oral histories, those works do not rely on and engage with a previously existing oral tradition. Within the sexual history lexicon the methodology proposed in Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis's examination of butch-femme culture in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, remains the standard. Though Kennedy and Davis use discourse analysis to deconstruct the life stories provided by their interviews, they strive to maintain the "authenticity" of the interviewee's voices by "leaving the seams" – reprinting large sections of the narrator's speech with minimal editing.⁶² The methodology and ethical standpoints of such works were useful in framing the oral history process in this dissertation save for one major difference. In all the available examples the persons interviewed had a strong feeling of group-based identity forged by their common experiences as a minority in the face of a hostile majority. The narrators interviewed for this dissertation, belonging as they did to the dominant majority, did not have the same ability to articulate the relationship of their sexual or gendered situation to the wider dominant group of heterosexual married persons and this provided several challenges requiring methodological adaptation.

Conclusions: Privileged and Forgotten Women

The women who lived, married, and had sexual relationships during the height of English Canada's baby boom are currently in the midst of a historical paradox. Deemed both sexually important and legitimated for their sexual and gender role adherence, the nuances and individual experiences of their lives have been at best flattened, at worst forgotten, by a society that sees them as a quaint interlude between much more sexually charged, and sexually interesting, eras. Concomitantly, women in the 1950s are often unfairly damned as being too quiescent, too willing to blindly accept the stagnant gender roles that their daughters would successfully cast off. These oversimplifications collapse the gradation of

⁶¹ See: Nancy Janovicek, "Oral History and Ethical Practice: Towards Effective Policies and Procedures," *Journal of Academic Ethics* 4 (2006):157-174; Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge 1993); Joan Sangster, "Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 1 (December 2006): 5-28.

⁶² Kennedy and Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, 24.

experience within this time and the ways that seemingly quiescent bodies could be agents of change breaking down sexual and gender role barriers.

Karen Dubinsky, in *The Second Greatest Disappointment*, notes, “To the normal go considerable spoils.”⁶³ This dissertation is an archaeology of the normal, examining how heterosexual marital sex was created as pleasurable and necessary; how discourses framed the married female sexual body; and the spoils and trials that came with attaining or failing to attain the status of normal. But this dissertation is also about the subversive power that can be found in the normal. By this I mean not only how discourses of normality inherently also produce discourses that challenge that normality, but also how the codification of sexual pleasure within marriage opened doors and gave a lexicon to sexual pleasure beyond its originally narrow bounds. The sexual revolution did not spring, like the goddess Athena, fully formed from nothing, and the ideas present in the revolution can be found in nascent form in the seemingly asexual fifties and early sixties. We often forget the generation that birthed the boom, their daughters’ militancy, feminism, and sexual freedom eclipsing what we see as the dull domestic hell of their mothers, yet, those mothers raised those daughters. Only by critically investigating and historicizing the “golden age” of the immediate postwar era can we truly understand what came after and, more importantly, reendow those postwar women with the full and nuanced humanity of fully articulated historical actors in their own right.

⁶³ Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment*, 228.

CHAPTER TWO

Embodying Family Values:

The Canadian Medical Association Journal and the Creation of the “Mother Body”

‘If the bedroom is not right, then every room in the house is wrong.’ Physicians should constantly bear this in mind when attempting to untangle marital difficulties which now appear to form such a high proportion of problems encountered in medical, gynaecological and general practice. Much time should be spent in listening to women with these difficulties and attempting to correct their emotional environment.¹

Introduction

Dr. R. A. H. Kinch, a gynecologist, made the above statement during a 1966 symposium on sexuality, family, and aging. He succinctly highlights the most prominent lens through which the postwar medical hegemony viewed female bodies. For Kinch, as with many other medical men, the central building block of postwar reconstruction was the heterosexual married couple, and “the bedroom” – a polite euphemism for sexual coitus – was both a useful diagnostic tool as well as a cure-all for many social and physical ailments related to the family. Significantly, Kinch notes that “much time should be spent listening to *women* with these difficulties.” While it may be argued that he is focused on the female part of the heterosexual equation due to his role as a gynecologist, he was also likely reflecting the fact that the medical community, in rebuilding the postwar family, had its gaze firmly fixed on the mother. Within the medical body politic the Leviathan female body, which I term the “mother body,” was constructed to serve a multitude of functions. As this chapter will demonstrate, female bodies were not only expected to embody ideals of femininity but were constructed as either mothers or mothers-in-waiting. Further, the mother body was made handmaiden to the postwar family as a whole, becoming a synecdoche that reflected the gender based deviance – written on the mother body in the form of illness – of her husband and even her children. Her body also served as a cure for many of their sexual and gendered ailments. As the postwar family’s avatar, the mother body had the era’s mores written upon her very flesh.

Using the mother body to rehabilitate the postwar family was part of a larger push by many societal authorities to “save” what was seen as the foundation stone of society. Members of the medical

¹ R. A. H. Kinch, “Sexual Difficulties After 50: The Gynecologist’s View,” *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (hereafter *CMAJ*) 29 January 1966, 211.

profession, like many other Canadian social authorities, worried that the family was on the brink of disaster. Though the heterosexual nuclear family was viewed as natural and normal it was also seen as extremely fragile. If the bedroom, that is the sexual activity of the married parents, was in trouble the entire family and domestic sphere was threatened. As the unnamed writer of a 1959 editorial in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* noted, “[i]t seems to be generally agreed that in Western countries the stability of family life is not what it was in a less enlightened age.”²

“The medical medium of choice in Canada”: Methodological Considerations in Using the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*³

This chapter investigates the creation of the English Canadian medical body politic and the “mother body” by making use of the premier professional medical journal published during that time period: the *Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)*.⁴ Though not the only source of medical discourse in Canada, the *CMAJ* is particularly useful due to its status as a generalized professional journal, its vast and ever-increasing penetrative reach to the English Canadian medical community, and because it was not just a reflection of hegemonic medical discourse – it was an engine of that hegemony within the profession. That is, because the *CMAJ* was written and marketed solely for medical consumption, it both reflected trends within the community (as it was forced to remain relevant to its

² “Crises in the Family,” *CMAJ*, 15 September 1959, 494. The allusion made to family relations being easier in a “less enlightened age” is likely a reference to the seeming simplicity of gender and sexual relations during the rigidly controlled Victorian prior to the beginnings of social upheaval caused by World War II. For other examples see: R. R. Struthers, “A Review of Health Conditions in Children in Post-War Europe,” *CMAJ* August 1946, 152-162; N. W. Philpott and Christina F. Goodwin, “Care of the Unmarried Mother and Her Child,” *CMAJ* September 1946, 293-295; H. M. Harrison, “Experience in Periodic Health Work,” *CMAJ* October 1948, 363-366; R. G. Bell, “Industry as a Medium for the Promotion of Health,” *CMAJ* March 1949, 220-224; “The Family,” *CMAJ* August 1950, 179; G. D. W. Cameron, “Public Health Work and the Physician,” *CMAJ* November 1951, 478-480; R. O. Jones, “The Place of the Psychiatrist in the Community Medical Services,” *CMAJ* January 1953, 1-5; G. D. W. Cameron, “The Canadian Sickness Survey, 1950-51: Its Implications of the Practicing Physician,” *CMAJ* December 1954, 613-615; Margaret Brock, “The Doctor and the Social Worker,” 23 September 1961, 749-752; “Marriage and Mortality,” *CMAJ* 1 October 1956, 597; “Teenage Morals,” *CMAJ* 21 October 1961; A Russell and M. Sambhi, “Intrafamilial Aggressive Patterns: A Pilot Study to Develop a Classification of Family Relationships,” *CMAJ* 26 May 1962, 977-980; “The Feminine Mystique,” *CMAJ* 26 September, 1964; M. Lattey, “Letter to the Editor: The Intelligent-Housewife Syndrome,” *CMAJ* 26 September 1964, 717-718; “The Doctor and His Wife,” *CMAJ* 8 January 1966, 93; F. W. Lundell, Alan M. Mann, “Conjoint Psychotherapy of Marital Pairs,” *CMAJ* 12 March 1966.

³ Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Mfm M-4787 Minutes of the Meetings of the CMA Executive Council, Report of the Managing Editor, November 1953.

⁴ There are very few studies examining the history of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. The majority are penned by medical men writing as amateur historians. See: John Sutton Bennett, *History of the Canadian Medical Association, 1954-1994* (Ottawa: The Association, 1996); H. E. MacDermot, *History of the Canadian Medical Association, 1888-1983* (Toronto: Murray Printing Company n.d.). These books mention the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* only in passing. The only other secondary source which has information on the *CMAJ* is Julia L. Kinnear’s, “The Professionalization of Canadian Nursing, 1934-32: Views in the *CN* and *CMAJ*,” *CBMH/BCHM* 11 (1994): 153-174, which focuses on an earlier time period.

paying subscribers) and, due to careful editing, editorial work, and advertising, also served to hegemonize the image of the medical profession as a body with a consistent ideology and praxis.⁵ As a “managed” source, the *CMAJ* had a seemingly cohesive voice reflecting the choices of its contributors and editors. There were four editors during the time period under review, all male and all well-established doctors in their own rights. They, in addition with to the prominent doctors on the Board of the Canadian Medical Association who oversaw the *CMAJ* gave the *Journal* an overwhelmingly male perspective and generally conservative tone.⁶ This androcentric voice was also reflected in the gender of the bulk of the contributors. Though it is difficult to assess fully, due to the journal’s policy of identifying most authors only by their first initial and last name, the majority of the authors seem to be male – female authors were usually identified by full name and sometimes even the title Mrs.⁷ The dominance of male voices is also reflective of the gendered make-up of the profession at the time. Assessing geographic distribution of the contributors is much more concrete as the city from which each study or letter originated from was almost always identified. Though the *CMAJ* printed a great deal of content from its “parent” country of England, including a reoccurring “London Letter” feature⁸ the majority of articles were homegrown and unsurprisingly reflect a strong urban bias as larger cities were more likely to contain established biomedical intuitions that could facilitate large scale medical trials.⁹

⁵ After World War II the Canadian Medical Association engaged in an aggressive marketing strategy to expand on the *CMAJ*’s circulation. This included distributing copies to returning veteran medical officers in the immediate postwar years as well as free copies to all medical missionaries and reduced rates for recent medical graduates. The *Journal* saw increasing circulation throughout this time period. For example, in 1946 the CMA reported over 9,000 subscribers. In 1950 they printed a total of 148,270 journals though the records do not show how many of these were from subscribers. In 1958 389,351 journals were printed. Data beyond this date appears to be missing though it is recorded within the meeting minutes that circulation continued to increase throughout the time period under review. LAC, Mfm M-4787 “Minutes of the Meeting of the CMA Executive Council, 1946-1962.

⁶ Of course no source is entirely monolithic and there were dissenting voices to the general conservative viewpoint especially in the letters to the editor which sometimes expressed the need for tolerance of sexual “deviants” such as homosexuals or unwed mothers. For example, the *CMAJ* published an article in 1962 entitled “The Other Side: Living With Homosexuality.” Written in the first person by a self-identified, though anonymous, non-medical homosexual man; the article describes the issues facing a homosexual man and calls for sympathy. Anonymous, “Living with Homosexuality,” *CMAJ* 12 May 1962, 875-877. In 1951 Dr. H. J. Skully noted, “A young, healthy, unmarried woman comes in for a check up. It hardly needs elaborating as to what this patient is anxious to know. Her emotional state is such that she needs sympathy and encouragement at this time.” H.J. Skully “The Patient’s Viewpoint,” *CMAJ* July 1951, 64.

⁷ For example, when the famous female physician Marion Hilliard published an article in the *CMAJ* she was identified as “Marion Hilliard, M.D.” Marion Hilliard, “The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Menopause,” *CMAJ* 1 January 1957, 1. This also occurred when the wives of Canadian Medical Association members published letters (about activities for wives during the yearly meetings of the C.M.A.). See: Una Mangner, “An Invitation from the Wife of the President-Elect,” *CMAJ* April 1948, 402.

⁸ Summarizing news and any discoveries from the United Kingdom thought to be of interest to Canadian physicians.

⁹ There were also token American contributions thought to be of interest to Canadian medical practitioners but the main organizational ties remained to England.

In order to use the *CMAJ* as what Foucault would term an “archive” of the medical normal, I created a database of every issue published between the years 1946 and 1966¹⁰ using the article titles and abstracts to collect any articles, advertisements, editorials, and letters that referenced the family, sex within or outside of marriage, works on the female or male reproductive system, pregnancy, birth control and related matters, as well as any discourses about doctors’ own lives, their understanding of their profession, and their relationships with their own families. This content was then scrutinized. Such a widespread lens elucidated a mass of discourse; despite the plethora of voices on a multitude of topics, however, a clear body politic centred around the matriarchal body emerges.

Extremely useful to the medical community the mother body was created primarily within the frame of psychoanalysis. The newly accepted understanding of the mind-body connection, especially given the Freudian focus on sexuality, served the medical need to link the mind to the body and the concentration of illness within the sexual and gendered functions of postwar womanhood. The new popularity of psychoanalysis was particularly important as the medical profession used psychoanalytical ideas to anchor female sexuality and femininity to biological markers such as fecundity as well as using those concepts to argue that any deviation from postwar normative scripts could make a woman psychologically and physically disordered. Thus, the contributors to the *CMAJ* were able to make femininity flesh, arguing that most female complaints were tied to gender role deviation that required reordering before a cure could be established. However, the medical body politic not only wrote the gendered sins of the woman on the mother body; but it also forced female bodies to bear the marks of the gender role deviations of the entire nuclear family and, more often than not, it was through the mother body that other members of the family could also be cured.

From “a figment of a warped mind” to Indispensable: Psychoanalysis and the Conflation of Sexuality, Gender Roles, and the Body¹¹

Freud and other psychologists started developing the principles of psychoanalysis at the turn of the century, but their focus on the libido and sexual displacement were bars to its early acceptance.¹² In

¹⁰ Over the period under consideration the journal went from publishing once a month in 1946 to four times a month by 1966. It should also be noted that “spot checks” of relevant themes were made before and after the period under consideration to ensure I had an understanding of the wider contexts in which those themes existed.

¹¹ H. O. Foucar, “Emotions and Human Relations,” *CMAJ* September 1947, 282.

¹² For works on the general history of psychology and the place of psychoanalysis within it see, Thomas E. Brown, “Dr. Ernest Jones, Psychoanalysis and the Canadian Medical Profession, 1908-1913,” in *Medicine in Canadian Society: Historical*

English Canada, despite its demonstrated efficacy in dealing with posttraumatic stress in soldiers, many medical (rather than primarily psychological) practitioners were still expressing discomfort with the main principles of psychoanalysis main principles after World War II. For example, in September 1947 H. O. Foucar in his article “Emotions and Human Relations,” noted that:

[t]he name of Freud occupies an important place in psychology...He introduced the term psycho-analysis and replaced hypnosis by a method of “free association.” He stressed sex as the driving force and therefore the primitive emotion. That sex is important, no one can deny but to explain everything on that basis is no longer acceptable.

He continued that Freud and his contemporaries saw sexual imagery everywhere including the architecture of churches which he deemed “fantastic and unnecessary and the figment of a warped mind.”¹³ N. Viner, who would write several articles on psychoanalysis for the *CMAJ*, had particular discomfort regarding infant sexuality stating that he felt Freud had dwelt on it with “excessive emphasis.”¹⁴

Despite his concerns, Viner, along with many of his contemporaries, thought that Freudian psychoanalysis was a valuable tool. He perceived in 1946 that a paradigm shift in thinking about physical and mental illness was already underway. Younger doctors, including himself, were excited about the new ideas of the mind-body connection even if other (usually older) doctors rejected psychosomatic ideas.¹⁵ Thus, the immediate postwar years were a time of change when old and new constructions of the body and its relation to the mind were used in direct competition. For example, Dr. K. T. MacFarlane, in an article about pelvic pain and pain during coitus (dyspareunia), noted that, “Physical or mental stress may begin a neurosis but diagnostically the primary cause must be found and should not be confused with the mental state of the patient.”¹⁶ Consequently, when his patient, a twenty-five year old Mrs. D.R.S., came to him for the treatment of dyspareunia, he prescribed bed rest and then, when that was not totally effective, surgery, rather than mental therapy. Indeed, he noted that cases of

Perspectives, ed. S. E. D. Shortt, 315-360 (Montreal: McGill-University Press, 1981); Nathan G. Hale (Jr.) *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans 1917-1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); J. D. Keehn, *Master Builders of Modern Psychology: From Freud to Skinner* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Thomas H. Leahey, *A History of Modern Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Cliffs, 1991); Wade E. Pickren and Donald A. Dewsbury eds. *Evolving Perspectives on the History of Psychology* (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2002); Robert Wilcocks, *Mousetraps and the Moon: The Strange Ride of Sigmund Freud and the Early Years of Psychoanalysis* (Langham: Lexington Books, 2000).

¹³ H. O. Foucar, “Emotions and Human Relations,” *CMAJ* September 1947, 282.

¹⁴ N. Viner, “Treatment in Mental Disease: Especially the Psychoneuroses,” *CMAJ* August 1946, 102.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 101-102.

¹⁶ K. T. MacFarlane, “Pelvic Pain,” *CMAJ* September 1946, 273.

pelvic pain should always be assumed to have a physical cause unless the patient was demonstrably mentally disturbed to a level that would require immediate institutionalization.¹⁷

After some initial reluctance psychoanalytical content within the *CMAJ* increased exponentially. In 1946 the number of articles discussing psychoanalysis numbered only two; ten years later there were twelve articles specifically focused on the “talking cure” while many others referenced psychoanalytic concepts less directly. Further, more and more contributors to the *CMAJ* felt that psychoanalysis had to be integrated into solely medical practices and that any doctor unable to utilize these new skills was not fulfilling his full mandate to treat the ill.¹⁸ In his 1947 address to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, reprinted in the *CMAJ*, Dr. C. B. Farrar M.D., while expressing some reservations about Freud, urged his colleagues to make use of “the oldest form of treatment” and employ “the ‘scientifically directed’ influence of one mind on another to promote health.” He argued this was a necessary measure since, in his estimation, fifty to eighty percent of patients would have psychic features to their cases.¹⁹ The rest of his address discussed the various ways that psychoanalytic treatment, normally a very time-consuming practice, could be used within the limited time frame of a normal physical appointment.

Similarly, a 1960 editorial stressed the importance of general practitioners having some training in psychoanalysis to intervene into the everyday emotional problems that emerged in families before they become substantial enough to require a specialist’s care. The author, M. Tyndel, suggested that all general practitioners enter a kind of symbiotic relationship with a psychiatrist who would mentor the general practitioner and in return be the first point of referral for more serious cases. Tyndel noted that this kind of strategy was one way to fulfil the new ideals of medicine which argued that the doctors should take a “whole patient” approach instead of merely focusing on diseased organs or illnesses.²⁰

By the 1950s psychoanalysis was the paradigm that dominated English Canadian medical practice as reflected within the *CMAJ*.²¹ At the same time there was a shift within the pages of the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 270-271.

¹⁸ This increase in psychoanalytical content was also due, in part, to patient and societal pressure from outside the medical profession. According to historian Elise Chenier advocates of psychoanalysis aggressively “sold” the idea of mental health to the public which greatly increased its influence during this time. Elise Chenier, *Strangers in Our Midst: Sexual Deviancy in Postwar Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 31.

¹⁹ C. B. Farrar, “Psychotherapy in Medical Practice” *CMAJ* December 1947, 519.

²⁰ M. Tyndel, “The Role of the General Practitioner in Psychiatry,” *CMAJ* 6 February 1960, 324.

²¹ Though investigations into the reasons behind this shift are largely beyond the scope of this dissertation there is a correlation between the discredit of eugenics and the rise of psychoanalysis as the dominant medical frame. For histories of eugenics see: Jane Harris-Zsovan, *Eugenics and the Firewall: Canada’s Nasty Little Secret* (Winnipeg: J. G. Shilingford Publications, 2010); Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to*

Journal that began to feminize the patient and therefore illness in general. That is, at the beginning of the time period under review the majority of submissions to the *CMAJ* dealing with psychological issues gendered all general patients male. If not referencing a specific patient in a specific case study the medical community assumed “the patient” to be male, most often referring to hypothetical patients as “he” or “him.” There was also a preponderance of male-specific psychological issues such as the difficulty acclimatizing recently demobilized soldiers to civilian life.²² However, by the end of the period in 1966 non-specific patients were overwhelmingly gendered as female and referred to as “her” or “she.” Some feminist historians would no doubt argue that such a shift to the female patient was part of a long history of writing the female as inherently ill.²³ It is true that by pathologizing the female body the medical community was able to significantly expand their reach by medicalizing a host of issues in bodies previously deemed “healthy.” In other words, the medical profession was empowered “not only to distribute advice as to a healthy life but also to dictate the standards for the physical and moral relations of the individual and society in which [s]he lives.”²⁴ Controlling such professional territory was crucial in the postwar era as it became clear that some form of socialized medicine was on the horizon and doctors wanted to have the power to drive the direction of that program and the public’s trust in doing so.²⁵ What should be noted, however, is that in addition to these, more self-interested factors, the

the Baby Boom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Mark A. Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990).

²² See, for one example: *CMAJ*, September 1947, 284.

²³ The most noted example of this thesis is found in Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *Complaints and Disorders; the Sexual Politics of Sickness* (Old Westbury, N. Y.: Feminist Press, 1973.) See also: Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts’ Advice to Women* (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1979); Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

²⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* trans. A. M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2003), 34.

²⁵ This need to be trusted by the public manifested itself in several articles on both the issue of socialized medicine and the need for a public relations campaign. Notably many of these articles were published in both French and English – something that rarely occurred. See: “National Health Service Prospects in Great Britain,” *CMAJ* February 1946, 171; H. Holye Campbell, “Total Rehabilitation and Organized Medicine,” *CMAJ* June 1950, 600-602; “Panic and Public Relations,” *CMAJ* April 1952, 386-389; Ian MacNeill, “Is the Profession Misunderstood?” *CMAJ* January 1952, 79-82; A.D. Kelly “Why Bother With Public Relations?” *CMAJ* May 1952, 493-496; Robert R. Robinson, “Public Relations: Prescription for M.D.’s” *CMAJ* December 1953, 648-649; L.W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: Enter the Patient,” *CMAJ* 1 December 1955, 908-909; M. B. Etziony, “Letter to the Editor: Repetitio Ad Nauseam,” *CMAJ* 15 December 1955, 992; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: The Doctor and Community Relations,” *CMAJ* 15 January 1956, 158-159; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: The Doctor and the Press,” *CMAJ* 1 February 1956, 224-228; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: Medicine on the Air,” *CMAJ* 1 April 1956, 571-571; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: The Doctor Speaks,” *CMAJ* 1 March 1956, 396-297; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: Doctors on Camera,” *CMAJ* 15 April 1956, 652-654; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: Public Attitudes Towards Doctors,” *CMAJ* 1 January 1957, 46-47; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: Public Attitudes Towards Doctors,” *CMAJ* 15 January 1957, 144-146; L. W. Holmes, “Public Relations Forum: Preventative PR,” *CMAJ* 1 February 1957, 229-230; Francis T. Hodges “Public Relations Forum: Medicine’s Seven Deadly Sins,” *CMAJ* 15 April 1957, 660-662; Harry Baker, “Doctor-Patient Relationship Or Doctor-Public Relationship,”

contributors to the *CMAJ* were deeply invested in postwar reconstruction of the family and society and extended the reach of their prescriptive discourse into their own lives. The *CMAJ* published several articles that focused on how a doctor, busy, and forced by society to appear detached, could return home at the end of the day and fully engage with his own family. In a 1966 editorial the unnamed author worried that doctors “may be particularly prone to the excuse of overwork, a readily acceptable excuse in his profession,” and that doctors whose profession demanded the “suppressing [of] his own emotional feelings [may be] unable to switch to a two-way and emotionally tinged communication system with his wife.” This distance had the potential to lead to familial crisis.²⁶ It was critical that medical men, in their attempts to rebuild the postwar family, did not neglect their own. As prominent postwar authorities, doctors lead the community by their own example as well as through the frame of “objective” treatment.

In many ways psychoanalysis was a perfect framework for postwar medical authority over the body. First, the medical community needed a new organizing principle as eugenics, previously the organizing medical paradigm, had been discredited.²⁷ Psychoanalysis’s focus on sexuality also fit well with changing ideals about women’s sexual drives, filling the vacuum that had been left by the breakdown of Victorian images of the sexually passive woman.²⁸ This new sexual persona had to be contained, however, and so was only given legitimacy within heterosexual marriage. For the medical community being able to express and enjoy sexual contact within marriage was deemed healthy and

CMAJ 15 January 1958, 128-131; J. B. Benson, “Letter to the Editor: Public Relations,” *CMAJ* 15 March 1958, 450-451; “Doctors on Television,” *CMAJ* 1 June 1958, 866; “What Patients Think of Doctors,” *CMAJ* 27 August 1960, 440-442; F. W. Hanley and F. Grunberg, “Reflections on Doctor-Patient Relationship,” *CMAJ* 2 June 1962, 1022-1024; “News & Views On the Economics of Medicine: Recommendations of the Royal Commission on Health Services,” *CMAJ* 1 August 1964, n.p.
²⁶ “The Doctor and His Wife,” *CMAJ*, 8 January 1966, 93. Unsurprisingly the doctor is defined as male in a heterosexual relationship.

²⁷ Chenier, *Strangers in Our Midst*, 22-23, 123.

²⁸ The image of the sexually quiescent Victorian woman had been eroding consistently since the turn of the century undergoing successive shocks such as “the flapper” in the 1920s. However, given the socio-political upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century it seems that the post- World War II era was one of the first times that social experts were able to turn their full attention to women’s sexuality. For discussions of the changing nature of sexual womanhood prior to World War II see: Beth L. Bailey, *From the Front Porch to the Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in American* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain 1918-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Susan K. Freeman, *Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education before the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Angus McLaren, *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Woman: Sexuality, Family and the Law, 1920-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Carol Smith-Rosenburg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Toronto: Copp Clack Pitman Ltd., 1988); Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Marianna Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991).

normal but to desire, or to engage in, sexuality outside of marriage was a prescription for ill health and situated one on the abnormal side of the spectrum. The psychoanalytical framework went even further. If presented with symptoms tied to her reproductive system such as painful periods or pain during coitus and there was no immediate and obvious physical explanation, doctors were encouraged by the psychoanalytical framework to investigate her background for psychological markers of gender role deviance such as dissatisfaction with being a housewife or crimes against femininity, such as a premarital affair. According to psychoanalytical principles these issues, even if they occurred within the patient's distant past, would fester and cause the patient to experience physical symptoms due to displacement. Thus the body – a woman's biology – was tied to her ability to fulfill postwar gender norms. The conflation of sexuality with gender norms meant that the inevitable illness would usually be seated in her reproductive functions. The connection between the mind and body also worked both ways. Women's bodies, especially their reproductive systems, were a danger – liable to dysfunction causing psychological pain and disrupting proper gendered family roles. Menarche, menstruation, and menopause in particular were seen as arduous for both the mind and body and were constructed as times of trouble in need of careful medical oversight and management to mitigate, if not prevent, harm. Because of the assumed union of reproductive biology to gender roles, medical men believed that in such times of trouble the strain could be diminished by practicing prescribed gender roles as vigorously as possible.²⁹ The society-soma connection was made.

Femininity in the Flesh: The Mother Body as Gender Role Embodiment

The acceptance of psychoanalytical principles into general practice fundamentally changed the way that the female body was viewed. No longer were physical causes the most likely explanation for female, especially reproductive, complaints. It is useful to compare the MacFarlane case of dyspareunia, discussed earlier, to one reported only eight years later in 1955. While in 1946 Dr. MacFarlane argued that physicians should always look for a physical cause of painful sex, the reporting physician in this

²⁹ Of course this was nothing new. Women's reproductive systems had been constructed medically as sites of danger since Galen and Hippocrates. It was simply a new way to frame this relationship. For other histories of the construction of the reproductive system as sites of danger see: Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990); Ornella Moscucci, *The Science of Woman: Gynaecology and Gender in England, 1800-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

case, a Dr. M. Bruser, foregrounds a psychological explanation despite the fact that he is engaged in demonstrating the links between endometriosis (a physical condition) and dyspareunia.³⁰ He notes that:

It cannot be demonstrated statistically, but the impression was that many of these girls were of a “neurotic” temperament. It is guess work whether this is accidental association or whether a connection exists; for example, is there a state of nervous tension engendered by repeated or constant pain, or apprehension concerning the next menstruation or the next act of coitus, or the cumulative effect of failure as a wife, both on account of pain and possibly infertility.³¹

By foregrounding the psychological explanation, Bruser is able to connect the physical pain that his patients feel to their assumed deficiencies as wives, in particular their potential inability to be mothers, and extend his medical authority over them; he is not only treating the finite physical condition, he is also asserting his authority over their mental state thereby extending the potential treatment indefinitely. Further, the assumed connection between the reproductive system and the mind was so strong that even though Bruser has no compelling data, statistical or otherwise, for his psychological explanation he is not challenged either during the peer review process or in any published letters in subsequent issues. The lack of set parameters in diagnosing psychological complaints, especially during the time period under review, allowed for its broad application. This was a stark contrast to biological explanations which needed at least the appearance of physical evidence.³²

The connection of the mother body to her postwar gender roles is made even clearer in a 1958 article describing a study of Premenstrual Tension Syndrome (PTS). Doctors J. N. Fortin, E. D. Wittkower and F. Kalz directly linked the symptoms of PTS to their patients’ supposed inability to embrace their femininity and adjust to their feminine role. In the study they compared women who did not have PTS (the control group) to women who experienced symptoms such as “tension, irritability, depression, anxiety... swelling of the abdomen and limbs, itching, thirst, and various tendencies to migraine, asthma and epilepsy.”³³ They concluded that PTS was often a response to guilt over sexuality and resentment at being a woman.

The control group demonstrated a better acceptance of the feminine role and of the inevitable restrictions imposed on a girl; a reaction of pride to the menarche with emphasis on the positive aspects of femininity; a dependant relationship to the mother with fewer hostile features; and a

³⁰ Endometriosis occurs when cells from the lining of the uterus are found outside the uterus which can cause pain and infertility. Discovered in 1860, the physical nature of the disorder was understood at the time under review.

³¹ M. Bruser, “The Common Occurrence of Endometriosis in Young Women,” *CMAJ*, 1 February 1955, 191.

³² Veronica Strong-Boag notes that psychological ideals of family and motherhood made it beyond the purely medical discourse and were featured in popular culture magazines such as *Chatelaine*. See. Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada: 1945-1960,” *Canadian Historical Review* LXXII, no. 4 (1991): 482.

³³ J.N Fortin, E.D. Wittkower, F. Kalz, “A Psychosomatic Approach to the Pre-Menstrual Tension Syndrome: A Preliminary Report,” *CMAJ*, 15 December 1958, 978.

better sexual adjustment. Their tensions, both internal and external, were dealt with more successfully.³⁴

In contrast, those in the experimental group who had PTS were described as unable to embrace their femininity, resentful of their mothers, and envious of boys' freedom from both social and biological restrictions. It seems that, for women, a crucial part of their embodied gender normality was the acceptance of their sex's second class status and the restriction deemed inherent to being a woman. Lack of acceptance was mentally and physically pathological. The PTS example also demonstrates the ways that the mother body's deficiencies were seen to be "inherited" by their children. In the article the reporting physicians are careful to note that girls suffering from PTS not only had strained relationships with their mothers but that they came from homes where marital discord between their parents was a common feature. This, according to the authors, demonstrated the mothers' inability to fulfill their feminine roles and was a contributing factor to their daughters' difficulty accepting gender role boundaries and an ancillary cause of their physical pain.³⁵

Though in the vast majority of cases gender role deviation was written on the reproductive or sexual organs of a woman in rare cases women found their social nonconformities written on other parts of their bodies. For example, Dr. Karl Stern and his associates Andree Lariviere and Dr. Guy Fournier argued that their case, a twenty-six year old woman who had plastic surgery on her nose to remove a bump and who was unhappy with the result, was actually suffering from acute sexual neurosis.³⁶ Other symptoms included anxiety, especially prior to menstruation which was generally irregular. The patient's sexual fixation began, the authors argued, because she had once seen a neighbour expose himself to some children and because the patient and a friend, when they were young and working at a summer resort, sometimes peeked in the men's dressing room window. They recorded extensive details about the patient's current relationship with her boyfriend who was, they reported, a thirty-three year-

³⁴ Ibid., 980.

³⁵ Elements of inheritance are features of almost all medical paradigms that seek to control the body. Eugenics focused on inherited traits but other authors have suggested that even prior to the rise of eugenics undesirable bodies such as the poor were thought to pass bodily weakness from one generation to the next. For the latter see: Kevin Siena, "'Pliable Bodies': The Moral Biology of Health and Disease" in *A Cultural History of the Body in the Age of Enlightenment*. ed. Carole Reeves, 35-52 (Oxford: Berg, 2010).

³⁶ It is unclear what role Lariviere provided in the case since he is not a doctor – only Stern is identified as a M.D. while Lariviere and Fournier have a B.A. and an M.A. (the British title for a physician) respectively. There is an editorial note that the report stems from the Institut Albert Prévost in Montreal which was a teaching sanitarium specializing in developing psychiatry. Karl Stern, Andree Lariviere, Guy Fournier, "Psychiatric Aspects of Cosmetic Surgery of the Nose," *CMAJ* 15 March, 1957, 469-472. It is possible that the patient was committed to the institution which would explain why she was the focus of a psychoanalytic assessment. However, no details of such a commitment are cited within the paper which, if she had been committed, would have been highly unusual.

old, divorced, dancing instructor. They also noted that, “The patient cries and becomes panicky if her boyfriend tries to have normal sexual relations but she practices fellatio... Her entire sexual development shows overt signs of immaturity with marked orality.”³⁷ While it is true that Freud had signalled the nose was a common site of sexual displacement the doctors never explain why, if the woman was a cosmetic surgery patient, they took such an extensive sexual history. Since it was the patient who expressed dissatisfaction with the results of her surgery, thereby challenging the surgeons’ authority and competence, they may have pathologized her in retaliation; however, this is impossible to know. What is clear is that the woman, by engaging in extramarital sex especially with a dancing instructor whom the doctors hint was overly effeminate, was placed on the abnormal side of the morality spectrum and her transgressions made her both physically and psychologically ill.

In psychoanalysis a woman’s psychosexual development, her move from girlhood through the physical and emotional changes of puberty, were only deemed complete when she became pregnant. Motherhood was the culmination of her biological and psychological maturity. As Daniel Cappon M. B., working the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, stated, “pregnancy crowns a female psychosexual evolution.... Though ambivalence may exist, there is triumph of life over death, of motherhood over self-preservation, of motherliness over sexuality, of passivity and submissiveness over aggression and of femininity over masculinity.”³⁸ He then goes on to argue that the proper motivation for a woman to get pregnant was not only to show love and gratitude to her husband – by providing biological proof of their healthy heterosexual relationship – but also “to prove [her] womanhood.”³⁹ That is, by having a baby a woman could provide the world with physical proof of her normality, fulfil her gender role, and generally demonstrate the viability of her marriage and her own psychosexual maturity.

Finding the healthy pregnant body (or any healthy body at all) in the pages of the *CMAJ* is difficult; by definition all bodies contained therein were pathologized. Thus, the ideal pregnant body is constructed primarily by inverting the described characteristics of the abnormal body. In almost all cases where the pregnant body was pathologized as abnormal, the women involved were portrayed as either unmarried – their pregnancies the result of taboo illicit sex – or at the very least were engaged in improper gender relations with their husbands. For example, Dr. Gordon W. Preuter, in his trials of the

³⁷ Ibid., 471-472.

³⁸ Daniel Cappon, “Some Psychodynamic Aspects of Pregnancy,” *CMAJ* February 1954, 148.

³⁹ Ibid., 149.

anti-nauseate Trifluoperazine, dismissed the cases where the drug proved ineffective claiming, “Most of the failures occurred in very young patients (16-19 years of age) who because they were unmarried or had been forced into marriage were undergoing unusual emotional stress.”⁴⁰ Extreme drug-resistant nausea was also blamed on gender role deviation in a case presented by a Dr. M. Straker who noted on the woman’s case file that not only was the pregnancy unplanned and unwanted (though the woman was married) she had, “marked fears of conception, of motherhood, of femininity,” and despite her condition had expressed her desire to continue with her career. Straker presented her case as one with a happy ending however as he proudly reported she “recovered” her sensibility after the birth of her child, demonstrating, “Warm reaction to child, (boy). Gave up work and took motherhood with enthusiasm.”⁴¹ The ambiguous phrasing in this case study leaves open the question from what exactly the patient “recovered.” Presumably the pregnancy-related nausea abated after delivery but whether it was the physical removal of the child from her body or her claiming of a proper motherhood identity that effected the “cure” is left unclear.

The most clearly expressed image of the pregnant woman as an ultra-feminine ideal did not appear in the articles or editorials but within the advertising. Advertising within the *CMAJ* is an interesting piece of the larger *CMAJ* discourse puzzle as it was the only sustained content not produced by medical men. Due to its narrow focus on its targeted medical audience, advertising in the *CMAJ* differed greatly from traditional public marketing. That is, advertisements in the *CMAJ* tended to be text-heavy rather than visually based and often mimicked the style of medical reports focusing on impressing their medical readers with clinical trial results, the economy of a particular product, or its

⁴⁰ Gordon W. Preuter, “Trifluoperazine in Nausea and Vomiting Pregnancy,” *CMAJ*, 1 July 1959, 22.

⁴¹ M. Straker, “Psychological Factors During Pregnancy and Childbirth,” *CMAJ* May 1954, 572.

usefulness in raising a practitioner's prestige. However, certain products, usually those focused on the domestic sphere and to be recommended for use by women and children, tended to have more images;



*This started last night
with **BONAMINE** for morning sickness*

MECLIZINE HYDROCHLORIDE
Bonamine at bedtime gives up to 24 hours of effective protection from nausea and vomiting of pregnancy.^{1-3,9}
Bonamine is excellently tolerated—*not* a single report of major complications in six years of wide clinical use.¹⁻¹⁰

Science for the world's well-being
Pfizer PFIZER CANADA Division of Pfizer Corp.
5330 Royalmount Ave., Montreal 9, P.Q.

REFERENCES: 1. Seidner, H.M.: Illinois M.J. 109:20, 1956. 2. Moyer, J.H.: M. Clin. North America, Mar., 1957, p. 405. 3. Charles, C.M.: Geriatrics 11:110, 1956. 4. Weil, L.L.: J. Florida Acad. Gen. Practice 4:3, No. 3, 1954. 5. Kinney, J.L.: J. M. Soc. New Jersey 53:128, 1956. 6. Semmens, J.P.: Obst. & Gynec. 9:586, 1957. 7. Conner, P.K., Jr., and Moyer, J.H.: GP 14:124, No. 5, 1956. 8. Daeschner, C.W., et al.: South. M.J. 49:1465, 1956. 9. Mulherin, C. McL., and Bryans, C.I., Jr.: J.M.A. Georgia 45:46, 1956. 10. Report of study by Army, Navy, Air Force Motion Sickness Team: J.A.M.A. 160:755, 1956.

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FIGURE 2.1

these domestic images demonstrated the importance of normative gender roles. The fact that this advertising was not meant to be viewed by the general public provides further evidence that medical men were not simply imposing these ideals on their patients. The very success of these advertisements, their consistency in portraying these gender ideas denotes some level of internalization of these themes by the medical establishment. If they had not resonated with doctors the advertisers would have changed tactics to better engage their audience.

Both Pfizer, maker of Bonamine, and Searle & Co., maker of Mornidine, used the image of the happy pregnant mother making breakfast to market their anti-morning sickness drugs. (Figures 2.1 and 2.2) In both advertisements the women are blissfully making a large breakfast of bacon and eggs. The background of the Bonamine advertisement includes her husband and

school-age son waiting for their meal. Neither woman is visibly pregnant, though both of them wear lovely feminine nightgowns and are young (though not too young – between twenty and thirty) and demonstrate a conventional “prettiness” that is feminine but not overly sexualized. Their domestic setting is made clear not only by the image but also the text. The Bonamine tagline reads, “This [referring to the woman making breakfast] with Bonamine started last night for morning sickness.”⁴² The tagline of the Mornidine advertisement reads, “Now she can make breakfast again.”⁴³ Image and text worked together to demonstrate that through the use of these drugs the women were able to return to

⁴² “Advertisement,” *CMAJ* 22 October 1960, 26.

⁴³ “Advertisement,” *CMAJ* 11 July 1959, 59.

their domestic roles and thus good health. In both cases the pharmaceutical companies were not promoting their products to doctors to cure nausea per se – these symptoms are clearly ancillary. The message that they were selling to physicians was that their drugs could be used to bring the mother back into her gender prescribed role which, especially in the case of the Mornidine advertisement, would have a positive effect on the whole family. Such imagery also supported the medical ideal that while the mother body was fragile so long as a woman had the right motivations – to return to her roles as domestic doyenne – medicine could affect a cure with a minimum of fuss.

If pregnancy was the apex of a woman’s biological link to her gender role and femininity, the most dangerous time for her was when that biological link was severed. Menopause, with its final separation of the female body from its childbearing potentiality was pathologized as the time that could cause extreme mental-physical strain on women. However, as with the anti-nausea drugs described above, the treatment of menopause’s physical characteristics such as fatigue, pelvic pain, or night sweats were decidedly secondary considerations, if they were mentioned at all. In contrast, the gender role adjustments were highlighted. A 1965 article on “Ovarian Failure and the Menopause,” noted the need of menopausal women for:

affection and understanding, yet often those needs are frustrated by a maturing and independent family and a busy, sometimes, indifferent husband. Essentially, the anxieties of these women reflect an emotional vacuum which a short time ago was filled with the dreams and hopes of youth.⁴⁴

NOW SHE CAN COOK BREAKFAST AGAIN

... WHEN YOU PRESCRIBE NEW
MORNIDINETM
(BRAND OF PIPAMAZINE)

A new drug with specific effectiveness in nausea and vomiting of pregnancy. Mornidine eliminates the ordeal of morning sickness. With its selective action on the vomiting center, or the medullary chemoreceptor "trigger zone," Mornidine possesses the advantages of the phenothiazine drugs without unwanted tranquilizing activity. Doses of 5 to 10 mg., repeated at intervals of six to eight hours, provide excellent relief all day. In patients who are unable to retain oral medication when first seen, Mornidine may be administered intramuscularly in doses of 5 mg. (1 cc.). Mornidine is supplied as tablets of 5 mg. and as ampuls of 5 mg. (1 cc.).

G. D. SEARLE & CO. OF CANADA LTD.
 240 QUEEN ST. E., BRAMPTON, ONT.

FIGURE 2.2

⁴⁴ Donald C. McEwen, “Ovarian Failure and the Menopause,” *CMAJ* 1 May 1965, 962.

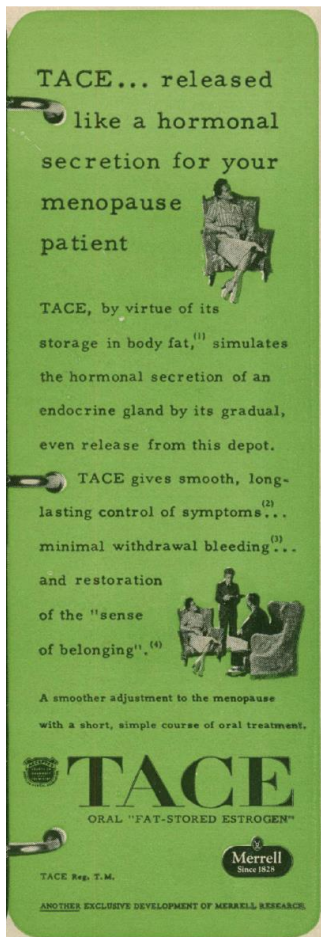


FIGURE 2.3

The author, Dr. Donald C. McEwan, used Primarin, an estrogen therapy, to treat women in this “emotional vacuum” and in his case reports he noted their families’ reactions to their treatment as proof of their cure. Mrs. S.’s husband was “fascinated” and urged her to continue the treatment. Mrs. P. M.’s husband felt “her progress has been remarkable,” and Mrs. H. was “able to manage her problems without concern to her family or herself.”⁴⁵ In each of these “cures” the women were put back into their feminine role as wives and mothers despite menopause severing the biological link to their motherhood. Tace, another drug meant to alleviate the symptoms of menopause, also capitalized on this idea with an advertisement that showed the patient before, sitting alone in her chair, and after, still in the chair but surrounded by her loving children and husband.⁴⁶ (Figure 2.3) One advertising campaign for Bellergal portrayed a doctor taking a middle aged woman by the hand in the middle of a giant, fractured female symbol; the caption reads “Lead your patient through the difficult years.”⁴⁷ In this advertisement the female symbol serves as a gateway between the assured femininity (literally drawn in the image of the symbol) which is connected to biological reproductive capabilities and the unknown

territory that the woman will occupy when she leaves the female (metaphorically) behind. (Figure 2.4)

Even the famous Dr. Marion Hilliard, whose books and columns in *Chatelaine* often had a feminist message, highlighted menopause as a time of trouble, especially for women who felt abandoned by a working husband and grown children. Though Hilliard proposed an unorthodox solution – that patients take advantage of their new freedom to go out and get a job that fulfilled them – she still conflated gender roles, biology, and

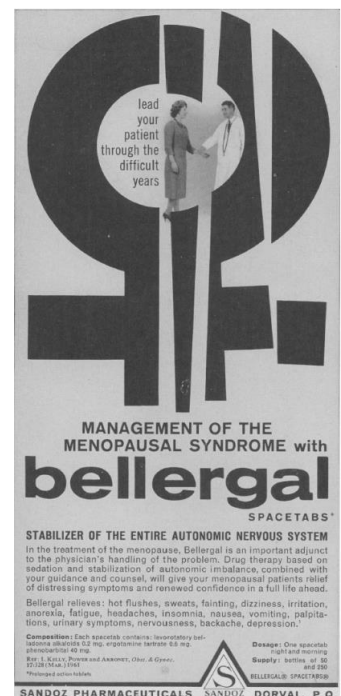


FIGURE 2.4

⁴⁵ Ibid., 967-968.

⁴⁶ “Advertisement,” *CMAJ* 15 January 1955, 37.

⁴⁷ “Advertisement,” *CMAJ*, 1 September 1962, 26

sexuality. As she notes in her article one of the symptoms of menopause was intermittent and abrupt drops in sexual desire.

Sexual desire does not disappear entirely and may have sudden upsurges, so it becomes capricious and unnerving to a loving sensitive wife. To a wife, who has been loyal and dutiful only, a complete rejection may take its place. When the very centre of the family is under siege like this, wise counsel is necessary.⁴⁸

Hilliard affirms the role of the mother body as “centre” of the family predicting dire consequences for all members without a doctor’s “wise council.” Further there is a clear value judgement between the “loving sensitive wife” and the lesser, problematic wife who engages with sex only to please her husband. For Hilliard the latter marriage is clearly already in a precarious position.

Menopause, though pathologized, was still considered a natural process. However, concerns about gender role and biology were highlighted even more in the “unnatural case” of children being born with incomplete or “unsatisfactory” genitalia. Despite the rareness of intersexuality, hermaphroditism and/or the congenital absence of the vagina, there was a statistically large number of articles written on their treatment denoting the fear of anybody whose gender and biology could not be easily aligned.⁴⁹ In a 1956 editorial the unnamed author stressed the importance of assigning a gender to any child born with ambiguous genitalia quickly, and that the child should always be raised as one gender and never told about the uncertainty of their sex. “Parents and physician should make up their minds about the infant’s sex early (within the first few weeks) and stick to their decision so that a gender role is clearly defined and consistently maintained from the beginning.”⁵⁰ To avoid confusion, the author continued, parents should never be informed that they have a half boy and half girl but instead told they have either a girl or a boy with incomplete sexual organs. Connecting a biological sex to a socialized gender as soon as possible and maintaining that connection was the surest way to normalize the child.

⁴⁸ Hilliard, “The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Menopause,” *CMAJ* 1 January 1957, 1.

⁴⁹In the period under review there were a total of seven cases reported in the *CMAJ*. See: David D. Kulcsar, “Intersexuality (With Report of a Case),” *CMAJ* August 1948, 144-248; J. E. C. Stollmeyer and J. P. A. Latour, “Pseudohermaphroditism,” *CMAJ* November 1950, 494; L. T. Barclay, “Artificial Vagina,” *CMAJ* January 1954, 67; J. C. Pattee, D. M. Wyse, R. Palmer Howard, “Female Pseudohermaphroditism Treated with Oral Cortisone,” *CMAJ* October 1954, 358; Murray L. Barr, “The Sex Chromatin and its Bearing on Errors of Sex Development,” *CMAJ* 15 March, 419-422; D. A. Hillman, “Fetal Masculinization with Maternal Progesterone Therapy,” *CMAJ* 1 February 1959, 200-201; M. Kosowski, “Letter to the Editor: Congenital Absence of Vagina,” *CMAJ* 2 January 1960, 43; J. B. Costello and E. J. Badre, “Construction of an Artificial Vagina,” *CMAJ* 17 September, 1966. According to a study in the *American Journal of Human Biology* intersexual cases occur at most in two percent of live births. Melanie Blackless, et. al. “How Sexually Dimorphic Are We? Review and Synthesis,” *American Journal of Human Biology* 12 (2000): 151-166. It should be noted that intersexed or hermaphroditic infants were most often made into biological and social females during this time period as it was deemed cruel to assign a male gender to such persons as they would be forever effeminized by having a very small penis.

⁵⁰ Barr, “The Sex Chromatin and its Bearing on Errors of Sex Development,” *CMAJ* 15 March, 421-422.

In some cases girls born with ambiguous genitalia also had short or missing vaginal canals and there were several reports on different methods to “build” a vagina for these women. These articles tended to stress the normality of these girls in their adherence to feminine gender roles and usually mentioned that the surgery was a precursor to an upcoming marriage.⁵¹ Dr. L. T. Barclay who had performed a number of reconstructions pointed out: “all of the three patients whom I have treated for atresia of the vagina were young women, attractive and with well-developed secondary sex characteristics.” In the same article he discusses an update from an earlier patient, a nurse, noting that “three years later [after the operation she] has an apparently normal vagina and to be married soon, which is probably good evidence of normal sexual instincts.”⁵² The evidence of the desire for marriage thus equalled normal sexuality and demonstrated the implantation of a biological marker of femininity – the vagina – had allowed the patient to successfully embody her social femininity, the latter of which is confirmed by the doctor’s assertions that she is feminine and his careful notation of her properly womanly job as a nurse.⁵³

What is most striking about the above discourses is the frequency of their engagement with “femininity,” thus making an essentially non-medical term part of the diagnostic and treatment lexicon. For contributors to the *CMAJ* the label of “feminine” encompassed a woman whose gender and sexual roles were in congruence with her biology – the more congruent, the more feminine – with the pregnant woman the apex of femininity reaffirming the biological and social viability of the heterosexual nuclear family. The femininity of the mother body was also tied to particular ideals of beauty that were attractive yet wholesome and not overly sexualized – appropriate given the maternal nature of this particular Leviathan construction. Accordingly, femininity became a medical synonym for female normality and this necessarily affected the way that female bodies were treated in the postwar era.

Putting the “Family” in Family Planning: Communal Fertility and the Mother Body

In her role as the keystone of the family, the mother body did more than just embody femininity, sexuality, and gender role normalcy. Within the medical body politic the mother body was not the sole property of the woman who inhabited it – her body both reflected and belonged to the wider family.

⁵¹ A vaginal passage was required for the patient to be able to physically engage in heterosexual intercourse.

⁵² Barclay, “Artificial Vagina,” *CMAJ* January 1954, 68.

⁵³ Of course the ultimate biological marker of femininity was a functioning uterus but this was beyond the ability of medical science to provide.

One of the ways that the mother body's communal nature was constructed was through discourses on the limitation or promotion of fertility. Much scholarship has been expended on the efforts of second wave feminists to create a society where a woman had complete control over her own body, primarily identified by a woman's right to control her fertility through access to abortion and birth control "on demand."⁵⁴ Yet little information exists mapping the contours of the ideology of female body ownership prior to the establishment of these rights. For postwar contributors to the *CMAJ*, limiting and promoting fertility was the communal "right" of a couple. Thus the era under review seems to be a time of ideological transition between the Victorian era when upon marriage a woman's body was absorbed into that of her husband, effectively erasing her embodied personhood and the developments of second wave feminism when anything happening within a woman's body was deemed (ideally) solely her legal and social concern.

Birth control for the contributors to the *CMAJ* was seen as an overwhelmingly positive entity, so long as it was limited to married couples. A married couple having good sex not only demonstrated their marriage was strong and "normal" but also were engaged in a prophylactic activity that would protect their bond in times of future trouble. Unwanted pregnancy was constructed as an unfortunate side effect to this process, to be mitigated if possible. Contributors noted that "complete continence in a happily married couple can be reasonably looked upon as an impossibility"⁵⁵ and "[f]ear of pregnancy produce[s] much human misery, ill-health, marital tension and unhappiness."⁵⁶ As early as 1948 the *CMAJ* published a chart, created by an English medical man, which, "enables a married woman, to some extent, to regulate her married life in an intelligent manner without having to worry over the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy."⁵⁷ In 1962, seven years before the advertisement and sale of contraceptives would be officially decriminalized, the *CMAJ*'s Board of Directors made the decision to accept advertisements for contraception within its pages.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ See: Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Linda Gordon, *Women's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Grossman, 1976); N. E. H. Hull and Peter Charles Hoffer, *Roe v. Wade: The Abortion Rights Controversy in American History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001); Elizabeth Tyler May, *America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptive in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

⁵⁵ "Oral Contraceptives," *CMAJ* 10 August 1963, 270.

⁵⁶ J. H. Dickinson, G. G. Smith, "A New and Practical Oral Contraceptive Agent: Norethindrone and Mestranol," *CMAJ* 10 August 1963, 242.

⁵⁷ L. Carlyle Lyon, "A Menstrual Chart," *CMAJ* August 1948, 172.

⁵⁸ LAC "Minutes of the Meeting of the CMA Executive Council," Mflm 7491.

It was clear that birth control was only a positive force if the fertility it limited was the communal property of a couple – only then would it serve to remove the anxiety from married sexual coitus and not create additional stressors by changing the ideal postwar family dynamic. Contributors to the *CMAJ* repeatedly emphasized that birth control, even if the method could be engaged in without the spouse knowing (as with the Pill), had to be a family decision. The husband and wife should agree to use birth control and any doctor aiding them to get birth control should make sure this was the case; failure to do so was to deprive a male of his “right” within a marriage to use his wife’s body to produce progeny.⁵⁹

At this time many new methods of birth control that limited female fertility were under review and the communal ownership of the mother body was underscored by the fact that almost all reports of trials of these methods (such as the Pill or the IUD) had a special section for the husband’s opinion of the method and his overall comfort in engaging in that type of contraception. Though the “body” under investigation was the female one, the “patient” under review was an amalgamation of, and “owned” by, both husband and wife. For example, in a 1965 trial of the oral contraceptives for married women, the questionnaire included “Husband’s opinion of the method,” with a good deal of space left for his answer.⁶⁰ In a 1966 study of intrauterine devices (IUDs) the authors noted that:

The husband of one woman suffered a penile hematoma after being “stabbed” by the tail of the device. The woman’s coil was removed because of alleged excessive vaginal bleeding and cramps. We were unable to determine whether she actually had these symptoms or whether her husband had insisted that the coil be removed.⁶¹

The tone of the article makes it clear that a husband would be completely within his rights to demand his wife alter her contraceptive practice to maximize his enjoyment of her body.

Authors such as Christabelle Sethna, in studying the rise of acceptance of birth control in Western society, have often argued that it was the threat of overpopulation from “undesirable” countries in the developing world that finally made certain methods of fertility control, such as the Pill, generally acceptable.⁶² However, evidence within the *CMAJ* suggests that this explanation is only part of the

⁵⁹ “The Legal Aspects of Sterilization,” *CMAJ*, May 1948, 512-13.

⁶⁰ C. A. Douglas Ringrose, “The Emotional Responses of Married Women Receiving Oral Contraceptives,” *CMAJ*, 5 June 1965, 1207.

⁶¹ Fred L. Johnson, F. R. Doerffer, J. E. A. Tyson, “Clinical Experience with Margulies Intrauterine Contraceptive Device,” *CMAJ*, 2 July 1966, 15.

⁶² Christabelle Sethna, “The University of Toronto Health Service, Oral Contraception, and Student Demand for Birth Control, 1960-1970,” *Historical Studies in Education* 17.2 (2005): 265-292; Christabelle Sethna, “The Evolution of the *Birth Control Handbook*: From Student Peer-Education Manual to Feminist Self-empowerment Text, 1968-1975,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 23.1 (2006): 89-118.

equation. Contributors to the *CMAJ* did see birth control as a way to police and limit racialized and classed bodies deemed unable to control themselves. Nevertheless, they also viewed birth control as a practical reward for heterosexual married couples, who by right of their acceptance of the normality of heterosexual married unions, were allowed to engage in as much sexual activity, within that frame, as they desired free from unwanted pregnancy. It was expected that couples would use birth control wisely and space their children to maximize those children's development and to prevent pregnancies for which they could not provide. Within the pages of the *CMAJ*, birth control and heterosexual couples reinforced the authority of each other. Married, monogamous, heterosexual couples were deemed legitimate and rational and therefore birth control was associated with the normality of heterosexual union instead of the sexual excess epitomized by the sexually active single female body. Medical contributors to the *CMAJ* decried any couple (or woman) who used birth control to avoid having any children at all, even expanding the familial control over the mother body by citing a child's right to siblings!⁶³ Family planning was a family affair. Framing birth control usage within the mother body rather than the dangerous single female body was crucial to its respectability.

The fact that a woman's fertility, her general reproductive ability, was framed as communal property by medical contributors is made even clearer when taken in context with issues of infertility, abortion, and sterilization. Couples dealing with infertility had few options in the immediate postwar period – the technological and biological innovation that would bring about the first “test tube babies” was still at least twenty years in the future.⁶⁴ The primary therapy: Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID), involved using an apparatus to introduce semen directly into the mouth of the uterus. AID was extremely controversial. When infertility was caused by a husband's inability to deliver sperm into his wife's vagina, for reasons such as previous penile injury that prevented effective ejaculation, the procedure was deemed acceptable; articles talking about AID with a husband as donor made this clear using the designation “AID (husband),” rather than “AID (donor).” However, a minority of physicians also suggested AID could be used with donor sperm in situations where a husband's sperm itself was the problem such as in cases of low motility.⁶⁵ The vitriolic outpouring of negativity against such

⁶³ “Birth Control,” *CMAJ* November 1947, 489; G. P. R. Tallin, “The Legal Implications of the Non-Therapeutic Practices of Doctors,” *CMAJ* 4 August, 1962, 207-213; “Medical News in Brief: The Physician and Family Planning,” *CMAJ* 24 September 1966, 689.

⁶⁴ The first “test tube baby” born as a result of in vitro fertilization was Louise Brown who was born in England 25 July 1978.

⁶⁵ There were no cases put forward in the *CMAJ* of women desiring AID (donor) in order to have a child on their own (or as part of a lesbian couple). Whether this absence is due to the social constructions of the day making planning single motherhood an unthinkable option for women, or *CMAJ* contributors simply refused to countenance such a practice, or a combination of the two, is unknown.

procedures demonstrates the way that fertility was constructed as communal within the mother body. In his 1962 address to the Meeting of the Canadian General Medical Association, legal advisor and Queen's Council G. P. R. Tallin warned doctors that allowing AID (donor) would usher in the end of marriage and gender relations as they knew it.

In view of Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" it is possible to conceive that present ideas of marriage may become obsolete. Ideas of equal rights for men and women, and of non-discrimination on grounds of sex, accompanied by the discovery of new techniques may lead to an alternating system under which Joseph and Georgina will function as husband and wife respectively in the odd numbered years and under the names of Josephine and George as wife and husband respectively in the even numbered years. This system would eliminate all complaints about a man-dominated world. Of course, Huxley has gone one step further and abolished husband and wives altogether. Children in his world are fathered by a spermatozoa bank and delivered from a test-tube. This of course is merely a scientific extension of artificial insemination.⁶⁶

Though deliberately hyperbolic, Tallin was serious in his warning that by facilitating AID (donor) doctors were in fact aiding moral and legal adultery. Put simply, AID (donor) voided the marital contract by removing the husband's input in communal conception. In another example, an editorial on AID (donor) by an unnamed author used much the same language warning that if AID (donor) "became widespread, it might well destroy family life as the basis of human society."⁶⁷ The unnamed editor further argued that donor insemination would have to be extended to unmarried women or men, thus negating the viability of the nuclear family. He concluded his editorial by comparing donors to prostitutes, and characterizing the doctors who performed the donor insemination as pimps. The great irony is that within the *CMAJ* couples who could not conceive were urged to adopt; it was better to accept into the family a child with no biological ties to either parent than one who had ties to one parent and one person outside of that union.⁶⁸

Compounding the above irony was the pathologization of women who wished to have their doctor facilitate AID (donor). Despite the focus on pregnancy and motherhood as the combined culmination of a woman's psycho-sexual development, desiring AID (donor) was not seen as a logical expectation for women living in the face of such social constructs but whose husbands were infertile. In their article "Psychiatric Aspects of Artificial Insemination (Donor)," psychiatrists W. W. Watters and J. Sousa-Poza cited case studies that demonstrated that women who pushed for AID (donor) did so not out

⁶⁶ Tallin, "The Legal Implications of the Non-Therapeutic Practices of Doctors," 208.

⁶⁷ "The Law and Artificial Insemination," *CMAJ*, 15 May 1956, 832

⁶⁸ S.S.B. Gilder, "The London Letter: Conception after Adoption," *CMAJ* 5 June 1965, 1209.

of a desire for motherhood but as a means of punishing their husbands for their infertility. The doctors argued that such women, though they expressed their primary desire to experience biological embodied motherhood, were more concerned about the prestige of being pregnant and soon lost interest in their children after those children were no longer dependent on them. The women cited in the case studies are described as overly domineering, nagging and particularly unfeminine – their lack of femininity and their desire to demonstrate authority within the marriage seen as further proof of their disturbed psyches.

Moving fertility out of the communal mother body and into the hands of women was also one of the reasons cited for why abortion should remain taboo. Within the pages of the *CMAJ* abortion seems at first a grey area – a moment of historical change as there were many articles published calling for changes to draconian Canadian abortion laws. However, a close reading of that discourse illuminates that medical men were advocating for abortion law reform not because they supported a woman's right to choose but because they wanted more control over the procedure invested in the hands of the medical community as a whole – the better to protect them from criminal prosecution.⁶⁹ In the postwar era a woman could obtain a legal abortion only if a doctor deemed it medically necessary to preserve her life or, in the later years, her mental sanity. Unsuccessful applicants in this process were often pathologized to an even greater degree than women seeking AID (donor), though both were condemned for their desire to be in control of their own fertility. Indeed, several articles suggested that any woman desiring an abortion was actually mentally ill as her mothering instinct had become somehow disrupted, the connection between her biology and embodied femininity faulty. In a 1963 letter to the editor, the author, Dr. C. P. Harrison, argued that women who wanted to be rid of a pregnancy were divorced from their inherent feminine desire to protect and preserve their offspring: “surely Nazi Germany lives in memory as an example. Sacrifice the weak to the strong is the cry – a strange travesty of motherlove.”⁷⁰

It was assumed that any woman seeking an abortion was doing so secretly without her husband's knowledge or even possibly to hide another crime such as an affair. Trying to abort a fetus and move fertility out of communal control was an act of hatred to a husband and often signaled the disorder of

⁶⁹ C. Crawford Lindsay and C. V. Ward, “Potassium Permanganate as an Abortifacient,” *CMAJ* November 1954, 465-467; J. J. Lederman, “The Doctor, Abortion, and the Law: A Medicolegal Dilemma,” *CMAJ*, 4 August 1962, 216; G. P. R. Tallin, “The Legal Implications of the Non-Therapeutic Practices of Doctors,” *CMAJ* 4 August 1962, 207-215; Walter Simpson, “Letter to the Editor: The Doctor, Abortion, and the Law,” 13 October 13, 1962, 821-822; C. P. Harrison, “Letter to the Editor: The Issue of Legalized Abortion,” *CMAJ* 9 February 1963; S. G. Stern, “Letter to the Editor: The Issue of Legalized Abortion,” *CMAJ* 27 April 1963, 899; “The London Letter: Abortion,” *CMAJ* 23 September 1963, 679; D. F. Osborne, “Attempted Abortion with Retention of an Intrauterine Foreign Body,” *CMAJ* 15 February 1964, 494-495; P. M. Grant, “Letter to the Editor: On the Futility of Legalizing Abortion,” *CMAJ* 22 October 1966, 879; Peter M. Grant, “Letter to the Editor: On the Futility of Legalizing Abortion,” 24 September 1966, 688.

⁷⁰ Harrison, “The Issue of Legalized Abortion,” 329.

gender roles within that particular family. According to Dr. Zarfas, who conducted a study on women seeking therapeutic abortions (most of whom he denied), almost all those seeking terminations were overly masculine. He described one patient, a German immigrant, as an “aggressive, demanding, intolerant woman who hated her husband.”⁷¹

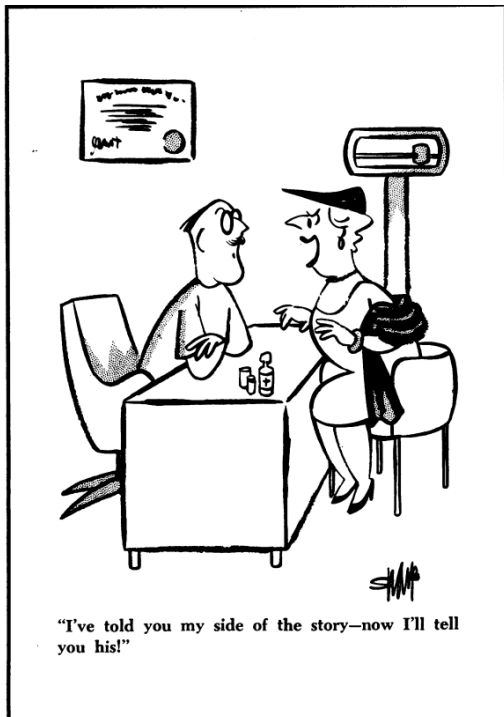


FIGURE 2.5

In all the above cases the women patients involved are described as gender role deviants whose masculine demeanour and authority over their husbands is cited as a contributing factor to their illnesses and as evidence that they were ill. The contributors thus drew a direct correlation between loss of femininity, gender role inversion, and the removal of fertility control from the communal mother body. This image of the pathological, unfeminine and overbearing woman, sometimes associated specifically with Eastern European or Latin immigrant women, became such a fixture within the Canadian medical zeitgeist that she was featured in several advertisements and lampooned as a stock character in the *CMAJ*'s recurring cartoon.⁷² (Figure 2.5)

Interestingly, the tie of biological fertility to the communal mother body was so strong that it influenced situations where both the male and female partners were pushing for the same medical procedure as occurred in many cases of sterilization. Many doctors refused to undertake a sterilization operation even if the couple were in agreement in their desire for it. *CMAJ* doctors noted that while a married couple may agree that they had produced the number of children that they desired, the possibility of widowerhood or widowhood was too great a risk. A second husband or wife may want children and the sterilization of either partner should be avoided because to do so would put this *hypothetical* future marriage in jeopardy.⁷³ There was also some concern that even should the marriage remain intact that the doctor could be sued if either partner changed his or her mind. Even when sterilization was a

⁷¹ E. Zarfas, “Psychiatric Indications of the Termination of Pregnancy,” *CMAJ* 15 August 1958, 230-236.

⁷² “Cartoon,” *CMAJ* 15 July 1958, n.p.

⁷³ “The Legal Aspects of Sterilization (Part II),” *CMAJ*, July 1948, 80.

consequence of a required operation such as a hysterectomy, articles stressed the importance of gaining the consent of both the husband and wife. As the unnamed writer of a 1948 editorial noted:

As the relationship between a husband and wife is not only confidential, but is of the most intimate nature and is attended upon with such far-reaching consequences...anything that might be done which interfere with such a sacred relationship and its consequences should be undertaken only with the consent of both parties...Our laws recognize the mutual responsibility between husband and wife and we have actions in our courts claiming the nullity of marriage based on sterility of one or other of life partners. It therefore, follows that any operation performed upon the wife which would interfere with the intimate relationship and its responsibilities and consequences should be authorized or consented to by both parties.⁷⁴

In this quotation, perhaps more than any other, the right of a couple to the wife's fertility is spelled out: any changes to the mother body, even to preserve its own integrity and viability, have to be "authorized or consented to by both parties."

Written on Her Flesh: The Mother Body as Synecdoche for the Family

The communal nature of the mother body went far beyond questions over familial ownership of her fertility. At its core the mother body served as a synecdoche for the family as a whole reflecting their gendered transgressions as well as being the medium through which deviations could be cured. In essence the mother body had to bend and change itself to suit the needs of the family members and was the primary interceder in correcting familial gender imbalances.

Maintaining the family's adherence to gender standards was often a balancing act. Take, for example, the 1960 study, "Impact of Sudden Severe Disablement of the Father Upon the Family," by Doctors R. Castro De. La Mata, G. Gringras and E. D. Wittkower. This report examined the treatment of eight families in which the father had suffered a sudden and acute illness or accident that left him unable to live his life in the previous manner and focussed on who within his family aided (or hindered) his mental and physical recovery. From the beginning of the article the authors invoke the mother body noting:

When a person marries, he and his wife enter marriage with a series of conscious and unconscious needs which they expect to be fulfilled through interaction with each other. This produces a highly dynamic play of adjustment and readjustment to maintain a good level of equilibrium and successful functioning of the family as a unit.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ "The Legal Aspects of Sterilization," *CMAJ*, May 1948, 512.

⁷⁵ R. Castro De. La Mata, G. Gringras, E. D. Wittkower, "Impact of Sudden, Severe Disablement of the Father Upon the Family," *CMAJ* 14 May 1960, 1015.

On the surface this quotation seems to be gender neutral though the content of the rest of the article is hinted at by the use of the male pronoun. What the rest of the article makes clear, however, is that it is the wife who must “adjust and readjust” to “maintain equilibrium.” These adjustments – to maintain the patriarchal organization of the family – were advocated even when they put the wider family in jeopardy or went against the fundamental principles of psychoanalysis that the authors purported to promote. For example, after the father in Family A broke his back while working as a window cleaner, the family maintained their “clear-cut and well integrated” family status. The authors noted:

Although the older members of the family realized that the father’s injury was serious and that the consequences might be grave, they adopted the attitude of ‘all will be well in the end.’ In fact, the family was so convinced that the father would recovery eventually that the idea of her looking for a job never crossed the mother’s mind.⁷⁶

De. La Mata, Gringras, and Wittkower praised this course of action, despite the fact that the family was barely scraping by financially, noting that such an attitude resulted in “the father’s position being strengthened,” an important factor in his medically unexpected full recovery. They argued that “[b]y virtue of collective denial, a sense of tragedy had by-passed the family.” Not only do the doctors in the article put the family’s financial survival below the father’s gender role maintenance they praise the family for ignoring the issue despite the fact that overcoming and unearthing the truth underneath denial is a central tenet of psychoanalysis. They likewise praised Mrs. C. whose husband suffered a leg injury in a car accident which rendered him temporarily helpless as his other leg had been amputated in childhood. Mrs. C. took a job only during this temporary time and quit as soon as Mr. C. was able to return to work. More importantly, she worked to maintain his status as the head of the household even when she was forced to take on aspects of the breadwinner role. As they noted: “she rose to the occasion with remarkable understanding, skill and tact. [She said] ‘We have to let him feel that we are dependent on him.’”⁷⁷

In contrast, Mrs. B. was heavily censored for her inability to maneuver her role and her body to protect the family’s wellbeing and maintain her husband’s gendered dignity. Due to the permanency of her husband’s disability, caused by a series of strokes, Mrs. B took a full time job. “The parent’s roles have undergone a reversal: the mother goes to work while the father stays at home, prepares the meals and depends on his wife in many ways. This change has gravely affected the whole family. With some justification, the father feels cast aside.” In an attempt to regain his masculinity they note, Mr. B. had

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1016.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

begun to beat his wife and children. The subtext of this case, when taken in context with that of Mrs. A. and Mrs. C., is that Mrs. B. was somehow deficient in her handling the situation – even that the ensuing familial destruction, including domestic violence, is her fault. Indeed, the problem is not that she got a job, other women in the study were forced to work as well, but that she allowed him to accept her feminine duties such as preparing meals. A better course of action, which would have aided in the entire family’s happiness, would have been to take a job while still engaging in her subordinate homemaker role as other wives had done – shouldering the mentally and physically exhausting burden of the “double day.” This, combined with a deference to his dominant position as the head of the family (despite his inability as a breadwinner) was deemed the “cure” for such disruptions.

In supporting the gender role bifurcation of the family the medical profession was not engaging in any different or extraordinary discourse. What was unique, however, was the medical profession’s ability to medicalize those gender roles. Nonetheless, with the notable exception of homosexual men, gendered illness remained centred on the mother body. Male bodies, like those who were suddenly disabled in the Montreal study noted above, who were unable or unwilling to fulfill their role as breadwinner may have been frowned upon and suffered a loss of self-esteem but there were no cases where a failure in heterosexual masculinity equalled a biological illness. Significantly these men did not become impotent or suffer any pain regarding their reproductive abilities or systems as a result of their contravention of gender roles. Mr. B., though he beat his wife and children, was not particularly pathologized; indeed, the article gives him so much sympathy as to place the majority of the blame with Mrs. B. who should have better managed the situation.

When heterosexual men failed in masculinity, it was usually their female counterpart, the wife or girlfriend, who had that lack written on their own female body. For example, in a 1952 article on postpartum psychosis Dr. F. E. McNair presented two cases in which he directly attributed the wives’ psychosis to their husbands’ inability to fulfil his masculine role. According to him, the first patient, Mrs. J. G., suffered from postpartum psychosis, which was not only caused, but also exacerbated, by her husband’s inability to be a “man.” McNair noted in the case records that, “[w]hile pregnant she routed a thug’s attack on herself and her husband.”⁷⁸ Later, “As her illness developed momentum her husband became indecisive, did not assume responsibility and her elder sister took over.” Another case study,

⁷⁸ F. E. McNair, “Psychosis: Occurring Postpartum: Analysis of 34 Cases,” *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, December 1952, 638.

Mrs. D. G., was the “war bride of a husband whose mother still dominated him.”⁷⁹ In both cases the patient’s husband was unable to fulfil the requirements of their gender role – whether through the application of physical force to protect his wife and unborn child, or the ability to take control of the household, or even simply to govern the other women in his life. His inability forced his female counterpart into a more active role causing, or at the very least contributing to, her illness.

Again, this phenomenon was not merely a disinterested medical population foisting ideals on the public; cases occurred in doctors’ own families. As noted earlier, there was general unease that medical men, required to be emotionally distant with their patients and burdened by overwork, would not be able to relate to their own families, especially their wives, in a mutually fulfilling way. As one American-based psychiatric study noted, “the doctor’s professional role affords him unusual opportunities for dodging the solution of his marital problems.” However, it would not be the doctor who suffered, as the study asserted, the doctors’ wives, when compared to a control group, were *all* in psychiatric treatment and had much higher levels of narcotic, legal barbiturate, and amphetamine abuse as well as alcoholism.⁸⁰ Despite the fact that it is the male doctors who are unable to engage emotionally and sexually with their wives, it is the wives who ultimately became the patients.⁸¹

The sole case where male gender and sexual role abnormality was written on the male body rather than the female was in cases of homosexuality. In several articles homosexual bodies were described as being more subject to venereal disease which was not attributed to “risky” behaviours as characterized debates over AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s but instead to some kind of internal weakness. Contributors to the *CMAJ* also suggested that some homosexual men, especially those whose homosexuality was higher on the Kinsey spectrum, were in fact impotent.⁸² For example, Samuel Laycock, a famous Canadian advice columnist and psychological educator noted that:

because some individuals whose interests are more homosexual than heterosexual are able to get married, have normal sex relations and beget children this does not mean that this adjustment is

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 639.

⁸⁰ It was not considered that doctors’ wives might have greater access to, and thus a greater ability to abuse, legal drugs than those in the control group or that their husbands would be more likely to seek biomedically-based solutions to marital discord. “The Doctor and His Wife,” 8 January 1966, 93.

⁸¹ It should also be noted that the article did not suggest that intimacy was impossible for the doctor – that he was impotent but instead that he either was too busy or too busy and distant to romance his wife to get her to the point where she willingly engaged in marital intimacy.

⁸² S. R. Laycock “Homosexuality – A Mental Hygiene Problem,” *CMAJ* September 1950, 245-250; B. Kanee and C. L. Hunt, “Homosexuality as a Source of Venereal Disease,” *CMAJ* August 1951, 138-140; Marvin Wellman, “Overt Homosexuality with Spontaneous Remission,” *CMAJ* 15 August 1956, 273-279. For an analysis of the social theme of the homosexual man as engaged in “risky” behaviour see: Susan Sontag, *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (London: Penguin, 1989).

possible for the more pronounced homosexuals to whom heterosexual relations are not only repugnant but impossible.⁸³

The focus on “begetting children” is interesting as it leaves open whether homosexual men are unable to father children because engaging in heterosexual coitus is so repugnant that they would be unable to achieve the necessary erection and ejaculation or because their homosexuality had damaged their sperm or reproductive organs in some way. Given Laycock’s focus on mental and physical “hygiene,” a polite term for eugenics-based treatment, the latter interpretation is both possible and likely.

Why were homosexual male bodies pathologized in this way while heterosexual male bodies were not? The bodies of the men in the disablement article were also gender role deviants but they did not become impotent or manifest their deficiencies in any embodied way. The simple answer is that homosexual bodies were already fixed on the deviant end of the spectrum. However, it must be noted that because the homosexual man was seen as existing outside or parallel to the nuclear family there was no wife to bear the embodied gender burden for him, thus opening the door for the pathologization of his body. Further, while homosexual men’s bodies were pathologized for their perceived gender/sexual role deviance and were in many ways constructed as the authors of their own downfall, even their bodies remained connected to the mother body. Mothers were usually blamed at least in part for “warping” their homosexual sons. For example, Dr. Marvin Wellman reported on one homosexual patient who came from a home where the mother desired to work and disliked being a housewife and who, because she disliked her husband, focused her affections solely on her son. He concluded that this inappropriate focus precipitated the son’s condition and made him effeminate in his mannerisms and appearance.⁸⁴

The mother body was also brought to bear on cases of homosexuality as a “cure” for that affliction. A heterosexual marriage was both a treatment for this kind of sexual deviation as well as being a public, ongoing proof that the treatment was successful. Thus in Wellman’s case his patient was pronounced cured when he demonstrated that, “[h]is marriage, *in which he is the dominant partner* is successful.”⁸⁵ Significantly not all homosexual men were thought to be curable in this way. Feminized, homosexual men, who were deemed to have female-identified behaviors, were usually seen as lost causes.

⁸³ Laycock “Homosexuality – A Mental Hygiene Problem,” 246.

⁸⁴ Wellman, “Overt Homosexuality with Spontaneous Remission,” 273-274.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 276. (Emphasis added.)

Heterosexual marriage and the maintenance of gender roles could also “cure” other sexual deviations. Two noted Toronto psychiatrists, Doctors Ian K. Bond and Harry C. Hutchinson, discussed a case of man who was addicted to exposing himself to women. His condition went into spontaneous remission when he was courting his wife, as at that time his sexual impulses were channelled into a proper heterosexual conduit. However, he returned to exposure after their marriage. During this time, his wife, of whom we only see glimpses in the case history, became ill and bedridden with an ulcer – making her body unavailable to him and his deviation returned. As in the cases of homosexuality, his mother was blamed for making sex seem dirty to him which, according to Freudian ideology, meant he retaliated by exposing himself. Using visualization techniques and inhibition therapy the doctors claimed that they were able to cure his sexual fantasies and:

[a]s his sexual fantasies diminished exhibiting was involved in them to a much lesser degree. The patient was able to engage in mixed group activities without tension for the first time....Sexually he became more virile and reported considerable enjoyment in his sex relations with his wife.⁸⁶

Just as when he was courting his wife, his sexual impulses were once again channelled into a proper course and thus by enjoying sex with his wife the patient was pronounced cured.⁸⁷

These cases of homosexuality and sexual deviance demonstrate that the mother not only reflect the gender role imbalances of the family but that sexual contact with her body, like the touch of a saint, could heal inappropriate postwar sexualities. The wives (as opposed to the mothers who are blamed as the cause) remain shadowing figures within the narrative and their voices are practically non-existent reinforcing the idea that it is solely their bodies that effect the cure. This cure was deemed even more successful if their husbands were able to make them pregnant adding a crucial biological component to the social cure.

Conclusions

The mother body was a useful construct for medical professionals in the immediate postwar period. She served to legitimate postwar gender roles by grounding them in female biology, allowing doctors to write gendered discourses on the very flesh of their female patients. Such was a very powerful

⁸⁶ Ian K. Bond and Harry C. Hutchinson, “Application of Reciprocal Inhibition Therapy to Exhibitionism,” *CMAJ* 2 July 1960, 24.

⁸⁷ Elise Chenier also refers to this particular case in *Strangers in Our Midst* where she notes that psychologists such as Bond and Hutchison had a very ambiguous view of wives of offenders such as this one profiled here. Though mothers were often portrayed as the root cause of such sexual deviance wives were often blamed for cases of recidivism. Indeed, according to Chenier, in this case such a relapse did occur. Chenier, *Strangers in Our Midst*, 133-135.

position for medical men. They not only used Freudian psychoanalysis to place women's (and some men's) bodies in a situation where non-compliance to gendered prescriptions could make a person ill, but they also, due to their almost complete domination of the medical marketplace, had a very captive audience for their authoritative discourse. A sick woman looking for relief of symptoms had very few places to turn other than the medical authorities, and even women who were not ill would at the very least come in contact with hegemonic medical orthodoxy during times such as pregnancy. The postwar medical establishment thus wielded a power that was as pervasive as it was subtle. Indeed, it would not be until the women's health movement, which focused on empowering women to make informed choices about their own bodies, that society as a whole would begin to realize the pervasive nature of medical ideals.⁸⁸ At the same time, however, medical men (and a few women) were not part of some grand conspiracy to disenfranchise postwar women; there is evidence that medical authorities were expected to make use of many of the medical body politics ideas in their own lives, breaking down some of the barriers between the doctor and the patient. It should also be noted that at this time that the psychology of sex was in its infancy within English Canada and its practitioners were much more efficacious at defining postwar sexual issues than actually solving them. Reasserting the status quo was one of the few "treatments" that seemed to work, at least on the surface and in the short term.⁸⁹ These caveats aside, however, it is clear that postwar medical authorities used the mother body to create a body politic that, in many ways, made morality a medical issue and which enshrined non-medical entities such as "femininity" within the diagnostic and treatment structures.

⁸⁸ The most famous example of this is arguably: Boston Women's Health Book Collective, *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book by and for Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

⁸⁹ Chenier, *Strangers in Our Midst*, 32.

CHAPTER THREE

Sex, Marriage, and the “One Flesh” Body:

Married Sexuality in the Anglican, United, and Roman Catholic Denominations

But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh.¹

[The] human body, a body which is God’s gift and trust, [is] only in a limited sense ours to do with as we please.²

Introduction

Christianity has a long history of qualifying the usefulness of bodies based on sex and sexuality. In the Bible sexuality is used to demark miraculous events and demonstrate the hand of God in the everyday world. Aside from the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the Bible, especially the Old Testament, abounds with examples of families made suddenly fertile, such as the nonagerians Sarah and Abraham conceiving Isaac and the healing of Rebekah’s barren womb.³ More mundanely, Catholic religious vocations require lifelong chastity.⁴ In early modern times the bodies of such religious had to be whole and without blemish, including the sexual organs, in order to take holy orders; impotence or bodily imperfection was often seen as evidence of sin and the general disfavour of God. In both the Catholic and Anglican faiths, proof that either the husband or wife have bodily or mental imperfections that prevents the completion of the penetrative sex act is one of the few cases where the marriage is subject to annulment.⁵ Continuing through from the early modern to the Victorian era, sexual activity was thought to be a drain on the mental faculties; excessive sexual activity could cause mental fatigue and even idiocy. Those who wanted to exert their energy elsewhere, such as prayer to bring them closer to

¹ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. 3rd Edition, ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), HB, 76.

² *The Lambeth Conference 1958 Encyclical Letter from the Bishops Along with Resolutions and Reports* (S.P.C.K. and Seabury Press 1958), 2.149.

³ See: Genesis 21.1; Genesis 25.21. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, HB, 39; 45.

⁴ This has not been without challenge. See: Patricia R. J. Bunnik, “The Ecclesiastical Minister and Marriage: An Attempt at Clarification,” *Social Compass* 12, (1965): 53-100; M. Y. Chang, “The Crisis is About Control: Consequences of the Priestly Decline in the US Catholic Church,” *Sociology of Religion* 59, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 1-5; Richard A. Schoenherr, *Goodbye Father: The Celibate Male Priesthood and the Future of the Catholic Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Gillian Walker, “Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven: Constructing the Celibate Priest,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (2004): 233-257.

⁵ See: Angus McLaren, *Impotence: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 35-37; Judith C. Mueller, “Fallen Men: Representations of Male Impotence in Britain,” *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 28 (1999): 92-93.

God, were required to place a tight rein on what were seen as animalistic tendencies.⁶ After the waning of the more puritanical viewpoint of the Victorian age, the social upheavals of two World Wars and the Great Depression placed sexuality in a constant state of flux, though changes were often seen as limited to special circumstances caused by those events. As peace and prosperity once again reigned in North America, the three dominant postwar Anglophone Canadian faiths – the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and United Churches – attempted to instruct the faithful in a new, “modern” view of sexual morality. All three denominations presented sex, at least within the bounds of heterosexual marriage, as a positive, transformative force that would transmute two separate worldly bodies into a single, spiritual body that became “one flesh.”⁷ Though the denominations deployed this ideal of the “one flesh” body for different purposes, together they helped make married sex a holy affair in which the couple could take pride and joy, rather than an activity tainted by shame or sin.

What was the authoritative discourse on married sexuality that confronted English Canadian women during the baby boom? What parameters did Canada’s main denominations place on the understanding of sex within marriage and where were the points where that discourse broke down enough to allow for greater freedom of expression and change? The previous chapter described how Canadian medical authorities used a female body politic, on which the transgressions of gender could be written, to discipline the sexual and gender roles engaged in by both men and women. While there was clearly a marked transference of discourse between Canadian medical and religious authorities, the religious community did not wholly adopt or adapt the medical body politic. Instead, in their attempts to discipline and explain postwar gender and sexual systems within and outside of marriage, each of the three denominations turned to the passages in the Bible describing the joining of man and wife together to make “one flesh.” They interpreted these texts to mean that the union of man and wife in marital

⁶ See: Edward Behrend-Martinez, “Manhood and the Neutered Body in Early Modern Spain,” *Journal of Social History* 38.4 (Summer 2005): 1073-1093; Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990, 60; Mueller, “Fallen Men,” 85-102.

⁷ It should be noted that I am confining myself to the three most prevalent Christian denominations within Canada during this time period as other, less popular Christian denominations as well as non-Christian religions are simply beyond the scope of this dissertation. Thus, “religion” or “denomination” should be seen to refer in this dissertation to the Anglican, United and/or the Roman Catholic Church unless otherwise specified. There are a few works that examine a wider religious historiography in Canada. See: Reginald W. Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2002); Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: the Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1990); Tina Block, “‘Boy meets Girl’: Constructing Heterosexuality in Two Victoria Churches, 1945-1960,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 10, no. 1 (1999): 279-296; “‘Families that Pray Together, Stay Together: Religion, Gender, and Family in Postwar Victoria, British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 145 (Spring 2005): 31-54; Lynne Sorrel Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

coitus was a spiritual, even sacramental, event. In that moment of concord, man and woman were no longer separate entities. They became fused together, with God, in a holy occurrence that could not be duplicated in any other way, including meditation or prayer.⁸ This “one flesh body” was both the ideal expression of spiritual sexual contact and contained within its doctrine the churches’ particular gender and sexual mores. The spiritual one flesh body defined which bodies were useful and productive and those which were deviant. The discursive construction of the one flesh body also provided prescriptions for individuals to move from a state of deviance to compliance within the dominant body politic.

Moving Beyond Secularization and the Quiet Revolution: Canadian Religious Historiography and the Importance of Postwar Religion

Historically situating this examination of postwar married sexuality is difficult. The historiography of postwar religious authority in Canada is a sparsely populated domain at best and currently the majority of Canadian religious histories are being produced within religious institutions themselves. Though some of these works are completed with scholarly vigor, many tend to be more local, often descriptive histories, and most are written within a positivist framework that legitimize their faith within society. Further, the gulf between these historiographies and those produced by Canadian historians outside religious institutions continues to grow with each holding their own separate conferences, publishing in separate journals, and being taught in different schools. This makes it difficult to make comparisons and collaborations between the two strains of historiography and also limits historical comparisons between denominations.

Scholarly works created outside of religious institutions are also increasingly problematic due to the comparatively small number of scholars working on the subject, as well as the creation of dominant debates that limit the expansion of the genre. For example, English Canadian religious history has become mired in a debate over the influence of the Church in the modern period. This “secularization debate” began with Ramsay Cooks’s *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*, wherein he argued that, outside of the largely Catholic francophone Quebec, the dominant religions were rocked to their cores by the one-two punch of Darwinian science and historical criticism of the Bible. In an attempt to remain relevant, the leaders of these churches became increasingly

⁸ In this the Canadian Churches, with the exception of the United Church, were not creating their own discourses but instead interpreting international authoritative discourses through a Canadian prism. The Catholic Church in Canada had ties to both the Roman and American hierarchies and the Anglican Church in Canada reflected the tenants of the mother country though proclamations and recommendations on issues such as divorce had to be modified to suit Canada’s unique legal system.

involved in secular sociological pursuits rather than theological concerns, essentially taking the theology out of religion. The great irony being, as Cook explains, that by losing their theological foundation the major religions transformed themselves into glorified social clubs as the sociological apparatuses that they created were eventually usurped by professional, lay experts.⁹ This secularization theory has subsequently been refined and extended by authors such as David B. Marshall who contends that while the social gospel movement temporarily revived the Protestant Churches, religious ideology became one more casualty of the Great War and subsequent Depression. Even the creation of the United Church could not stem the flow of Canadians away from organized religion.¹⁰

Vehemently opposed to the secularization thesis, Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau have argued that Churches continued to have an important influence in Canada well after World War II and that far from becoming irrelevant, religious leaders helped to promote the development of liberal thought in the 1960s.¹¹ However, Christie's own work contradicts this position. In her article "Sacred Sex: The United Church and the Privatization of the Family in Post-War Canada," she argues that the United Church refocused on the family after World War II, not just out of concern for postwar societal reconstruction but because they wanted to counter the growing power of Roman Catholics who used governmental services such as the Family Allowance to support large families, and because women were entering the workforce in ever-increasing numbers – hardly progressive and liberal motivations.¹² Further, Christie and Gauvreau use much the same evidence as Cook and the other proponents of the secularization theory; this is part of the difficulty with this particular debate, as it rests mainly on the contested interpretation of the currently available sources. Thus, unless new sources are discovered or new analytical viewpoints explored the result is an inevitable, ongoing, stalemate.

Quebec religious history is more robust. Yet, this historiography is also becoming funneled into a master narrative and counter-narrative over whether or not the Catholic Church hindered or helped the

⁹ Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

¹⁰ David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

¹¹ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: the Protestant Churches and Social Welfare, 1900-1940* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996). See also: *Christian Churches and Their Peoples, 1840-1965: A Social History of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

¹² Nancy Christie, "Sacred Sex: The United Church and the Privatization of the Family in Post-War Canada," in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, ed. Nancy Christie, 348-376 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

development of Quebec, as epitomized by the Quiet Revolution.¹³ In his work *Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970*, Michael Gauvreau refutes the image of the Catholic Church as regressive, noting that, in fact, the Catholic Church supported the progressive, liberal, societal development of Quebec. He points to Church-affiliated groups, such as Catholic Action, supporting the limitation of Catholic families through the use of the rhythm method and the development of “spiritual motherhood” as evidence that there was proto-feminist development from the Great Depression through to the 1960s.¹⁴ Gauvreau makes some important points; female dominated organizations such as Church-affiliated social groups did give many women the organizational skills and a sense of empowerment that would help them in later, more easily-identified as activist, activities. However, the desire to “win” such a binary debate inevitably pushes scholarly discourse towards polemic which unfortunately obscures historical nuances and undermines the complexity of individual religious experience. Further, both the English and French Canadian debates serve to create a false dichotomy that presumes English Canada, especially Western Canada, is Protestant while Canadian Catholicism is confined to Quebec and small pockets in the Maritimes. Yet, the prairie regions, especially Saskatchewan and Manitoba, boast a strong Catholic population and infrastructure consistently augmented by “assimilated” Eastern Europeans; these English-Catholics have a distinct Western identity separating them from Quebecois Catholics.¹⁵ While there is very little scholarship on English Catholicism, it is clear that the experience and historiography of Quebec Catholics cannot be applied unproblematically outside of francophone Canada. Gilles Routheir, in “Governance of the Catholic Church in Quebec: An Expression of the

¹³ For works that support the idea that the Catholic Church was a regressive force see: Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, Jean-Claude Robert, and François Ricard, *Histoire du Québec contemporain Le Québec depuis 1930* (Montreal: Boréal, 1989); John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec*, 2nd Edition, (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1993); and Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁴ Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005). See also, Ollivier Hubert and Michael Gauvreau, “Introduction: Beyond Church History: Recent Developments in the History of Religion in Canada,” in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada*, ed. Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert, 3-45 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006). Critics of Gauvreau's point of view argue that the organizations that he focuses on, such as Catholic Action, were not under the direct control of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and indeed, that such organizations often worked at cross purposes to hierarchical dogma. See: Matthew Hayday, “Review: *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970*,” *Historical Studies* 73, (2004): 1111-1114.

¹⁵ Hans Mol, *Faith and Fragility: Religion and Identity in Canada* (Burlington, Ont.: Trinity Press, 1985). Evidence of this prairie ethos can also be found in primary sources from Western Catholic groups. For example in a brief prepared by the Calgary Catholic Family Services on marriage preparation the authors used specifically prairie ideals to give authority to their pronouncements. At one point the authors bemoaned the fact that the young people of their time lacked the “vigour of the pioneers” who colonized the Western regions. “Modern” couples were too focused on personal pleasure to put in the real work needed for a successful marriage. Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), MG 28 I117, Vol. 89, Fonds of the Vanier Institute on the Family, Catholic Family Service Calgary Correspondence and Brief on “Preparation for Marriage and Family Life in Rapidly Changing Social Conditions,” 1904-1966.

Distinct Society?” uses the responses to the dictates of Vatican II to demonstrate how the Anglophone Catholic community ran largely parallel to the francophone community, only rarely intersecting. According to him, the language barriers between the two groups meant that few individuals were able to interact with both enclaves. Instead, English-speaking Catholics tended to meet and share resources with American Catholics, while French-speaking Catholics more often connected to Rome and Europe.¹⁶

Further, as Lynne Marks observes in her work *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario*, the secularization debate has paralysed Canadian religious history by fixing it in the realm of intellectual history. She shakes off the historical paralysis this debate has caused by following American religious historiography, applying a socio-cultural lens to the Canadian context.¹⁷ This means studying what American sociologist Robert Orsi calls “lived religion”; studying religion as it is lived in the everyday.¹⁸ First, he breaks down the oversimplified binary that characterizes elite discourses coming from Church hierarchies as always repressive, defined against “popular” religious movements which are seen as consistently resistant. Such tensions do exist, but placing them in eternal opposition obscures the multi-layered, “messy” negotiations that are constantly in play in individual religious experience. Orsi argues that we need to replace such binaries with the understanding that religious experience occurs within set limits; the question is therefore not the resistance of those limits but how far the imagination can be pushed within them. Second, Orsi notes that historians and sociologists need “an understanding of the knowledges of the body in the culture, a clear sense of what has been embodied in the corporeality of the people who participate in religious practices” thus breaking down the barrier between the mind and body when it comes to religious experience.¹⁹ Finally, historians need to understand the ways that religion is embedded within the structures of social living such as marriage and kinship patterns and the tensions that are always present in such structures.²⁰ This chapter uses Orsi’s framework to move beyond the paralysis of Canadian religious historiography. It examines the authoritative discourses of the three main Anglophone Canadian denominations, specifically how they attempted to create structures of control of the body

¹⁶ Gilles Routhier, “Governance of the Catholic Church in Quebec: An Expression of the Distinct Society?” in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada*, ed. Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert, 292-314 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, Tina Block has also made important contributions to this more nuanced historiography. See: Block, ““Boy meets Girl””; “Families That Pray Together.”

¹⁸ Robert Orsi, “Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion,” in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, ed. David D. Hall, 3-21 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1997).

¹⁹ Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

through the social instruction of marriage. It pays particular attention to the ways that religion, that is, a spiritual feeling of closeness to God, was experienced through the body. Further, this chapter searches for what Orsi identifies as “spaces of freedom,” instances of weaknesses in the dominant structure identified by contradiction, tension or ambivalence, which individuals may capitalize on to create new knowledges of religious experience.²¹

While this chapter methodologically moves beyond the secularization debate, some engagement with its content is necessary if only to demonstrate the relevance of mainstream religious authority over marital sexuality during the postwar period. That is, it must be established that the discourses of the Christian churches still had efficacy in the time period under study. One of the reasons for the longevity of the secularization debate is the immense difficulty of measuring religious belief, or lack thereof.²² Statistics, though problematic, can form a valuable starting point. The two censuses conducted during the time period under study, in 1951 and 1961, demonstrate that the majority of Western Canadians were willing to declare themselves as belonging to the Anglican, Roman Catholic, or United Churches, at least when confronted about their religion by a census taker. According to the 1951 census 14.7 percent of all Canadians identified as belonging to the Anglican Church, 20.4 percent to the United Church, and

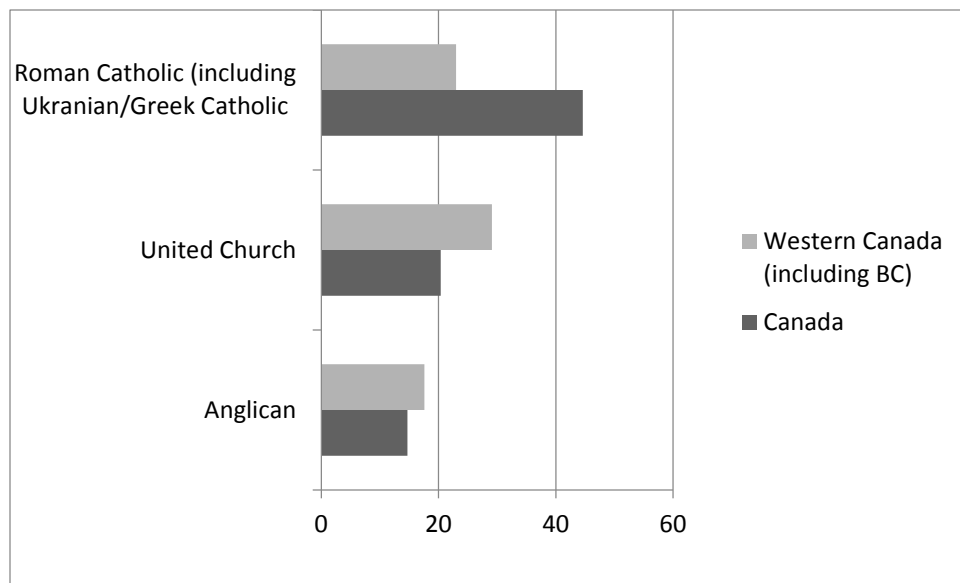


FIGURE 3.1 CANADIAN CENSUS YEAR 1951

44.6 percent as belonging to either the Roman Catholic or Ukrainian/Greek Catholic Churches.²³ In the West these numbers are 17.6 percent (Anglican), 29.1 percent (United) and 23 percent (Roman/Ukrainian/Greek Catholic).²⁴ (Figure 3.1) Though these numbers

²¹ Ibid., 14.

²² The most difficult task, naturally, is to prove the absence or rejection of belief. For work on the growth of atheism in Canada see: Tina Block, “‘Going to Church Just Never Even Occurred to Me:’ Women and Secularism in the Pacific Northwest, 1950-1975,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 96 no. 2 (Spring 2005): 61-68; “Everyday Infidels: A Social History of Secularism in the Pacific Northwest” (Ph.D. diss., University of Victoria, 2006).

²³ Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Ninth Census of Canada 1951*, Table 1.

²⁴ Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Ninth Census of Canada 1951*, Table 39.

changed ten years later, in the 1961 census the majority of Western Canadians still identified themselves as belonging to one of these churches: 13.2 percent of Canadians identified themselves as belonging to the Anglican Church, 20 percent to the United Church, and 46.7 percent to the Roman Catholic or Ukrainian/Greek Catholic Church.²⁵ Western Canadian numbers are 15.5 percent (Anglican), 30.9 percent (United) and 24.3 percent (Roman/Ukrainian/Greek Catholic) respectively.²⁶ (Figure 3.2)

Census data is never definitive. There was a reluctance among Canadians to identify as having “no religion,” and statistics can never reflect the full spectrum of religious engagement.²⁷ A person

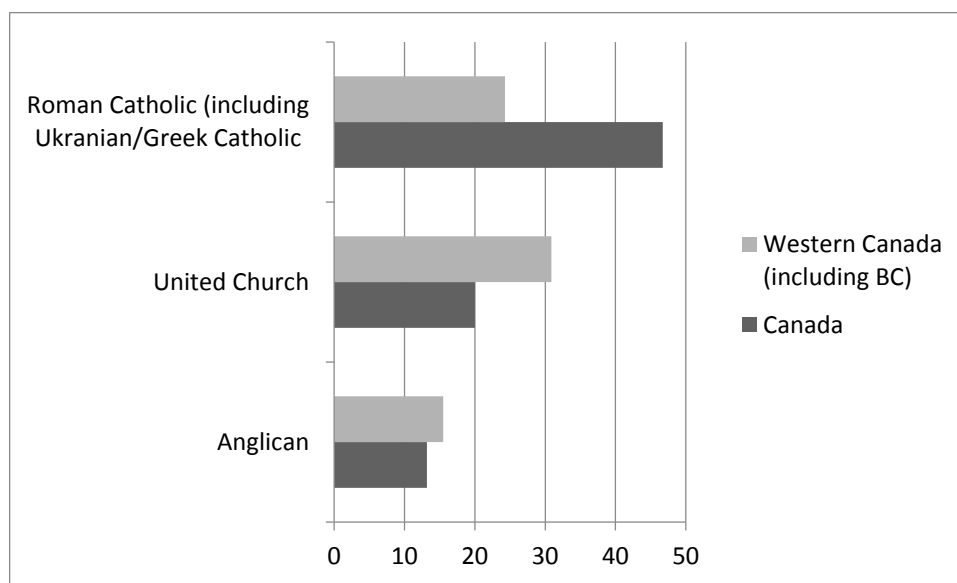


FIGURE 3.2 CANADIAN CENSUS YEAR 1961

identifying him- or herself as a member of the Anglican Church could fall anywhere on a large spectrum: referring to his or her upbringing in that faith, even if he or she currently attends Church occasionally, or not at all, to those devoted “churchpersons” who regularly attended

services and who participated in many of the “extracurricular” church activities and clubs. However, when quantitative data is combined with the qualitative data gained during the interviews conducted for this dissertation, the claim that the majority of Canadians in the postwar era were engaged with the dominant Christian religious discourse is strengthened. Some of the women interviewed, such as Edith Small, were devout; Small even became an ordained United Church minister in her later life.²⁸ Others, such as Fiona Shortt, had a negative reaction towards religion, eventually leaving the Church they were raised in or eschewing religion entirely.²⁹ Yet, all eighteen interview subjects noted that they had contact with the marital sexual discourse of at least one of the major denominations even if it was only on the

²⁵ Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census of Canada*, Table 42.

²⁶ Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census of Canada*, Table 43.

²⁷ Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 10-11.

²⁸ Edith Small, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 September 2010.

²⁹ Fiona Shortt, (pseudonym), personal interview, 5 July 2010.

occasion of their marriage. Though the interviewed women are not meant to be representative one can assume, based on the experiences of the women interviewees, the census data, archival documents, and the secondary scholarship, that the majority of Canadian women who married during the baby-boom were exposed to, and influenced by, some form of authoritative Church discourse regarding sexuality which they then had to decide to follow, modify, reject, or ignore.

Making Sex Sacred: The “One Flesh” Body within the Dominant Christian Faiths

The three Church’s postwar spiritual sexual body politic of the one flesh body marked a departure from early modern and Victorian schemas of sexuality. No longer was sexual activity within heterosexual monogamous marriage, seen as, at best, a necessary evil that had to be curtailed so that individuals might focus their energy on God. Rather, the Churches in the postwar period expended considerable effort assuring parishioners that marital coitus, if conducted within the guidelines set by the Church, was legitimate and to be enjoyed by both partners. Far from being something that took energy away from one’s communion with God, religious authorities argued that sanctioned marital coitus was a type of spiritual union.³⁰

Though all three Churches were united in their reification of sexuality into the body politic of the one flesh body, this spirituality was conceptualized differently by the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths. The Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches in Canada fundamentally disagreed over the doctrinal reasons that God ordained marriage and the sexual contact that would occur within it. The Roman Catholic Church maintained that the primary function of marriage and married sexuality was to create a family by having and raising children. The Catholic one flesh body was an expression of obedience to the “natural law,” which, if followed correctly, directed Catholics on how to take only what was good or positive in natural processes such as sex. According to natural law, all marriages, barring infertility, were seen as a step towards the creation of a family. Subverting the natural law in any way, including using artificial birth control, was subverting God; the bodies doing so would be classified as disordered and deviant. Marital sexual acts were holy because each act could potentially create a child. In embracing the potential of conception via coitus the couple was “showing their love for God by

³⁰ None of the sources examined for this chapter portrayed this change as a particular strategy to induce couples to marriage. Instead, the changes in the view of sexuality in the postwar religious world were part of a larger attempt by all three denominations to adapt to the changes of the “modern world.” Only the Roman Catholic Church, in the calling of Vatican II on the subject of the Catholic Church’s role in the modern world, actually engaged in a formal reflection process, but there was discourse regarding this theme of modernization in the archives of all three denominations.

cooperating with Him in the creation of a new person to love Him eternally.”³¹ Other benefits, such as a feeling of intimacy and deepening the love between the couple, were originally seen as ancillary, even unnecessary, though this view changed in dominant Catholic teachings as time passed.

Though the Anglican and United Churches also argued for the importance of children to marriage and the significance of family in society, they viewed children neither as the primary reason for marriage nor the sole justification for marital intimacy. Admittedly, both the Anglican Church and the precursors to the United Church – the Methodist and Presbyterian faiths – had previously subscribed to the ideal of marriage as family crucible. Throughout the twentieth century, however, they increasingly moved away from that ideal.³² As both Churches would also come to support family planning during this time period, effectively severing the potential of conception from most sexual acts, they had to look elsewhere for reasoning to make marital sex a sacramental act. However, outside of conception no Biblical or canonical sources could be cited in the creation of sex as sacramental. Ergo, the sacred character of Protestant marital sex remained undefined and amorphous during this time period. While the Protestant denominations argued that the experience of the one flesh body was still a mystical union with God, they attempted to merge this mysticism with emerging medical, psychological, and sociological norms of an ordered body, including the new psychiatric melding of body and social gender roles.³³

The creation of both the Catholic and Protestant ideal one flesh bodies also ordered the way in which they policed gender relations. All three denominations used the sexual coming together of man and woman – specifically how the two genitals fit together like puzzle pieces to create a whole – as a metaphor for, and biological evidence of, the correct complementary social roles of men and women. For Canada’s Roman Catholic Church, which maintained their support for a patriarchal family structure, the one flesh body was clear evidence of the different, complementary natures of men and women, and the rightness of the relationship of the man as socially/sexually active and penetrating, to the woman as socially/sexually passive and penetrated. However, for the Anglican and United Churches, who

³¹ Monsignor J. D. Conway, “Enlightenment for Confused Spouses,” *Prairie Messenger* 16 January 1958, 4. Reprinted from the “Question Box” in *Catholic Messenger*.

³² Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 342; Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 136.

³³ Mary-Ann Shantz notes that a similar use of psychological concepts in Anglican advice to parents about raising children in her examination of Anglican churches in Calgary. See: Mary Ann Shantz, “Centring the Suburb, Focusing on the Family: Calgary’s Anglican and Alliance Churches, 1945-1969,” *Social History/Histoire sociale* 42, no. 84 (November 2009): 430, 433.

recognized that the patriarchal structure was at odds with their new ideals of companionate and democratic marriage, the one flesh body as metaphor was more complex.

All three denominations agreed that the postwar family in general, and marriages in particular, were in trouble. Despite the period's bucolic and ahistorical popular image, Church authorities were unified in the opinion that two World Wars and the Great Depression had combined to create a society lacking a moral compass, which was increasingly focused on the accumulation of consumer goods, and was suffering from the many changes in gender roles brought on by nearly half a century of conflict. The seriousness of societal decay was seen to be so great that Anglican and United Church officials both referenced Edward Gibbon's descriptions of the downfall of Rome in *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in allusion to Canada's present situation.³⁴ As the Most Reverend Francis A. Marrocco explained:

I see...categor[ies] of family life that would require a lot of "adhesive tape" treatment. By this I mean families in which patching up, readjustment and rehabilitation was urgently needed.... Many others, though agreeing that we need counselling and rehabilitation services for family life in marriages that are sick, ailing and broken, have also been saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Their voices continue to plead that if it is Christian to give first aid to injured marriages and impaired family life it is at least equally as Christian to work at reducing the causes of breakdown and decadence. They have been urging the promotion of Pre-Cana and Cana Conferences, the Christian Family Movement, Married Couples Retreats, pre-marital and post-marital instruction classes, and the use of existing parish organizations for the dissemination of at least some direction on the teachings of the Church.³⁵

Religious authorities were surprisingly pessimistic about their ability to aid those couples already in deep crisis – temporary and weak "adhesive tape treatment" was all they could offer. Instead, they turned their attention to future unions which they felt they could build up with stronger foundations. Further, they believed that by fixing marriage, the family and society as a whole would reap important trickle down benefits. Early intervention was key. The first union of a couple, assumed to be between two virgins, was seen as a particularly potent joining that, if completed properly, would set the stage for an elevated spiritual sexual life.³⁶ Consequently, couples who engaged in coitus without the proper (i.e.,

³⁴ Reverend Canon W. H. Davidson, *The Nature of Marriage* (Montreal: R. A. Regnault, 1946), 3; United Church Archives of Canada (hereafter UCAC), Accn. 77051C, f. 177-2, Pamphlet, David A. MacLennan, "Family Life." n.d.

³⁵ Francis A. Marrocco D. D. Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto, *The Christian Family Apostolate* Report of the Seventh Annual Session of the Catholic Social Life Conference held 9-10 October 1959 in Sudbury Ontario.

³⁶ See: *This is a Great Sacrament* (Ottawa: Le Droit 196?), 349-351; *Toward a Christian Understanding of Sex Love and Marriage* National General Council of the United Church of Canada, 1960, 14; *The Hallowing of the Union* (Toronto: Diocesan Marriage Services, 196?), 6.

Church-sanctioned) knowledge beforehand would be forever spiritually and emotionally handicapped and be capable of only ever experiencing a pale reflection of the one flesh body.

The denominations' two primary concerns were that marriage, a serious and solemn occasion, had become overly romanticized, and that couples were entering into the union without due consideration. This position was only strengthened when, immediately after the war, there was an unprecedented spike in the country's divorce rate as some of those who had chosen to "marry in haste" divorced rather than "repented at leisure."³⁷ The Churches waged war on youthful, starry-eyed ideals of marriage, decrying such as the antithesis of lasting unions. As Elsie Robinson graphically put it in her article for the Catholic newspaper *Prairie Messenger*, "Frank Talk About Realism in Marriage," "There is probably no institution on earth about which more sacrilegious tripe is written. This notion that matrimony consists of legalized romance is the silliest and most dangerous fallacy ever foisted on the human race. If marriage is romance, then the electric chair is a hot water bottle."³⁸ While several different "culprits" were blamed for such hasty unions, Hollywood was considered the most dangerous offender by far. Movies, and later television, according to religious authorities, created an image that made marriage merely the logical next step for people in love – the ending of the fairy tale – an attitude that S.R. Laycock termed "romantic infantilism."³⁹ Not only did Hollywood produce media that encouraged rash romanticism, but the stars were bad examples in their own right. As William Genné, a United Church authority, noted in his article in the United Church publication, *Christian Home*, "While there are many fine families in Hollywood, the stars who are the most associated with the glamorizing [sic] are those who seem unable to maintain a satisfying relationship with their mates or provide a stable home for their children."⁴⁰

The war on romance was a symptom of a larger concern by older religious authorities about the ability of youths on the brink of marriage to properly order their lives without expert aid. Preaching from the pulpit was no longer seen as adequate to address these concerns and Churches sought to expand their reach by creating and implementing new educational regimes that focused on a variety of areas within family life. The two key branches of these regimes were always focused on the interrelated matters of sexual education and marriage preparation. These educational efforts created a massive archive of

³⁷ Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 28-29.

³⁸ Elsie Robinson, "Frank Talk About Realism in Marriage," *Prairie Messenger* 18 May 1950, 3.

³⁹ Movies and Marriage," *Prairie Messenger* 17 January 1946, 8.

⁴⁰ William Genné, "We're Contradicting Ourselves," *Christian Home* (August 1962): 7.

discourse containing: letters, committee proceedings, conference proceedings, marriage courses, pamphlets, articles, and manuals – all of which demonstrate the prevalence of one flesh body ideology.⁴¹

Orgasmic Motherhood: The One Flesh Body, Motherhood, Science in the Policing of Postwar Catholic Women's Bodies

Within this archive, the Churches expressed their ideals of marriage, as well as defined what made a good mate, how to date within the moral confines of the faith, how to enter marriage with due solemnity and consideration, problem solving within the union, and sexual guidelines and meanings for marriage. In the discourses of the Roman Catholic Church there was also an additional element as Catholics were urged, above all, to accept a celibate religious vocation to serve God as the superior spiritual embodiment. These discourses make it clear that celibate vocational bodies were not to be seen as asexual. Vocational bodies retained their holiness in part by their discipline of their sexual instincts to the service of God, and this sacrifice gave their bodies a special quality. In the main Canadian Anglophone Catholic marriage manual and correspondence course, *This is a Great Sacrament*, which was developed at St. Paul's University (part of the University of Ottawa), it is made clear that married

⁴¹ Church periodicals and newspapers are a particularly interesting source base as within denominational boundaries (and occasionally outside them), different articles, sermons and addresses that were of particular interest would be reprinted over and over in national and regional papers demonstrating how certain articles or topics were seen by many Church leaders as particularly important and/or relevant to current issues. Due to the multiplicity of Catholic journals I chose to focus on the *Prairie Messenger* which was published throughout the entire time period under study, with the sanction of the Roman Catholic Church, out of St. Peter's Abbey in Meunster, Saskatchewan. This newspaper was chosen as it not only typifies the ideals of Western Canadian Catholics – containing a distinct “prairie” or Western ethos but also because throughout this time period it continually increased its circulation. Further, as noted above, the *Messenger* frequently reprinted articles of interest from other Canadian, as well as American, Catholic periodicals. This allowed readers to engage in the wider Catholic discourse while still having at least fifty percent of the content remain local in authorship and content. The Anglican's main publication was undoubtedly the *Anglican Journal*. However, it contained little reference to issues of married sexuality. This was likely because the Anglican Church, unlike the other two denominations, focused their efforts on training their priests to be effective marital counsellors rather than a program of public education. Thus, most of Anglican married sexual discourse could be found in “task force” committee minutes and other internal sources. The United Church had a number of official and non-official periodicals including some springing from the United Church's root Presbyterian and Methodist faiths. However, in 1959 the United Church of Canada entered into a publishing arrangement with the American Methodist Church which published a magazine out of Nashville called the *Christian Home*. According to their agreement, the Methodist publishers would create a Canadian version of *The Christian Home* by adding Canadian content, including letters, to “American” articles and editorials already being produced. The publisher would then ship the “Canadian” *The Christian Home* to Toronto where the Canadian United Church would distribute them. After the launch of the Canadian *The Christian Home*, the United Church in Canada pursued an aggressive marketing strategy to achieve maximum readership. Unlike the more general magazine the *Observer*, *The Christian Home* was designed for family lay readership and home devotion and so discussed married sexuality much more frequently. Further *The Christian Home* also reprinted any relevant passages or articles from the *Observer* if it was thought to be of family interest. UCAC, Accn. 83.051 f. 177-5, Folder Plans for the *Christian Home*. This variety of source material makes direct comparisons between the three denominations more difficult as the available archival data does not allow for an “apples to apples” comparison. However, I am confident that in each case the available documents present an internally cohesive approach reflecting the tenor of each denomination's approach to married sexuality which can then be compared and contrasted with the other denomination's approaches.

bodies were lesser bodies: “Marriage and virginity are not to be considered as being on the same footing, however. The celibate who willingly takes a vow of celibacy making it a fixed way of life, differs from the married person **by the special renunciations** which he makes with the help of supernatural love.”⁴² Only with divine aid could a person fully sublimate their sexual drives which God had endowed man to ensure the continuance of the species. Significantly, *This is a Great Sacrament* differs in many ways from the Catholic Action marriage preparation course materials profiled by Michael Gauvreau in *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution*, which he argues did not make marriage the lesser vocation.⁴³

Only those select few who received a special calling directly from God were to take holy orders. Consequently, the sexual bodies of most Catholics would be controlled through channelling the sexual urge into the religiously appropriate realm of heterosexual monogamous marriage. For Anglophone Canadian Roman Catholic authorities the moment a man and a woman joined together in sexual congress created a new body of one flesh that became holy only if there was a potential for procreation. That is, the sexual act itself was not holy; the spiritual element was created in the joining because the couple were opening themselves up to the possibility of creating a new life with, and for, God. However, even if conception did not occur, the one flesh body was still holy; by engaging in sexual congress the couple was allowing God, in that moment, to control their destiny by determining whether or not conception occurred. By that logic, to engage in contraception was to thwart God, and subverting the use of their bodies in this way had consequences. Couples who refused to have children would eventually become overwhelmed by their sexual passions while those who had children would find their sexual joining became increasingly holy and personally satisfying over time. As *This is a Great Sacrament* stated:

Nothing purifies the mutual love of a husband and wife as does the birth of children. It is very hard for a married couple to live a chaste life if they refuse to have children; on the other hand virtue is an easy matter for those who welcome the birth of children. The fires of passion of the

⁴² *This is a Great Sacrament*, 155. (Emphasis in original.)

⁴³ Whether this incongruence is due to a variation between Anglophone and francophone Catholic traditions, or is due to the fact that *This is a Great Sacrament* was created within an academic institution rather than an ancillary popular organization, or is because Gauvreau is overstating his case for Catholic Action as progressive, is impossible to determine without further research beyond the scope of this dissertation. Further, this is only one of the ways that Gauvreau’s representation of Catholic Action’s Service de Préparation au Mariage (SPM) differed from the evidence in *This is a Great Sacrament*. According to Gauvreau, the SPM actively promoted the rhythm method as acceptable birth control, allowed for women to orgasm separate from any penetrative sexual act (i.e., not in the act of procreation), and had more current psychological concepts and language. More detailed comparisons of Catholic marriage preparation materials, both within Canada, and internationally, are needed, however, before a definitive reason for these differences can be vouchsafed. Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution*, 175-246.

early days change gradually until they become a steady, clear light, less tumultuous, but more soul satisfying, more harmonious and more intimately blended.⁴⁴

In this way, the reward for giving up control of one's body to God was, in a sense, greater control over one's own body in the future; those who failed to do this would become increasingly seeped in sin and thus further and further alienated from God. The properly ordered Catholic body was always poised towards the ultimate prospect of salvation or damnation and only disordered and deviant bodies acted without consideration of this future.

One of the signs by which couples could identify that they were using their bodies in the proper way was that the marital act would be pleasurable. Orgasm was portrayed by several Catholic authorities as "part of His reward to them for the sacrifices they undertake in the sublime task of raising children for Him."⁴⁵ If one inverts this concept it becomes clear that couples who attempted to thwart God through the use of birth control, or couples who engaged in extramarital coitus, would not be able to achieve orgasm. This created a discourse which not only portrayed those unfortunates who pursued sexual experiences outside of Catholic marriage as driven in a downward spiral to seek more and more sexual experience that would never be satisfying, it also put a great deal of stress on orgasm as the litmus test of marriage success. The latter was a double-edged sword. It, as Gauvreau states in regards to Quebec, did confirm that women had a right to sexual pleasure; however, modern medicine has demonstrated the difficulty many women have in attaining orgasm through penetrative sexual acts alone, meaning that many couples would ultimately fail this test.

Tying all aspects of sex, including orgasm, to procreation had significant effects on Anglophone Catholic sexual dogma. In many ways the one flesh body was both the physical representation of male and female difference as well as the biological anchor for complementary gender roles. In this, Canadian Anglophone Catholic authorities were maintaining a Victorian sexual schema, albeit with a few minor doctrinal changes. Catholic women's ultimate destiny was motherhood and their biological processes, as well as their feminine mentalities, pulled her towards maternity their entire lives. So strong was the rhetoric about the natural inclination of women to motherhood that there was a great concern expressed by religious leaders about "gap" women who had not received a religious calling but, for reasons such as a lack of marriageable men in the wake of the war, were unable to marry. As the unknown author of an article in the *Catholic Herald*, reprinted in the *Prairie Messenger*, stated:

⁴⁴ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 337.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 332.

The normal woman wants to be of particular importance to one person; she wants a close human relationship; she wants to matter emotionally to someone. This means marriage and maternity, and there is no other way in which such satisfaction can be found. The life of the woman who is called neither to marriage nor religion must perforce at times be lonely.⁴⁶

Women who found themselves in this undesirable situation were told to become “spiritual mothers,” using their inherent maternal instincts to bring God’s message to those in need. Further, these women were assured that though they had been “call[ed] to love and serve God in loneliness...that He will give them the strength they need to endure their hardship.”⁴⁷ It should be noted that this ideal of “spiritual motherhood” was very different from that Gauvreau described as advanced by Catholic Action in Quebec. While he argued that “spiritual motherhood” was empowering to all Catholic women as it allowed them to argue for the public use of their maternal instincts, as separate from reproduction, it is clear that in the Anglophone tradition spiritual motherhood was only to be practiced by those with a religious vocation or who were unable to marry – married women were expected to experience reproductive motherhood.⁴⁸ The importance of motherhood is strengthened by the fact that women who did marry but could not conceive were treated with a gentle pity and urged to adopt if possible and raise children for God in that capacity.⁴⁹ Only by adopting children could a barren couple have a fully Christian marriage and, more importantly, could a woman fulfil her biological role. Thus, the female body was deemed by the Church as religious and celibate, maternal/maternal-in-waiting, or broken. There was no equivalent concern for men without wives. For men, fatherhood was only one way, and usually not the primary way, to serve God outside of the religious calling.

At the same time Catholic authorities, no doubt aware that their strongest adherents were usually women, felt the need to assure women that men and women were equally worthy of salvation in the eyes of God, even though women were subject to a patriarchal system on earth. The Catholic Church attempted to placate female Catholics while simultaneously retaining their overall patriarchal structure by venerating motherhood. Of course, this discursive strategy had long been a part of their overall faith structure as women had been encouraged for many years to idolize and pattern themselves after the Holy

⁴⁶ “Fulfillment for the Lonely Heart in a Single Woman,” *Prairie Messenger* 7 October 1954, 3. Reprinted from *The Catholic Herald*. See also: “The Unmarried Woman – Spiritual Motherhood,” *The Prairie Messenger* 17 January 1946, 3; Dr. Doris Boyle, “Homemaking Most Difficult Work,” *Prairie Messenger* 12 June 1958, 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution*, 177.

⁴⁹ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 364.

Mother, the Virgin Mary.⁵⁰ In the postwar period this veneration of maternity allowed the Catholic Church to reify their image regarding women's rights; they portrayed themselves as the last line of defence protecting women's right to be mothers against the attacks of a modern society trying to force women to, in essence, become men. For example, in the Statement of the Canadian Hierarchy on "the Family in Canada," Canadian Catholic officials noted that the Pope had called for a living wage to be paid to all men so that women would not be forced to work outside the home due to economic necessity. "Forcing" women to work outside the home was equated on one occasion with Mussolini's regime, and more poignantly in the Cold War era, with the practices of communism.⁵¹

In Soviet Russia today, even more so in the so-called People's Republic of China, women can and do almost any work a man can. Yes, maybe it is not so bad and even good that some become trained professional people or skilled artisans. But what about the other end of the scale, such as ditch-digging and construction work, being part of a living chain carrying rock and earth by hand to build roads, runways, dams? So far, in these countries women still bear the children, as no alternative has yet been found. But even child-care is organized, to reduce to a minimum the loss of time on the job, through state nurseries or even more harshly in red China through the permanent wardship of the communes.⁵²

Church authorities also expended a great deal of effort assuring housewives and mothers that their role was valued, interesting, and crucial to society. One example of this occurred in an address given by a mother, Agnes E. Meyer, to Harvard University, reprinted in the *Prairie Messenger*. "Women," she exhorted, "should make society realize that upon the housewife now falls the combined tasks of economist, nutrition expert, sociologist, psychiatrist and educator. Then society would confer upon the status of housewife the honor, recognition and acclaim it deserves."⁵³ The attempt to confer motherhood some kind of professional status was a well-known postwar containment tactic which many scholars argue resulted in the explosion of home economics courses in universities and colleges across North America.⁵⁴ However, more important to Catholics might have been the Pope's own words

⁵⁰ The veneration of the Virgin Mary has a long history. In many ways the image of Mary is a commodity that has been deployed with different characteristics by different groups for different reasons throughout history. See: Sarah Jane Boss ed. *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2007); Sarah Jane Boss, *Empress and Handmaid: On Nature and Gender in the Cult of Virgin Mary* (London: Cassell, 2000); Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Random House, 1976).

⁵¹ "The Family in Canada," Statement of the Canadian Hierarchy in *The Christian Family Apostolate* Report of the Seventh Annual Session of the Catholic Social Life Conference held 9-10 October 1959 in Sudbury Ontario.

⁵² William A. Dyson, "Husband-Wife Relationships," *Social Thought* 61 no. 2 (n.d.): 8. Reprinted from an address at the Regional Social Life Conference, Peterborough Ont, October 1960.

⁵³ Agnes E. Meyer, "Too Many Apologize for Being a 'Mere Housewife' – 'Women Aren't Men'" *Prairie Messenger* 14 September 1950, 6. Reprinted from the *Co-operative Consumer*.

⁵⁴ Attempting to give motherhood a professional veneer and status was a common postwar containment tactic outside of religion. See, Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto:

exhorting the value of housewives and mothers and how failing at her role would negatively affect the rest of her family, especially her daughters:

the daughter of the worldly woman, who sees all housekeeping left in the hands of paid help and her mother fussing around with frivolous occupations and futile amusements, will follow her example, will want to be emancipated as soon as possible and the words of a very tragic phrase ‘to live her own life.’ How could she conceive a desire to become one day a true lady ... the mother of a happy prosperous, worthy family?⁵⁵

Women who fulfilled their biological roles were the only ones who became both socially and physically “true ladies.” Fulfilling the biological imperative to motherhood likewise had biological benefits, even being seen as a type of physical/spiritual anti-aging treatment. As His Grace the Most Reverend J. Gerald Berry, D.D., Archbishop of Halifax, noted in his sermon on the “Christian Family Apostolate,” “Who has not seen the youthful look of a mother of a large family surrounded by her offspring?”⁵⁶

Canadian Catholic women, though equal in their ability to find salvation were, according to religious discourse, naturally subservient to men. However, Church officials normalized this by telling women that they, unlike men, had an inborn talent for compromise. According to *This is a Great Sacrament*:

This talent for adapting herself, a talent with which Providence has endowed her, imposes certain duties on her as a wife. It has been said that married people can be happy only if they meet each other half-way. It is a fact. But if one of the two should find it necessary to go more than half-way to ensure happiness, then it is up to the wife to do so, because it is much easier for her to adapt herself to her husband’s ways than it is for him to adapt himself to hers. This applies to all circumstances relating to the home, food, way of living, tastes, etc.⁵⁷

Catholic authorities suggested that any wife unable or unwilling to compromise was failing not only her marriage but her God. Moreover, by stating that women had an innate ability for compromise, they made abnormal any woman who chose to challenge conventions, whether in the home or outside of its bounds.

University of Toronto Press, 1997); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

⁵⁵ Translation of Pope Pius XII “The Duties of the Woman in Social and Political Life” CM XLII, 705 1945 in *The Christian Family Apostolate* Report of the Seventh Annual Session of the Catholic Social Life Conference held October 9-10 1959 in Sudbury Ontario.

⁵⁶ His Grace the Most Reverend J. Gerald Berry D. D. Archbishop of Halifax, “The Christian Family Apostolate,” *The Christian Family Apostolate* Report of the Seventh Annual Session of the Catholic Social Life Conference held October 9-10 1959 in Sudbury Ontario.

⁵⁷ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 109-110.

This paradox of equality and subordination was often summed up in the admonishment that men should love their wives as Jesus loved his Church.⁵⁸ That is, men were supposed to care so deeply for their families that they would willingly sacrifice themselves for its preservation, but at the same time this position came with authority over both their wives and children. As noted in *This is a Great Sacrament*, “Conjugal love grows according to a well-defined law wherein the husband is acknowledged as head of the wife, just as Christ is the Head of His Church. Thus, while the husband is the head, the wife is the heart; if the seat of government belongs to the husband, the throne of love belongs to the wife.”⁵⁹ What powers “the throne of love” gave women was never explained. The metaphor is particularly apt for Canadians, as the true power lay with the government, while the “throne” was the symbol of the monarchy which only served as a figurehead.

In an ideal situation, a husband’s dominance over his wife would not cause friction in the marriage. Supposedly, the husband, out of love, would naturally ask his wife’s opinion on family matters, mitigating his own power but ultimately retaining control over the final decision. This was made especially clear in the answer key to the section in *This is a Great Sacrament* on gender interrelations. The question asked who, the man or the woman, was to rule in the household? The solution: “Both, the man makes the decisions, the woman inspires these decisions.”⁶⁰ It should be noted that the Catholic Church made sure that there was no room for creative interpretation in answering such questions. Each section of the *This is a Great Sacrament* ended with a test and the students taking the course had to answer the questions correctly, receiving no less than 60%, before they would receive the next course module.

In marital personal relations the woman, deprived of an equal say in matters, was to use her inborn feminine tact to make her wishes known. More importantly, she was to keep her husband on the moral path, which, due to her feminine abilities, she could see more clearly than he. This was a message obviously derived from Victorian ideals of the woman as the feminine “angel in the home” and reflected tenets of Victorian anti-feminist ideology.⁶¹ *This is a Great Sacrament* noted:

The art of tactfulness that God has granted to woman imposes duties on her where her husband is concerned. She must be his guardian angel...and very often, without letting him suspect it. She

⁵⁸ Dyson, “Husband-Wife Relationships,” (n.d.): 5-6; *This is a Great Sacrament* 165, 171.

⁵⁹ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 165.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁶¹ Jill Conway, “Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution,” in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1972); Londa Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993); Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc. 1991).

must circumvent him, sway him, influence him so that he will always remain on the right road – a woman’s natural work if she is a loyal wife. But, and note it well, in her methods of doing this, there must be absolutely no trace of deceit.⁶²

Women were thus placed in a role where passive-aggressive communication tactics were not only deemed necessary, but actively promoted, by the Church. This facility to persuade was also the only thing that separated their relationship with their husband from his with their children, as he was given dominion over both of the “two gentle beings, the mother and child.”⁶³

Orderings based on sex, class, and race also continued to play a role in Roman Catholic schemas. Of course, such hierarchies were a common theme prior to, and during the reign of, Queen Victoria. According to scholars such as Wendy Mitchinson and Londa Schiebinger it was during this time that science and religion were the most well-integrated as religion confirmed the morality of following natural law and science provided evidence that the hierarchies enshrined in natural law had a scientific, as well as a spiritual and social basis; they confirmed that those hierarchies were “natural.”⁶⁴ For example, science “proved” the subservience of women to men through empirical evidence such as bone and organ size, which they argued proved women were weaker as well as demonstrating that women’s bodies were closer to the bodies of children than the bodies of men, extrapolating women’s mental capacity was therefore also more childlike.⁶⁵ It is unsurprising that the Roman Catholic Church felt maintaining such schemas more preferable to accepting the newly popularized system of sex ranking based on the mind-body connections of psychoanalysis. Both the Victorian system of social organization and the new medicalized system were utilized to place women in a position subordinate to men; they differed, however, in their justifications for this ordering and in the ways that gender and sexual roles were interrelated.

Remaining tied to the old scientific schemas of sex ordering alienated the Roman Catholic Church from the authority of more modern scientific concepts. Instead their authoritative discourses were cobbled together from a bizarre and eclectic mix of Victorian and even early modern scientific and

⁶² *This is a Great Sacrament*, 112. To be clear I read this statement not as saying that deceit should not occur – that is what the discourse is advocating. It seems that what the author are, in fact, suggesting is that the *appearance* of deceit be carefully concealed as, should the husband realize he is being managed, the point of the exercise would be lost.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶⁴ Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body*.

⁶⁵ Londa Schiebinger, “Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteen-Century Anatomy,” in *Feminism and the Body* ed. Londa Schiebinger, 43-44 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body*, 117-120.

medical authorities. The starkest example of this occurs in *This is a Great Sacrament*. In the section on “Male and Female Psychology,” students were provided with a table outlining the four basic “temperaments,” which described the relative positive and negative traits of each and the likely combinations that would be found in a single person. (Figure 3.3) The students were supposed to use the

Temperaments	good	Inclinations	bad
Sanguine	optimistic amiable frank gay		superficial inconstant extrovert, demonstrative vain, proud
Nervous	reflective profound pious affectionate loyal		fearful close-mouthed proud pessimistic
Bilious	energetic sincere authoritative		irritable self-opinionated domineering stern
Lymphatic	calm patient prudent wise		indolent negligent aimless

FIGURE 3.3

matrix to find their own personality type and that of their partners, then utilize that knowledge for conflict resolution. The four personality types were entitled: “sanguine, nervous, bilious and lymphatic.” However, their described characteristics are clearly derived from, and correlate almost completely with, the early modern medical schema of the four humours: sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic (Figure 3.4). Though the schema is given the veneer of modernity by changing three of the names and claiming they are

“psychological concepts,” it is obvious that this “new” system is actually an antimodernist throw-back to medical authority from a time when it better supported the Catholic patriarchal married structure.

A few lessons later, when discussing the physiology of men and women, *This is a Great Sacrament* explains menstrual pain not as a manifestation of the newly medically accepted neurosis, but as the result of “civilization,” a gendered characteristic popular in Victorian medicine.

Mensuration is a physiological phenomenon that should take place without pain. It is a fact nonetheless that most civilized women suffer to some extent from fatigue and malaise; some even endure excruciating pain. Usually, the cause can be traced to some defect of clothing, diet, or personal or social habits of the woman. Certain corsets and girdles, for example, are poorly adapted to the internal organs, which are thereby compressed and displaced. The diaphragm and the content of the abdominal cavity are pressed down and interfere with the circulation of the blood in its return to the heart. Fresh air, moderate work, regular recreation, a medical consultation when unaccustomed discomfort occurs, will result in normal menstrual periods. In places where life is regulated by natural laws, these functions peculiar to the feminine sex are undergone without pain.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 102.

The reference to “natural laws” is twofold. Prior to the fall of Adam and Eve women did not suffer in female processes such as childbirth or menstruation.

Humour	Fluid	Characteristics	Correlation to <i>This is a Great Sacrament</i>
Sanguine	Blood	causes irrationality, irresponsibility, joy, optimism, enthusiasm, affection, wellbeing	Sanguine
Choleric	Yellow Bile	provokes and excites the passions causing anger, violence, irritability, jealousy, envy, boldness, ambition, courage, realism, courage, ambition	Bilious
Phlegmatic	Phlegm	causes passivity, lethargy, emotionalism, sentimentality, devotion, subjectivity, sensitivity	Nervous
Melancholic	Black Bile	makes a person withdrawn, melancholy, pessimistic, cowardice, pensive, prudence, caution, realism, pragmatism	Lymphatic

FIGURE 3.4

There is also a racial subtext whereby white Western women suffering pain due to the even normal functioning of their female anatomy as opposed to women in places “regulated by natural laws” was a popular way of characterizing female bodies when the British Empire was at its height. Non-white female bodies coming from conquered territories such as Africa, India, Australia, and North America were thought to be more animalistic and thus suffer less from fertility related ailments than white women, especially of the upper classes. The latter could become ill not only because of the trappings of civilization such as modern corsetry but also because they were seen as being more highly evolved than non-white women. Therefore, female pain became a marker of both class and racial/ethnic difference.⁶⁷ That the Catholic Church should retain some of these ideals is not surprising, given their heavy missionary work during the postwar period in both African and Asian nations. Further, such Victorian conceptions of the female body as inherently weak and prone to illness also supported the patriarchal structure that the Church endorsed. Indeed, the above passage goes on to tell husbands they should treat their wives gently during such female “illnesses” and to make sure that their wives did not overexert themselves during their period by prohibiting them from certain activities such as dancing.⁶⁸ Though such a prohibition is almost comical by today’s standards, the implication that men have authority over their wives’ bodies and activities lurks underneath.

In their deviance from modern medical ideals, the Roman Catholic Church was very concerned about the possibility that parishioners might be receiving conflicting gender role and sexual role advice from their medical practitioners. In order to avoid this potential inconsistency, Catholic authorities continually emphasized the importance that Catholics only consult a Catholic doctor.⁶⁹ When the dioceses of Saskatoon and Sault St. Marie sent out questionnaires about Catholic family life to their parishioners, both surveys asked whether the family went to a doctor who shared their faith, and if they sought out their priest or their family doctor for questions regarding marriage and sex. When the results of the survey showed less than half of the Saskatoon respondents confirmed that they had a Catholic doctor, Church officials regarded this as cause for great concern. As Grant Maxwell, Co-Chairman

⁶⁷ Heather Stanley, “Sairey Gamps, Feminine Nurses and Greedy Monopolists: Discourses of Gender and Professional Identity in the *Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*, 1886-1902,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 29, no. 1 (2012): 55-56.

⁶⁸ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 261.

⁶⁹ “Catholic Doctors Answer Questions on Medical Ethics,” *Prairie Messenger* 10 July 1958, 1; Msgr. John C. Knott, “Everyman’s Family – Doctor’s advice priests to ‘mind your own business,’” *Prairie Messenger* 5 January 1966, 8, 10; Most Reverend Alexander Carter, “Report of the Family Life Survey of Sault Ste. Marie,” *The Christian Family Apostolate Report of the Seventh Annual Session of the Catholic Social Life Conference held October 9-10 1959 in Sudbury Ontario*; “Catholic Family Life Survey – City of Saskatoon A Joint Report and Statistical Survey,” (Saskatoon: Steering Committee S. C. F. L. S. Catholic Centre, 1960), n.p.; *This is a Great Sacrament*, 335.

Regional Social Life Conference, noted in his report on the survey results, “less than half the couples consult a Catholic doctor about their personal medical needs and problems. We think this is a significant finding inasmuch as some of the most important moral questions in marriages are associated with medical matters.”⁷⁰

Using a Catholic doctor was particularly important in regards to sexual issues within marriage because though medicine, as well as the Anglican and United Churches, had established that women not only enjoyed sexual intercourse but also had an equally strong appetite for it as men, the Catholic Church remained tied to Victorian notions of female sexual passivity and quiescent desire. Even on their wedding night when Catholic morality assumed both partners would be virgins, the male was described as taking an active role and warned not to let his stronger passions overwhelm his young and vulnerable wife. “More than one young bride has been rudely stirred and shocked by her loved one’s brutality in the course of this first intimate union and... silent and bitter tears have dampened the pillow of many a young wife on her wedding night.”⁷¹ To avoid this tragic start to their married life:

The husband, in turn, should avoid all abruptness and haste. He should be patient in leading his wife, by gradual and progressive stages, to complete union. He will encourage her to desire these complete unions, and the pleasure she derives from them will be the measure of his success and the reward for his patient efforts. For this reason, he must be careful to indulge in no close intimacies without first having aroused a desire on her part for them. The wife should cooperate fully. Let her confide freely in the man she loves: their words of love and other manifestations of affection soon will overcome her shyness; then, with nature’s help, these will lead in the most normal manner to more and more perfect intimacy.⁷²

It was the husband’s job to awaken the latent passions in his wife – there is no thought that she might have passions that are equal, or even stronger than his, and it is clear that she will not be taking an active sexual role in arousing *him*. This has a direct correlation to Victorian marriage manuals and medical texts which, according to historian Angus McLaren, “presented women not as passionless, but sexually dormant, needing to be aroused by a partner.”⁷³ Then, and in the postwar period, the wife’s role was to “cooperate fully,” leaving her without control or ownership of her own sexual desire.

The use of the phrase “complete union” and later the plural form “unions” is interesting as it does leave an opening for alternative interpretations. Conservative Catholics might read the above as the

⁷⁰ “Catholic Family Life Survey – City of Saskatoon A Joint Report and Statistical Survey n.p; Carter, “Report of the Family Life Survey of Sault Ste. Marie,” n.p.

⁷¹ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 350.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 351-352.

⁷³ Angus McLaren, *Impotence*, 106.

Church's admonition that all sexual activity had to conclude with male ejaculation into the female vagina. Acts that did not conclude this way precluded conception and thus were deemed incomplete and abnormal.⁷⁴ A more liberal reading, less focused on procreation and more focused on the couple themselves, would be that it was the husband's responsibility to provide his wife with an orgasm, and given the use of the plural, that he should, if possible, give her more than one. *This is a Great Sacrament* suggested that the highest level of the one sex body was achieved when the couple experienced mutual orgasm. It stated: "it is highly desirable that both experience orgasm simultaneously. This point is important. We recall it to your attention without going into further detail."⁷⁵

On a basic level the burden of the success of a couples' sexual relationship was the husband's responsibility. *This is a Great Sacrament* did allow that the wife, if she had not achieved orgasm immediately after the husband did, could touch herself "to obtain this satisfaction."⁷⁶ However, a few lines later the manual shames the husband for letting this situation occur, once again placing the burden of her sexual satisfaction on him. "It is a duty of love for the man to see to it that his wife experiences satisfaction in their marital intimacy, and that as far as possible it reach its climax at the time the male seed is discharged."⁷⁷ Thus, while Church authorities allowed that a woman obtaining her own satisfaction (within specific parameters) was not sinful they also demanded that the husband take control over his wife's body and shamed him if he was incapable of doing so. Such ideals must have put immense pressure on the marital couple, especially during the early encounters in their relationship. Though Church officials blamed Hollywood for creating unrealistic ideals for marriage they replaced those ideals with standards that were equally difficult, if not more so, to attain.

Aside from placing the burden on husbands for their wives' sexual enjoyment there is also a more sinister overtone to such a Victorian sexual schema. By giving husbands control over the entire sexual relationship, there was great social pressure on wives to "cooperate fully" whether they wanted to or not. Canadian Anglophone Catholics during this time were told by Church leaders that to deny one partner sexual intercourse within marriage was actually a sin. "The spouse, who without sufficient and serious reason refuses intercourse, is guilty of mortal sin; such refusal robs the partner of his (her) just right to the use of the other spouse's body."⁷⁸ On the surface this statement seems gender neutral, but

⁷⁴ *This is a Great Sacrament*, 327.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 354.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 326.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 326.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 327.

when combined with the surrounding discourse that makes clear the binary between the active male and the passive female, it is obvious that the male will always be the active initiator and the female the participant or receiver, albeit a usually willing one. “We have repeated over and over again that the male, more than the female, seeks carnal gratification...The female, on the other hand, being receptive, awaits man’s pleasure for her sexual satisfaction.”⁷⁹ The reasons for legitimate refusal were extraordinarily narrow including extreme intoxication and abuse of the sexual privilege by requesting sex too frequently, the latter of which was defined as: “for example, three or four times a night.”⁸⁰ Sexual intercourse was also suggested as a way of solving disagreements as “at times, it is very useful to *demand* intimacy in order to bring about a reconciliation of husband and wife.” The husband, who was, as stated, the active partner, could thus command his sexual privileges of his wife in the midst of a heated debate. Exerting this privilege in the face of disagreement not only reminded his wife of his Church-sanctioned dominance over their relationship and her body, an excellent way to conclude the argument in his favour, but also could be interpreted as allowing men to use more extreme sexual coercion, even marital rape to control their wives.⁸¹

Yet as much as husbands were responsible for their wives’ sexuality, wives, in turn, were assumed to bear influence over their husbands. Most of the time, however, this power was negative, used as an excuse for a husband’s poor behaviour if denied sex, and so was really no power at all. Women were warned that if they did not give into their husband’s request for sex, even if he was rough during intimacy, they might force him to commit either the sin of adultery or the lesser sin of masturbation.⁸² As one marriage advice column stated in *The Prairie Messenger*:

You must understand too that he loves like a man – with body desires that are always easily aroused by the sight and touch of you. You won’t sadden him then with the reproach that he is too rough or coarse or a “beast.” You will remember God’s word to you both: “And they shall be two in one flesh.” And though you might not feel like it yourself at different times, you will readily, cheerfully give yourself to him with great understanding of his more ardent nature. In that way, you may save yourself serious sin, you may save him sin, you may save his soul – that soul for which you are partially responsible since he gave it to you on your wedding day. That really would help a lot to make and keep him a good, God-loving husband.⁸³

⁷⁹ Ibid., 114.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 324.

⁸¹ Ibid., 325.

⁸² Ibid., 324.

⁸³ “Your Marriage – 2. Your Husband,” *Prairie Messenger* 20 April 1950, 6.

Like the other aspects of a Catholic marriage the authoritative discourse on sex relied heavily on the beneficence of the men whom it empowered.

Though Catholic authorities avoided postwar scientific and medical ideas in most cases, they were not averse to deploying its discourse and authority when the latter were regarded as reinforcing religious doctrine. In particular, medical and psychoanalytic concerns about overbearing wives and mothers, “Momism,” and the feminization of men due to the women in their lives, was validated in the Catholic authoritative discourse as it demonstrated the importance of the father’s role in the family and the significance of his proper masculine example. However, even when they used concepts made popular by postwar psychology, Catholic authorities remained clear about their superior authority. As Mr. Howard Fowler and Dr. H. Breault claimed during the discussion period of a 1959 Cana Conference (a type of marital spiritual retreat):

A child will always model itself on some prototype, most normally its parents. The mother should be to the girl a real MODEL of womanhood, and the father should be to the boy a masculine transparency of God the Father – thus both parents are involved in bringing the child to maturity and to God... Up to this decade Freudians and other psychologists did not realize the importance of fatherhood in the early years of the child’s life. This left father’s [sic] confused. Happily there is now a whole new concept being developed in the tremendously important role played by fatherhood at all levels of the child’s existence.⁸⁴

The above passage both utilizes psychology and undermines it by suggesting that the Church had always recognized the importance of fatherhood; psychologists and psychoanalysts, though claiming to be pioneers in understanding the human psyche, were only recently coming to the same discovery.

The Catholic Church, more so than any other discussed here, had an uneasy and complex relationship with medical science and the emerging social sciences during this time period in Canada. It was both a potent source of authority to tap, but also a dangerous challenge to some religious principles. As the Reverend Robert J. Dwyer noted, “There is a kind of magic in the modern mind in the word ‘scientific.’ It is a shibboleth of marvellous potency. Anything that is unscientific is ridiculous, and the meaning of science has been progressively restricted to a matter of apparatus and test-tubes.”⁸⁵ This ambiguous relationship to science was characterized most clearly in the debate surrounding birth control. Up until the few years before the publication of *Humane Vitae* officially banned birth control in 1968, Western Anglophone Catholic Church discourse remained strongly against birth control. It

⁸⁴ Howard Fowler and Dr. H. Breault, “Special Interest Cana Conferences,” *The Christian Family Apostolate* Report of the Seventh Annual Session of the Catholic Social Life Conference held October 9-10 1959 in Sudbury Ontario.

⁸⁵ Most Reverend Robert J. Dwyer, “Sage and Sand – No Scientific Proof For God?,” *Prairie Messenger* 10 July 1958, 2.

especially refuted the majority medical opinion that frequent intercourse without the burden of unwanted conception was beneficial to married couples and strengthened families. Maintaining that the primary purpose of marriage and married sexuality was procreation, the Church decried those who supported birth control as contributing to Canadian moral decay – even equating birth control promoters to purveyors of pornography.⁸⁶ Catholic authorities argued that birth limitation was a symptom of society's move to place materialism via financial success and commercial acquisition above more important concerns such as family and spiritual well-being. In direct contrast to the Protestant denominations who promoted family planning to suit a family's financial means, the Catholic Church portrayed those who wanted to limit their families to fit their budget as having a lack of faith in God to provide for them.⁸⁷ Further, users of artificial birth control were seen as lacking the proper "self-control" required of Catholics even in marriage; this control was crucial to Catholic understandings of the ordered body. In one *Prairie Messenger* article, Father John J. O'Connor wrote that married couples using artificial means of birth prevention degraded women, effectively making them take on the role of "paramour or mistress." Without the possibility of procreation to make the sex act spiritual, O'Connor asserted, women became slaves to men's basest lust.⁸⁸ O'Connor, like other Catholic authorities, thus used anti-birth control rhetoric to affirm that women would not desire sex without the arousal of a male or the potential for conception, while framing that discourse as being supportive of women's rights rather than limiting their embodied expression. Drawing on Catholic doctors and psychologists, Catholic authorities also warned their parishioners that birth control, especially the Pill, had dangerous physical side effects including permanent infertility. Authorities argued the use of contraceptives could cause deep psychological disturbances in both men and women as they robbed the one flesh body of its holiness and alienated the couple from God. Far from aiding married couples in becoming closer, as medical and

⁸⁶ W.G.P. "So They Want Help," *Prairie Messenger* 23 May 1946, 8.

⁸⁷ Ibid.; "Pontiff Hails Large Family as Testimony to Vitality of Nations," *Prairie Messenger* 13 February, 1958, 1; "Pope Lauds Large Families," *Prairie Messenger* 27 March 1958, 6; "Making Marriage Click – 'Too Many People,'" *Prairie Messenger* 17 April 1958, 6; "Making Marriage Click – 'We'll Starve to Death,'" *Prairie Messenger* 24 April 1958; "Making Marriage Click – Is Birth Control the Answer?," *Prairie Messenger* 8 May 1958, 6; "Making Marriage Click – Planning or Plotting Parenthood," *Prairie Messenger* 19 June 1958, 6; "In Our Opinion...Family 'planners' say God forgot to look ahead," *Prairie Messenger* 14 February 1962, 1; "The Family in Canada" Statement of the Canadian Hierarchy November 1958.; *This is a Great Sacrament*, 151.

⁸⁸ Father John. J. O'Connor, "Rewards of Virtue in Family Life," *Prairie Messenger* 14 February 1946, 6. Reprinted from the *Wanderer*.

Protestant authorities claimed, these physical and medical side effects threatened a couple's marriage as well as their overall health.⁸⁹

The Church was especially embattled because Doctor John Rock, one of the creators of the Pill, was Catholic. Rock did not hesitate to tell the public that he was inspired to the discovery by the spectacle of poverty amongst working class Catholics caused by having too many children.⁹⁰ This placed Catholic authorities in a difficult position as the unnamed author of one 1962 editorial noted:

Not a few Catholic couples wonder when the Church is going to approve contraception as the other religious groups have done already. A Catholic doctor who has helped to develop a contraceptive pill told reporters that he hopes that Catholics will be allowed to use it because many are now using less reliable methods!...Catholics and the rest of the world can be very sure that the Church will uphold God's law regarding the primary purpose of marriage until the end of time. It is blasphemous to believe that the sacrament [of marriage] puts a blessing on blind and passionate sexual indulgence.⁹¹

Even though the rhythm method was technically allowed to Catholic couples wishing to try to limit their families, many Canadian Anglophone Catholic authorities actually took pains to warn their parishioners that the rhythm system was permissible only under certain, rare circumstances and had to be used with the right frame of mind. The rhythm system was not to be exercised to prevent the couple from having children entirely or to drastically limit the number of children. As the authors of *This is a Great Sacrament* warned: "The biological phenomenon of sterile periods is absolutely normal in itself. The same may not be said of its 'clever' employment by married couples who use it with the intention of avoiding or controlling the birth of children." The highlighted use of the word "clever" here is a clear linguistic link to the prideful "knowledge" that was a part of Original Sin where Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree because they thought they knew better than God. According to *This is a Great Sacrament*, the rhythm system could only be used when it was necessary to avoid conception for the mother's health, and even then only after consultation with the couple's priest and a Catholic physician. Furthermore, even if the rhythm method was used in this way:

the first reaction of Christian hearts, reduced to the use (according to the conditions already explained) of the Rhythm System should be one of **regret**. Deep within their hearts should be a

⁸⁹ Interestingly, this made the Catholic Church one of the few groups raising concerns about the potential negative side effects of the Pill. Even though they used this rhetoric to serve their own ends, there were health issues with the early forms of the Pill that have often been superseded, both contemporarily and historically, due to the public enthusiasm for such medications. Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986).

⁹⁰ Margaret Marsh and Wanda Ronner, *The Fertility Doctor: John Rock and the Reproductive Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 57-8, 127.

⁹¹ "In Our Opinion...Family "planners" say God forgot to look ahead," 1.

pang of sorrow at their being unable to bestow the boon of life on a new soul. This regret is a sign of the sincere and good faith of the husband and wife.... Unhappily, this *attitude of regret is rarely found* among those who practise this method of continence; in its place are found instead motives that are worthy of severe censure and rebuke, motives for which the guilty partners will have to answer to God.⁹²

Indeed, like the use of artificial means such as the Pill, the marriage guide warned couples that always limiting intercourse to the times that the wife was infertile could have a negative effect on her mentally and physically. “According to nature’s law, the marriage act is ordained to produce a fruit; if it always takes place at a time when nature is unfertile, it is to be feared and regrettable physical results will ensue, in discomfort, and an upset nervous condition in the woman, etc.”⁹³ This sentiment is very similar to the Victorian medical concept of the “hungry womb,” which was perceived to have a natural desire to be filled; if it remained empty, it could cause debilitating mental and physical symptoms.⁹⁴

One of the greatest discursive weapons that advocates of birth control wielded was the threat of overpopulation. Fear was widespread, based on Malthusian predictions of population growth and in the wake of the privations of two World Wars and the Great Depression, that prosperous Western nations would once again be cast into poverty as food and other commodities became scarce. Yet Roman Catholic authorities had a variety of arguments to counter this claim. They noted that Canada “where we have more square miles than we know what to do with” actually needed more people.⁹⁵ Such sparsely populated areas would be able to absorb a growing population, both through home-grown citizens and immigration, the latter coming from overpopulated areas which would therefore balance out the Earth as a whole. Occasionally they simply denied the accuracy of world population statistics. Most commonly, the Catholic Church expressed a faith that science and scientists, through advances in bioengineering, crop production, and other discoveries, would counteract the predictions of worldwide famine. As Monsignor DeBlanc noted in an article for the *Prairie Messenger*, “It is interesting how scientists in this country dealing with food are always optimistic. They know we can produce almost anything we imagine.”⁹⁶ DeBlanc and other Catholic authorities thus refused to recognize the paradox of their argument that science (in form of birth control) was not the answer but that science (bioscience relating to food production) would save the day.

⁹² *This is a Great Sacrament*, 336. (Emphasis in original.)

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁹⁴ Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies*, 61.

⁹⁵ “In Our Opinion...Family “planners” say God forgot to look ahead,” 1.

⁹⁶ DeBlanc, “Making Marriage Click – Too Many People,” 1.

Of course, no authoritative discourse is completely hegemonic. Indeed, outside of the Anglophone Canadian discourse, the postwar international Catholic Church was experiencing what would be, in hindsight, a period of openness and self-discovery with appointed authorities such as Bishops representing a variety of viewpoints along the spectrum of conservatism to extreme liberalism. In these international discourses, there was a distinct movement towards decentering the importance of procreation and making it equal, or even subordinate, to creating marital intimacy between couples. Though the Western Anglophone Catholic point of view tended towards conservatism evidence of this international debate did occasionally creep into the discourse. For example, the *Prairie Messenger* reprinted the following passage from the *Catholic Herald*, without context, as a filler piece. It, reprinted here in its entirety, expresses a view of married love which, though not romantic by today's standards, was fairly unique in Anglophone Catholic discourse in that children are not mentioned at all.

Love is built on giving[,] it inevitably implies sacrifice and suffering; learning to give every bit of ourselves to our marriage partner in complete trust, losing ourselves and finding ourselves anew in our husbands and wives; learning to mould ourselves to the needs of one another, if necessary giving up our special pleasures and little selfish habits to meet each other's requirements. Love is accepting each other completely as we really [are], loving the shortcomings as well as the strong points, the mistakes and the successes, the faults as well as the virtues, accepting it all and yet all the time forging and growing in love to the point where another fault is left behind, where another island of selfishness is covered by the sea of love that should ever be engulfing husband and wife.⁹⁷

While there is no actual reference to Vatican II in such passages, it seems that the uncertainty about the primacy of procreation to sexuality and the general introspection caused by the Church's role being debated made a rhetorical space for alternative visions of married sexuality to be expressed. This international Catholic openness to debate would be ended both by the publication of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which followed the minority report and banned all artificial contraception, and the subsequent papacy of Pope John Paul II⁹⁸ who made a return to conservative orthodoxy one of his primary platforms.⁹⁹ Yet, well-informed Catholic couples, engaged in the wider international

⁹⁷ "Something to consider," *Prairie Messenger* 26 September 1962, 8. Reprinted from the *Catholic Herald*.

⁹⁸ There was one Pope, Pope John Paul I, in between Paul IV and John Paul II, but his papacy lasted less than one year in 1978 before he died in office, reportedly of a heart attack.

⁹⁹ It should be noted that Koral Józef Wojtyła, who would become Pope John Paul II, was instrumental in the rulings of Vatican II and *Humanae Vitae*. Some Catholic historians credit his influence as key to the move towards conservatism prior to his elevation to the Papacy. For more information on Vatican II, *Humanae Vitae* and the general character of international Catholic Church in the wake of World War II see: Gregory Baum, *Amazing Church: A Catholic Theologian Remembers a Half-Century of Change* (Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul's University, 2005); John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008); John T. Noonan Jr. *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986); Susan A. Ross, "The Women's

literature, may have found the discourses prior to 1968 more in line with their own views and continued to use those definitions of married sexuality and love even after they were no longer expressed within the Catholic hierarchy.¹⁰⁰

Sex as the Union of Spirits: The One Flesh Body in the Anglican and United Churches

Unlike the Canadian Anglophone Catholic discourse which, with a few exceptions, maintained a conservative focus on procreation as the centre of marriage, the Anglican Church during this time period increasingly moved away from such ideals. This marked a shift from a former alliance with the conservatism of Catholicism to sharing more in liberal ideology of the United Church. Both Protestant intuitions focused on placing the couple in and of themselves firmly at the centre of marriage and coitus.

Immediately after the war, the Anglican Church, like most religious institutions, was deeply concerned over the issue of rising divorce rates. More specifically, the Church faced queries over whether divorced persons could remarry within the Anglican faith and the general position of divorcees within the Anglican ministry. Anglican Church authorities were deeply conflicted between their belief that marriage was meant to be for life and their assertion that only God could truly “judge” a person. In their ministry, they had increasingly come to portray Jesus Christ as first and foremost loving and forgiving of sinners, as demonstrated by numerous Biblical examples such the parable of the stoning of the adulterous woman described in John 8.7.¹⁰¹ This conflict was aptly demonstrated at the first postwar Encyclical of the Anglican Church held in 1948.¹⁰² In its “Resolutions on the Church’s Discipline in Marriage,” the Church upheld the prohibition of divorce mainly to preserve the family as the crucible in which children were formed.

It [the Committee on the Church’s Discipline in Marriage Questions] is convinced that maintenance of the Church’s standard of discipline can alone meet the deepest needs of men; and

Movement and Theology in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*, ed. Gregory Baum, 186-203 (Novalis, St. Paul’s University, 1999); Robert J. Schrieter, “The Impact of Vatican II,” in *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*, ed. Gregory Baum (Novalis, St. Paul’s University, 1999), 158-172.

¹⁰⁰ According to Michael Gauvreau most women in Quebec were focused on discourses that decentred parenthood and *Humanae Vitae* was such a shock, so incongruous with those belief systems, that it caused Quebecois women to abandon the Catholic Church in droves. Gauvreau, *The Quebec Origins of the Quiet Revolution*, 245-6.

¹⁰¹ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, NT, 162.

¹⁰² Unlike the Roman Catholic Church where (theoretically) power filters down from the supreme authority of the Pope the international Anglican Church’s authority draws from a community of elite powers. Every ten years bishops from all over the world accept the Archbishop of Canterbury’s invitation to a conference, known as the Lambeth Conference, in England. Once there, these bishops discuss questions of contemporary relevance, hear reports from committees formed to investigate those issues, and come to resolutions which are then published in the form of an Encyclical to be accessed by the faithful. Though these resolutions are thus deemed as the recommended course to follow they do not technically have the weight of ecclesiastical law.

it earnestly implores those whose marriage, perhaps through no fault of their own, is unhappy to remain steadfastly faithful to their marriage vows... Inasmuch as easy divorce in Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere, has gravely weakened the idea of the life-long nature of marriage, and has also brought untold suffering to children, this Conference urges that there is a strong case for the reconsideration by certain States of their divorce laws.¹⁰³

The resolutions go on to assert that children with divorced parents were likely to be maladjusted and would inevitably be “forced to pay a life-long penalty for their parents’ selfishness and sin.”¹⁰⁴

However, the same document expresses concern about its own position, noting that many couples, through no fault of their own, were inadequately prepared by society to enter marriage. While the Church could not condone divorce, neither could it could cast aside those whose marriages had failed.

One the one hand, therefore, discipline must not be so rigorous as to exclude from the Church’s pastoral care those who have re-married after divorce. On the other hand it must not be so lax as to affront the consciences of Church people, or encourage the idea that divorce does not matter.¹⁰⁵

Church authorities also recognized that the emotional trauma caused by marital disintegration could be the spark that created a spiritual awakening in a person through either reviving their faith or even bringing them to the Church for the first time. Further, because of the Anglican Church’s British roots and its ties to that country’s legal system there was express concern about the “innocent party” in cases of divorce stemming from charges of adultery.¹⁰⁶ It was seen as supremely unfair to keep these persons from Holy Communion for something that was not their fault. This door, once opened, proved very difficult to close; the question of allowing communion to the adulterer, if they had truly repented of their sin, soon arose. Added to this was the fact that some Church leaders, interestingly enough, blamed themselves and their institution, at least partially, for what was perceived as a current wave of societal decay. In the *Confidential Report on the Church’s Discipline in Marriage Questions* the Committee noted that:

¹⁰³ *Lambeth Conference 1948 Encyclical Letter from the Bishops together with the Resolutions and Reports* (London: S.P.C.K. 1948), n.p.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁰⁶ The British legal system had long allowed for divorce due to adultery as per the doctrinal acceptance of such by the Anglican Church. Prior to 1857, divorces in England could be granted to the select few men who could successfully petition Parliament for a divorce as well as successfully bringing civil charges against the man with whom his wife had committed adultery. The 1857 *Matrimonial Causes Act* made it much easier for men to divorce their wives for adultery and allowed women to seek a divorce, though the latter had to prove adultery and an additional cause such as cruelty or desertion. See Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); Jeffery Weeks, *Sex Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, 2nd Edition, (Essex: Longman House, 1989).

The Church of England has not taught, with the necessary persistence, simplicity, and conviction, her divine doctrine of marriage, nor has she made known her attitude and policy to those who break her laws. She has allowed those who were married before her altars to exchange vows and assume responsibilities about which they have never been instructed; and in the perplexities and problems which so commonly ensued, she has too often left them without the spiritual direction and pastoral care of which they had desperate need.¹⁰⁷

These factors combined to create a great deal of ambiguity on the Anglican Church's point of view regarding the purpose of marriage and its insolubility.

It was not until the 1965 General Synod that divorce was officially recognized by the Anglican Church. However, the authoritative literature suggests that many ministers, prior to this official acceptance, left to their own devices and due to the lack of a clear prohibition, solemnized the second marriages of divorcees and allowed them to take communion. Unlike the much more clearly defined, and therefore stronger, authoritative discourse of the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church's position on the purpose of marriage was fairly amorphous, though it was clearly moving away from the ideal that the primary purpose of marriage and marital sex was children. For example, in the 1958 Lambeth Conference it was stated that: "The procreation of children is recognised as a primary purpose of the institution of marriage, though not the over-arching purpose of particular marriages. A contemporary understanding of the relation of sexuality to personality has begun to inform theological discourse."¹⁰⁸ Further, they noted that:

It has been common, in Christian theology, to mention the procreative function first, as if to say that it is the ruling purpose. So it is, in the sense that no marriage would be according to God's will which (where procreation is possible) did not bear fruit in children. But it is clearly not true that all other duties and relationships in marriage must be subordinate to the procreative one. Neither the Bible nor human experience supports that view. Where it has been held, the reason generally lay in a fear of misuse of the sexual relationship or in a false sense that there is, in any sexual relationship, an intrinsic evil.¹⁰⁹

Over the span of ten years, having children had moved from the reason to keep an unhappy marriage together to one that only had equal weight with securing the couple's own happiness. The purpose of the one flesh body had become dual. Yet, even this duality was not to last in the long term. By 1965 the focus on children was distinctly a second place consideration. That year the Church published *Marriage and Family Life 1: On Marriage in the Church (Canon and Commentary)*, which was intended to help

¹⁰⁷ *Lambeth Conference 1948*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, 2.142-3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.144-5.

acquaint the public with the Church's new ideals of marriage. In it, authorities suggested that each couple wanting to be married in an Anglican ceremony make the following declaration to demonstrate they understood the true nature of Anglican marriage.

We intend to strive thereafter to fulfil the purposes of marriage: the mutual fellowship, support and comfort of one another, the procreation (if it may be) and the nurture of children, and the creation of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfillment in a community of faithful love.¹¹⁰

Thus, though procreation is mentioned it is no longer an intrinsic part of the one flesh body. Children are only mentioned as a possibility: "if it may be." By decentering children within marriage and refocusing on the relationship of the couple themselves, the Anglican Church provided itself with an avenue to reverse its historical position on the prohibition of divorce. This did not mean that the Church stopped being concerned about the welfare of its youngest parishioners. Indeed, some authorities argued that it was healthier for children to be from a home "broken" by divorce rather one where the mother and father were constantly in conflict and the home was "broken" in all but the legal sense.¹¹¹ However, marriage was no longer solely the vessel through which children were born and raised; marriage was foremost a union to meet the needs of a couple and together they created the one flesh body. Only if those interpersonal needs were met could the couple's relationship serve as a successful keystone to support the rest of the family, including children. This may seem a very subtle change – more a matter of semantics – since children were still seen as an important part of individual marriages. In reality, this new focus on the couple and the importance of their happiness to the strength of the entire family reverberated into all aspects of married life, not least of which was sex and sexuality.

The United Church also faced the implications of placing the couple at the centre of married life. The United Church, with the most liberal view of divorce of the denominations under consideration, maintained throughout the postwar period that the couple was the centre of marriage. This characteristic was likely due to the Church's relative institutional youth, the fact that its policies were created during the relatively liberal 1920s, and its need to attract parishioners. As early as 1946 the United Church noted the ambiguity of Jesus's teachings on divorce. Not only was divorce allowed in the Old Testament, but the prohibition of modern divorce rested on a debate over whether or not Jesus's

¹¹⁰ C. R. Fielding and H. R. S. Ryan, *Marriage in Church and State: An Introduction to the Canonical Regulation of Marriage in the Anglican Communion* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1965), n.p.

¹¹¹ *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, n.p.

assertion that marriage was for life was an ideal or an absolute law. Many liberal Biblical scholars argued against the latter, one noting for instance:

It was contrary to the method of Jesus to lay down moral precepts in the form of law. The two commandments of Jesus (Thou shalt love thy God and thy neighbour) are not enforceable by law. Rather it was the method of Jesus to show us the ideal and give us word pictures of the ethics of the Kingdom.¹¹²

In the immediate postwar period the United Church left questions about divorce to the individual couple and their pastor. Towards the 1960s, the United Church actively joined the lobby to relax Canada's divorce laws.¹¹³

Focusing on the couple rather than children as the purpose of marriage had consequences that went far beyond the possibility of church-sanctioned divorce. In decentering children, both the Anglican and the United Church had to find new discourses that emphasised the positivity and sacred quality of sexual intercourse without resorting to the Roman Catholic focus on the potential for procreation. Protestant Churches were not satisfied with the argument that sexual relations between married couples deepened their personal love bond; they maintained it also had a higher, spiritual quality. Unlike Roman Catholic discourses, the Protestant creation of sex as sacramental had no theological underpinnings and so was exceedingly vague, almost mystic.¹¹⁴ Nebulous references to the "communion of flesh and spirit," the "union of spirit with spirit," and "fulfilment of personalities" gave neither a reason why sex should be sacramental nor how that sacrament should feel when experienced.¹¹⁵ In fact, some of the discourse reads more like that of a fringe evangelical movement than an established Church.¹¹⁶

The one flesh body became an almost magical event where man, woman and God were fused together in a way beyond linguistic description, and ultimately only explainable in the most lyrical of terms. For example, in *The Hallowing of the Union*, the main Canadian Anglican marriage manual,

¹¹² ACC, Accn. 83.052C f. 45-15, Bishop Dr. Leslie Hunter, "Divorce and the Remarriage of Divorced Persons," n.p.

¹¹³ Hunter, "Divorce and the Remarriage of Divorced Persons," n.p.

¹¹⁴ The only attempt within the discourse to actually tie sacramental sex to theology was a reference in the Anglican marriage manual *The Hallowing of the Union* to the Songs of Solomon as proof of the sacramental quality of intercourse. *The Hallowing of the Union*, 106-110.

¹¹⁵ UCAC, Accn. 83.052C f. 45-15, File of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce. Dr. Patricia White, "Marriage and Divorce' Statement for the Consideration of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce," July 1948, 1; Archdeacon Kenneth C. Bolton, *Premarital Talks: A Counsellors Approach to Couples About to Be Married* (Toronto: The Anglican Church of Canada Joint Committee on Adult Religious Education, 1958), 14-16; "Canadian Family Life Status and Trends," *The Bulletin of the Council for Social Service The Church of England in Canada* 128 (September 2 1948): 10.

¹¹⁶ See: UCAC, Accn. 83.052C f. 45-15, File of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce. Dr. Patricia White, "Marriage and Divorce' Statement for the Consideration of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce," July 1948, 1; Bolton, *Premarital Talks*, 14-16; "Canadian Family Life Status and Trends," *The Bulletin of the Council for Social Service The Church of England in Canada* 128 (September 2 1948): 10.

developed by the Diocese of Toronto and then distributed via the Marriage Counselling Committee,¹¹⁷ sex is described as:

a means of expressing love between partners and for the product of their sexual action, and for God who has given them the power and the privilege in participating in the creative activities of the universe. The sex act when engaged in in love can become the symbol of mutual respect, confidence, devotion and submission, not only to the participating partners but also to their offspring and to the divine purposes of God.¹¹⁸

In another particularly poetical example, United Church doctrine compared the sexual experience to the coming of Christ, “The Word became flesh in Christ, thereby manifesting the truth that the physical can be the vehicle of the spiritual.” The passage went on to state that, “Sex is a power which[,] when sublimated to the Christian principle of chastity before marriage and fidelity within the marriage bond, can be morally creative in helping to build ‘the more stately mansions of the soul,’” and that sex within a Christian marriage was “lifted above the merely temporal and physical level to one that is deeply religious.”¹¹⁹ While there is no evidence that the Protestant denominations deliberately used extravagant language to obscure the fact that there was no theological grounding to their new position on married sex as sacred, the use of such discourse did give the spiritual one flesh body at least the semblance of religious doctrine.

Despite its lack of theological authority, the Protestant spiritual one flesh body was as useful as the creation-centred one flesh body was to the Roman Catholics. By making the one flesh body a mystical, transformative, emotional, and physical experience, both Protestant denominations were able to argue for its containment within the bounds of matrimony. Couples engaging pre-marital or extramarital sex would never be able to achieve the one flesh body and would, by attempting to achieve it outside of matrimony, potentially ruin their future experiences of it – even if they had premarital sex while engaged and subsequently married. As the authors of the “Report on the Family in Contemporary Society” at the 1958 Anglican Lambeth Conference argued:

Pre-marital intercourse can never be right; it is selfish and sinful in its irreverence for the sanctity of both a man’s and a woman’s life; and it tends to make impossible the really happy fellowship that belongs to a marriage when the partners bring to each other a complete offering of selfhood unspoiled by any liaison. The full giving and receiving of a whole person which sexual

¹¹⁷ The manual was loosely based on the Roman Catholic correspondence course *This is a Great Sacrament* and both texts cover many of the same themes. However, the Anglican authorities used very little Roman Catholic moral discourse, noting it was often at odds with their own religious point of view. Anglican Church of Canada Archives, (hereafter ACC), C.S. 75-100, Box 12, Folder 3 Marriage Counselling Committee 1950-1962. Letter from Miss Nora Lea (Informational Secretary) to Reverend R. S. Mowry, 7 December 1962.

¹¹⁸ *The Hallowing of the Union*, 139.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

intercourse expresses is only possible within the assurance and protection of the faithful, life-long promise of each to the other, “forsaking all others.”¹²⁰

In addition, the one flesh body was viewed as being so powerful that attempting to achieve it outside of marriage was physically, emotionally, and spiritually dangerous.

Sex is like fire. Take fire out of our modern civilization, and you would wreck it. Let it get out of hand through ignorance or carelessness, and it is devastating in its destruction. Fire supplies light, warmth, and power. Sex is tied up with the light of inspiration, the warmth of friendships and love, and supplies a kind of power in human relationships. Some people get their fingers burned playing with fire, and some burn to death. Sex, uncontrolled or mismanaged, can be just as devastating. So long as we understand the nature of fire and its possibility for constructive use and respect its powers of devastation, we may use it for the benefit of ourselves and others. Correspondently, if we can secure a sufficient understanding of the part of sex in life, according to the plans of the Creator, and respect its powers of devastation, we may achieve the richness and abundance intended.¹²¹

Thus, even without the threat of conception out of wedlock the Protestant Churches made extra-marital sexuality both deviant and dangerous. It is important to note the gender-neutrality of the above metaphor making it clear that sex outside of marriage could be dangerous to both sexes.

According to Nancy Christie, the United Church sanctified marital sexual expression in an attempt to pacify women into maintaining their normative domestic gender roles; this is a significant oversimplification.¹²² Both Protestant Churches struggled to define their positions on the emerging changes in gender roles which simultaneously resulted in a discourse that encouraged women to be more than “just housewives” and undermined any support for women to engage in new occupations. Both the United and the Anglican Church recognized, in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, that they could not continue endorsing a patriarchal family organization because such male dominance was increasingly incompatible with postwar societal shifts. Doing so was also incongruent with the formers’ continued promotion of the democratic, companionate marriage. For example, in his advice to priests giving couples premarital instruction, Anglican minister Reverend George Luxton noted that it was a good idea to reassure the wife that the word “obey” in her marital vows was nothing more than an archaic holdover that would soon be deleted as soon as a new version of the Prayer Book was published. He wrote:

While it is accepted that the man is the head of the house, the least said about it the better. When he finds it necessary to assert his legal authority, it is a sign of failure in the partnership.... We

¹²⁰ *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, 2.156.

¹²¹ W. Clark Ellzey, *Sex, Love, and Marriage* (New York: Office of Publication and Distribution National Council of the Churches of Christ, 1954), 13-14. The United Church often made use of ecumenical publications such as these to supplement their very small amount of denominational literature. Ellzey made many contributions to *Christian Home* magazine.

¹²² Christie, “Sacred Sex,” 349.

ought to be frank with the young women of the church on this score and do our utmost to expedite the remove [sic] of the word itself.¹²³

The United Church likewise pledged its support of democratic familial relationships.

Social science has thrown new light on the role of the male and the female in our society. A girl enters marriage today more equal than her mother did. Women today have more social, economic, and educational independence than formerly. Stable marriage is based on good human relations and good communications between equals.¹²⁴

At the same time as they supported this newfound democracy and equality within marriage, both the Protestant denominations were deeply concerned about what social structure would replace the vacuum left by the dismantling of the patriarchal system, and if that new structure would contribute to the familial decay they felt was rampant in the postwar era. As Anglican Canon W. E. Scott, who would be later elevated to the Primate of Canada,¹²⁵ noted in his essay in *Scope*, an Anglican magazine for teens:

We may come to recognize that the roles for male and female in our society have certain limitations, some of which we accept or reject. We may come to feel, for example, that some of these limitations are rather arbitrary and based mainly on prejudice or out-dated social situations. If men are not more or less capable or intelligent than women, is it only childbearing that prevents most women from pursuing careers?... If those patterns of behavior and those sets of attitudes which once told us that we were either male or female are becoming less helpful, how do we discover what it means to be a male or female? Or, if we cannot pattern ourselves after mom and dad pretty much in the same way they did after their parents, then where do we look for guidance?¹²⁶

Ultimately, Scott had no answer for his youth parishioners because the Protestant Churches were in a state of conflict over the new roles of men and women.

Nowhere is the ambiguity of the main Protestant denominations to Canadian women's changing role more apparent than in the United Church lay magazine *The Christian Home*, which continuously published articles that at one moment supported gender role choices for women but at the next tore them down. One of the most obvious examples of this occurred in the July 1961 issue which began with the article "If You're a Working Mother, Be Prepared to Work Miracles," by Maxine Schweiker. On the surface the article is full of tips on how to successfully negotiate the "double day," such as buying drip-dry clothing for one's children to save time ironing (and still maintain appearances) and not to worry

¹²³ Reverend George Luxton, *Preparation for a Happy Marriage: A Companion to the Marriage Service in the Church of England in Canada* (Toronto: General Board of Religious Education, n. d.), 20.

¹²⁴ UCAC, Accn. 83.051C f. 192-3, Dr. Richard Hosking, "Notes on Marriage Counselling Sessions Held at St. John Halifax and A.C.T.C.," 1.

¹²⁵ The highest ranking Bishop in a particular area is the Primate of the area.

¹²⁶ Canon E. W. Scott, "The Person You Are Becoming," *Scope* 65 (April 1965): 5, 7.

overmuch about volunteering for extra work with organizations such as the P.T.A. Unsurprisingly, the author does not suggest the father should help his wife by cooking or cleaning – these are still female signified activities.¹²⁷ Thus, the “saintly” wife, left alone to fulfill both a domestic and work role is forced to “work miracles.” Working mothers were then further undermined by homemaker Emalene Sherman’s following article, “Be Glad You’re a Housewife.” Sherman gleefully writes on her rewarding and fulfilling life at home, free from the stresses outlined in the previous article. She concludes, “I would not return to the tensions of the office for twice the pay. The basic satisfactions for a woman are still in the bosom of her family.”¹²⁸ The irony that Sherman works as a freelance writer, which she cleverly and explicitly classifies as something she merely does in her spare time to mask her own potential deviance; this irony would not have escaped all readers. However, even wives who did not go out to work but who sought some kind of fulfilment outside of the home were targeted as not being family-oriented enough. In the provocatively titled, “Are You Faithful to Your Husband,” Anne C. Thomas coyly admits she is not actually referring to extramarital affairs but instead is asking if modern women are really honouring their marriage vows.

Don’t you know women who live such busy, supercharged lives that you feel lazy by comparison? They are constantly on the go, filled to the brim with committees, activities and worthwhile organizations. They are always busy. And yet, have you ever known one of these women well enough to see what goes on behind the scenes at home? At some time or another, these persons become driven beyond their sheer mental and physical endurance. This usually happens at night and consequently in the presence of their husbands. Then, all the waters break loose and these efficient, indefatigable young wives become downright screaming shrews!¹²⁹

These articles together create an archive demonstrating that, while the United Church would accept women taking on new roles, they could do so only as an addition to their role of wife, mother, and homemaker. Like war wives who worked outside of the home, these women were expected to take on a double day, completing fully both domestic and work tasks and, more significantly take their identity and self-worth solely from the former.¹³⁰ Additionally, this double day was thought to be beyond the

¹²⁷ Maxine Schweiker, “If You’re a Working Mother, Be Prepared to Work Miracles,” *Christian Home* (July 1961) n.p. Tina Block also notes a high level of ambiguity in United Church doctrine in her study of the First United Church and United Church doctrine in British Columbia. See: Block, “Families That Pray Together,” 37; Block, ““Boy meets Girl,”” 289.

¹²⁸ Emalene Sherman, “Be Glad You’re a Housewife,” *Christian Home* (July 1961): 33.

¹²⁹ Anne C. Thomas, “Are You Faithful to Your Husband?” *Christian Home* (August 1962): 38.

¹³⁰ Joy Parr makes a similar observation in regards to the female mill strikers in Paris. See: Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Communities, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 96-119.

physical and mental capacity of most women. This was likely true in most cases as the discourse makes it clear that a mother's domestic tasks could never be assigned to any other member of the family.

Women looking for affirmation of their different life choices could find some comfort in *The Christian Home* though these same discourses imposed tight restrictions on how roles outside of the home might be negotiated and further implied that a woman would have to be exceptional in her abilities to be successful in both realms. Finally, *The Christian Home* warned women that if they failed to live up to these standards they risked losing both their physical femininity and their marriage. In the article "When He Takes You for Granted," by Kay Hodell Chilcote, the author warns women whose husbands seem distant or unengaged that the fault likely was with them. Chilcote suggested that in such a situation a wife carefully take an inventory of her worthiness, as such, all of which centred on gaining her husband's approval.

Neatness? Good disposition? Interest in his work? A good listener? This is no time to cheat. No one is going to see this list but yourself, so force yourself to be scrupulously honest. If your waist measured twenty-four inches a few years ago, don't break the tape trying to equal that figure. Mark down the exact measurement today.¹³¹

Reference to the measurement of the waist recalls women's role as a sexual ornament confirming her husband's status as well as suggesting that those women had gained weight since their wedding day had failed both their social and physical obligations to femininity. The fact that these articles were written by women, and published in a Church-sanctioned magazine, gave their message a strong orthodox status making potential counter-narratives even more obscure.

While Nancy Christie argues that the sacramentalization of sexuality in the United Church was a token to keep women from seeking fulfilment outside the home, the situation is much more complex. It was an issue that not only permeated the United Church but also the wider Protestant faith. At best, the main denominations were deeply ambivalent about changing gender roles at a time when parishioners were looking to them for answers. It was in this environment that the spiritual one flesh body became useful as the only unambiguous answer that could be given to the congregation as it allowed the Churches to avoid making declarative statements about the new role of women. The one flesh body gave them the ability to concentrate on the creation of the whole, which was seen as more important (or at least less conflict-ridden) than focusing on how the two component parts related to each other. As

¹³¹ Kay Hodell Chilcote, "When He Takes Your for Granted," *Christian Home* (May 1965): 37.

Reverend Frank Morgan noted in his brief to the United Church Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce:

Marriage partners differ in physical strength, intellectual ability, emotional maturity, spiritual understanding and physical anatomy. Partners were made by God to complement each other in these areas and neither sex is always dominant in any one area. Therefore, in an ideal marriage there is no such thing as obedience or equality because the former can exist only between a greater and a lesser and the latter only between two similars.¹³²

This statement serves as a band-aid obscuring the fractured discourses above. Morgan is careful not to identify which are female or male strengths, but simply asserts that just as man and woman are made to fit together biologically, so too are they socially. Put more simply, Hazen G. Werner, in his pamphlet, “The Marks of a Christian Home,” states, “Marriage is founded upon mutuality. There are to be no superiorities and no inferiorities. A man and wife are to be equal like two blades of the scissors, both important and necessary to each other.”¹³³ The equality of two blades coming together horizontally (rather than vertically with one piece being dominant) is a clear demarcation from Roman Catholic metaphors which maintained male superiority over female passivity in both sexual and social matters. The metaphor of the scissors also demonstrates the two Churches’ attempts to provide their parishioners with an answer that maintained men and women were equal in all things but, like the blades of the scissors, opposites. Without both blades working properly in opposition as well as in tandem, the scissors – that is, marriages and society at large – could not function properly.

In promoting this metaphor of men and women as socially and sexually equal yet different, the Protestant Churches had a distinct advantage over the Roman Catholic Church. The former were able to utilize the authoritative discourse of the medical, psychological, and sociological sciences that also supported the linking of sexual or biological roles and social and gender roles. Protestant authorities, like Reverence Robert J. Dwyer, noted the “marvelous potency” of the label of science and applied it whenever possible. Linking their spiritual one sex body to the medicalized body politic not only gave their discourse an extra veneer of authority, it also provided a more visible structure for the ordering of gender relations as the Protestant one flesh body itself lacked doctrinal support. Their embrace of science, and their much less problematic relationship to its teachings, was one of the few ways that the

¹³² UCAC, Accn. 83.052C f. 45-15, File of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce, Reverend Frank Morgan, “‘Marriage and Divorce’ Statement for the Consideration of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce,” July 1958, 1.

¹³³ Bishop Hazen G. Werner, *The Marks of a Christian Home* (Nashville: The Upper Room Christian Family Services Series, 1946), 14-15.

Protestants differentiated themselves from Roman Catholics. Because the Protestant Churches embraced the Bible as metaphorical rather than literal truth they argued that the Bible could be interpreted and reinterpreted according to changing times and that the sciences were a tool to be utilized in this reinterpretation. As prominent Canadian Anglican legal authorities C. R. Fielding and H. R. S. Ryan put it:

Anglicans are accustomed to learn not only from the New Testament as it has been interpreted in the past, but also from its interpretation by those to whom theological and moral authority is usually accorded today, for example the Lambeth Conference. In common with our contemporaries we are also accustomed to learn whatever we can that may illuminate the contemporary scene from researchers in law, medicine, and the social sciences. This last is particularly important if the Church is to keep its canon law and the procedures based on it in fruitful contact with the life of civil society as well as with the life of the Church.... The duty of the Church in relation to marriage is to discern the will of Christ for all men as applicable to the present age, and to provide for its own members standards of conduct consonant with its understanding of His will.¹³⁴

For Protestant leaders, the only place that natural law, which they defined as life lived without human interference into biological processes such as illness and conception, could be practiced was in the Garden of Eden prior to the episode of the Fall. Thus, unchecked human fecundity could only be practiced in a world not facing issues such as poverty and want, both at home and in an international context.

We Protestants do not believe that the Roman Catholic doctrine of “the natural law” which seems to indicate continuity between the perfect created order and this present age, adequately explains the elemental rift in creation and human existence caused by sin. We live in a “fallen” world where conflicts arise between life and life, for example, policeman versus criminal, enemy pitted against enemy in war. Sickness, disease and suffering are manifestations of our sinful conditions in this world. We do not live by the perfect will of God but rather by his contingent will. Ours is not an ethic of perfection but rather a contextual one.¹³⁵

For Protestants, the one flesh body was spiritual but also fundamentally ordered. Natural processes such as fertility were crucially important and therefore had to be channelled. While for Catholics allowing unlimited fecundity was bending the body to the will of God, for Protestants it was bending the body to an imperfect, “worldly” nature that was fundamentally separate from God. It should be noted, however, that the Protestant discourses rarely set themselves up in direct opposition to Roman Catholic ideals. The relationship can be inferred, but it is not the acrimonious relationship of action and reaction proposed by

¹³⁴ Fielding and Ryan, *Marriage in Church and State*, iv.

¹³⁵ UCAC, Accn. 83.052C f. 45-15, File of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce, Reverend J. R. Hord “Report on Review and Revisions of Canadian Abortion Laws Needed,” 6.

scholars who argue that Protestant denominations such as the United Church channelled their discourses directly against those of the Roman Catholic faith in Canada.¹³⁶ Indeed, the Anglican Church even used *This is a Great Sacrament* as a basis for their own marriage manual *The Hallowing of the Union*, noting that though they would have replaced the Catholic content with their own, the themes and modules used by the Roman Catholic Church were efficacious.¹³⁷

In their quest to create an ideal married one flesh body that was both mystical and ordered, Protestant denominations benefited greatly from their acceptance of the use of birth control by married couples to limit their children. Anglican and United Church couples were told to embrace methods of contraception in order to create families that fit within their financial means; this would separate their bodies from the disordered and uncontrolled Catholic bodies. Again, this was often framed in the context of the inability of people to obey natural law in the face of a fallen world; poverty and the burdens of humanity on an overpopulated globe were important considerations in how the one flesh body could be used. According to the resolutions of the 1958 Lambeth Conference:

The Conference believes that the responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the consciences of parents everywhere: that this planning, in such ways as are mutually acceptable to husband and wife in Christian conscience, is a right and important factor in Christian family life and should be the result of positive choice before God. Such responsible parenthood, built on obedience to all the duties of marriage, requires a wise stewardship of the resources and abilities of the family as well as a thoughtful consideration of the varying population needs and problems of society and the claims of future generations.¹³⁸

Thus, the proper use of contraceptives was not just accepted, but recommended, by the Protestant denominations. Contraceptive use was thought to free a couple from the overbearing fear of unwanted pregnancy so that they could more fully engage in the spiritual oneness of the one flesh. Though the dominant historical metanarrative of birth control has been framed as woman's emancipation, the Protestant denominations' focus on the couple and disapproval of contraceptive use outside of marriage, serves to disrupt this metanarrative. The use of limitation devices such as the Pill were seen in Protestant discourse as emancipating the male as well and indeed, the family as a whole. As United Church authority Evelyn Millis Duvall noted in her article "What's Right With Today's Families,"¹³⁹ the future

¹³⁶ Christie, "Sacred Sex," 349.

¹³⁷ ACC, C.S. 75-100, Box 12, Folder 3 Marriage Counselling Committee 1950-1962. Letter from Miss Nora Lea (Informational Secretary) to Reverend R. S. Mowry, 7 December 1962.

¹³⁸ *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, 115.

¹³⁹ Single persons were not referenced in this article.

was bright because women had more choice and equality in marriage as well as sexual freedom within that institution. She continued:

Modern man may not be master of all he surveys, but he is able to cope with more of his life's problems than his forebears did. He and his wife can now plan the number of children they will have and how they will space them to take into account educational plans, vocational preparation, and their more easily estimated family finances. At times a family man may be bogged down, but he is not so often overwhelmed as is the man whose children come faster than he can care for them.¹⁴⁰

She said nothing, however, of non-married women – contraceptive use outside of marriage was disordered and deviant.

The Protestant denominations also echoed the medical community's parameters for the proper use of contraceptive methods. They explained that: contraceptives were dangerous if used by a non-married couple; both the husband and the wife had to agree to limit their family and the method of such limitation be mutually aesthetically acceptable; and, finally, that while contraceptive use was to be encouraged, other birth control methods such as sterilization and abortion, except as part of a life-saving medical procedure, were morally wrong.¹⁴¹ Further, the Protestant denominations agreed that it was abnormal – indeed pathological – to use contraception to avoid having children entirely or to limit the family to one child. To avoid or postpone children for selfish motives such as economic gain (rather than economic stability) was just as much a violation of the ordered body as uncontrolled reproduction was.

It may be said, however, that responsible parenthood implies a watchful guard against selfishness and covetousness, and an equally thoughtful awareness of the world into which our children are to be born. Couples who postpone having children until certain financial goals are reached, or certain possessions gained, need to be vigilant lest they are putting their own comfort level ahead of their duty. Similarly those who carelessly and improvidently bring children into the world trusting in an unknown future or generous society to care for them, need to make a rigorous examination of their lack of concern for their children and for the society of which they are a part.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Evelyn Millis Duvall, "What is Right With Today's Families," *Christian Home* (April 1966): 9.

¹⁴¹ See in the Anglican discourse: *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, 2.148-149; "Canadian Family Life Status and Trends," 3. For examples in the United Church discourse see: UCAC, Accn. 83.052C f. 45-15, File of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce, Letter to Mr. Fidler from Stanley B. Frost, 28 September 1959; UCAC, Accn. 82.086 Box 1 f. 14, "Toward a Christian Understanding of Sex, Love, Marriage: A First Report of the Commission On Christian Marriage and Divorce, Approved by the Nineteenth General Council of the United Church of Canada, Edmonton Alberta September 1960," 2; UCAC, Accn. 83.052C f. 39-4, Hord "Report on Review and Revisions of Canadian Abortion Laws Needed," 5-6; UCAC, Accn. 83.052C f. 39-4, Letter to the Honourable Lucien Cardin Minister of Justice from Secretary Board of Evangelism and Social Service 7 March 1966; J. Termayn Copplestone, "If You Marry a Roman Catholic," *Christian Home* (May 1961): 44-46.

¹⁴² *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, 2.146.

The Protestant Churches were walking the fine line between, and influenced by, competing ideals of capitalism and socialism. No right-thinking capitalist would produce children that would eventually become dependent on the state. At the same time, unrestrained consumption – keeping up with the Jones – was also deviant, as it placed too much emphasis on material goods rather than spirituality and the development of the family as the core unit of society. This was also Protestant middle-class values at work. Unrestrained fecundity, the inability or lack of intelligence to use tools such as contraception, was a characteristic of the poor and sometimes the non-white.¹⁴³ To maintain a properly ordered body, contraception was to be used to space children for their optimal development and to limit overactive fecundity to a reasonable level; procreation was still an important function though it no longer was a factor in every sexual union. As *The Hallowing of the Union* was careful to note, concluding the section describing different methods of birth control, “But no matter how the parents may plan for the spacing of births, the fact remains that the normal result of the expression of love between a man and woman in Christian marriage is the gift of children.”¹⁴⁴

The Protestant Churches appropriated scientific authority in other ways than encouraging the use of birth control – science could bring order to the religious body in multiple ways. This engagement was often as simple as appropriating the emerging lingo of psychoanalysis. Both the United and Anglican Churches made free use of terms such as “ego,” “neurotic,” and “Momism,” as well as concepts such as the psychological inheritance of disturbed personalities and the disciplining of homosexual feelings to heterosexual norms.¹⁴⁵ These tactics gave religious doctrine additional authority by attaching the veneer

¹⁴³ For example, though the Protestant Churches were against permanent sterilization of married couples who had had all the children they wanted because they worried that in the case of widow(er)hood and remarriage more children might be desired, some authorities did support its use amongst the poor or “ignorant” populations who could not be trusted to utilize contraceptives like the Pill effectively. See: *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, 2.148; “Toward a Christian Understanding of Sex Love Marriage,” 2. Scholar-activist Dorothy Roberts notes that similar arguments were made to coerce poor African-American women on welfare to have Norplant contraceptive rods inserted during the 1980s and 1990s. Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Random House Inc. 1997).

¹⁴⁴ *The Hallowing of the Union*, 8.

¹⁴⁵ See for the Anglican Church: *The Hallowing of the Union*; Mrs. F. G. T. Dawson, “British War Wives,” *The Bulletin of the Council for Social Service* 119 (1945): 3-7; *Lambeth Conference 1948*; ACC, F. CSS G.S. 75-106, Box 12, Marriage Commission Correspondence 1950-1962, “A Marriage Counselling Programme for the Church” A report on a three-day central Institute on Marriage Counselling conducted by the Joint Committee on Adult Religious Education of the Church of England in Toronto 26-28 November 1951; Reverend Owen G. Barrow, “Sex Instruction in the Parish,” *News and Notes for Clergy* 4 (26 February 1947): 2-8; *Lambeth Conference 1958*; 17-18; LAC, MG288 I 117, Volume 73, Anglican Church of Canada Folder (1/2) 1954-1976, Graham Cotter, “Preparation of Marriage and Family Life: A Summary for The Canadian Conference on the Family.” n.p.; C. R. Fielding and R. S. Ryan, *Marriage and Family Life 1 On Marriage and the Church (Canon and Commentary)* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1965); ACC SD20 F24.3, Marriage, Family and the Single State Folder, Charles R. Fielding, Notes on Marriage, Family and the Single State in preparation for Lambeth 1968, 13; Bolton, “Premarital Talks,” 14; Maurice P. Wilkinson, “Out of Wedlock,” *The Bulletin* 193 (May 1966): 3-16. See for the United Church: LAC, MG 28 I10, Volume 62, Folder 492 Marriage – Counselling 1946-47, S. R. Laycock, “Premarital Counselling

of scientific “fact,” even when the pronouncements were not made by scientists or when the case histories being described did not follow proper scientific method. For example, reference to statistics, often collected without even the most basic methodological rigour embraced by institutional social sciences, gave many lay publications the appearance of scientific authenticity, and “objective” authority.¹⁴⁶

Whenever possible religious pronouncements were augmented by the voices of medical or scientific experts who believed in, and more importantly deferred their own authority to, the pronouncements of the Christian faith. Both the United and Anglican Churches were able to make use of the authority of Dr. Marion Hilliard who, in addition to being a recognized expert on the female body, was also a devout churchwoman. Raised in the United Church, she later converted to Anglicanism, and she often served on ecumenical committees and other pan-Protestant education efforts.¹⁴⁷

Hilliard’s involvement is but another layer of the ambivalence that both Protestant denominations showed towards changing women’s roles. A single working woman herself, and evidence suggests Hilliard was also a closeted lesbian, Hilliard spoke out about the dangers of overbearing mothers and the need for children to have good masculine and feminine examples to aid them both in identifying their own gender roles and in choosing a mate. She subscribed to, and promoted, the connection of gender to biological sex, arguing, for example, that, “Woman is equipped with a

Clinic Organized by Saskatoon Church,” May 25, 1946; Werner, “The Marks of a Christian Home;” Ellzey, *Sex, Love, and Marriage*, n.p.; UCAC, Accn.. 82.086 Box 1 f. 14, “Toward a Christian Understanding of Sex, Love, Marriage: A First Report of the Commission On Christian Marriage and Divorce, Approved by the Nineteenth General Council of the United Church of Canada, Edmonton Alberta September 1960.”

¹⁴⁶ See: LAC, MG 28 I10, Volume 62, Folder 492 Marriage – Counselling 1954-66, Letter to Phyllis Burns, Secretary Family and Child Welfare Division of the Welfare Council in Ottawa from the Office of the Board of Christian Education of the United Church of Canada in Toronto, 17 May 1954; UCAC, Accn. 83.052C, f. 45-15, File of the Commission on Christian Marriage and Divorce, A. V. Bentum, “Marriage and Divorce – A Brief on AID, 23 April 1959; Frederick Elkin, “Dimensions of the Problem of Unmarried Parenthood,” *Bulletin* 193 (May 1966): 1-6. *Christian Home* contributors used this technique quite often. See: Reverend Frank P. Fidler, “Marriage Preparation Begins in the Cradle,” *Christian Home* (September 1960): 49; Allen J. Moore, “What’s Happening to the North American Family?” *Christian Home* (May 1962): 4; Albert Dale Hagler, “Parents Can Help Divorced Teen-Agers,” *Christian Home* (July 1964): 14; Mrs. Grier, “Vocation Homemaker,” *Christian Home* (July 1964): 9;

¹⁴⁶ Reverend Frank P. Fidler, “Marriage Preparation Begins in the Cradle,” *Christian Home* (September 1960): 49-50; J. Copplestone, “If You Marry a Roman Catholic...” *Christian Home* (May 1961): 44-46; Bette Casperian “Telling About Babies,” *Christian Home* (June 1961): 35-37; Mildred Fielder, “Words of Glory,” *Christian Home* (April 1962): 2-3; Study Guide for Parents: Theme: Husband-Wife Relationships,” “Words of Glory,” *Christian Home* (April 1962): 52-53; Siward Hiltner, “The Christian Understanding of Sex,” *Christian Home* (August 1962): 2-4; Patricia White, “Marriage and Mental Health,” *Christian Home* (February 1964): 5-7; Albert Dale Hagler, “Parents Can Help Divorced Teen-Agers,” *Christian Home* (July 1964): 12-14; W. Clark Ellzey, Mason and Marjorie Olds, “A Protestant View of Family Planning,” *Christian Home* (April 1965): 29-31; “Preparing Our Children for a Responsible Sex Life,” *Christian Home* (September 1965): 14-16.

¹⁴⁷ Marion O. Robinson, *Give My Heart: The Dr. Marion Hilliard Story* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company Inc. 1964). According to Robinson, a close female friend inspired her conversion.

reproductive system which, even if she never used it, dominates her fiber.”¹⁴⁸ At the same time, Hilliard, like Betty Friedan, felt it was healthy for women to have interests – including work – outside of the home. Hilliard’s presence in the Churches’ discourse about the gender roles was similar to the role she played in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Her position created an interesting discursive space where the dominant ideal body was both supported and subverted, not only due to her sometimes unorthodox pronouncements on gender, but also by her lived experience, the latter of which was well known because of her celebrity and her popular publications, including her columns in *Chatelaine*. In a sense, Hilliard herself embodied the very tensions that both the United and Anglican Churches were attempting to reconcile; while she supported the tenets of the one flesh body, she herself was anathema to it.

While Protestant authorities assured their parishioners that they had every right to enjoy all the benefits that science and modern living allowed, the Protestant churches were not willing to subjugate their authority to that of the lay medical/scientific world. Though they did not go to the extreme of insisting that parishioners find physicians who shared their faith, it was clear that the medical episteme of the body was not to substitute or subvert the religious episteme – only support it. To take the spiritual element out of the one flesh doctrine was to reduce any sexual encounter to the simple mating of animals. As the committee members of the 1958 Lambeth Conference put it:

First of all, the family is rooted in the elemental processes of life itself. Human reproduction – human parenthood – is vastly more complicated than the reproduction of plants or the simpler animals. Mankind has rightly come to see depths and possibilities in the process, and in the relationships which it establishes, which are, at best, only faintly suggested (if indeed they exist at all) in the lower orders of life.¹⁴⁹

Science could help order the one flesh body by providing contraception to limit fecundity or by helping to alleviate illness more generally, but it could not give sexual interaction its true, higher purpose.

Conclusions

The term “one flesh,” found in the Gospel of Mark, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh,” could be subject to multiple interpretations. The most basic would be the historical sublimation of dual legal entities – man and woman – into a single one of the man’s. However, for all

¹⁴⁸ *The Hallowing of the Union*, 189.

¹⁴⁹ *The Lambeth Conference 1958*, 2.142-3.

three of English Canada's main denominations, "one flesh" referred to the physical and spiritual moment of sexual congress. This was because the married body was, above all, sexual. Though leaders of each faith decried the oversexualization of society – labelling society "sex-saturated" – their discourses contributed to the overall importance of sex and the specific importance of sexual activity within marriage.¹⁵⁰ Their authoritative voices joined those of the medical community in educating married couples that having frequent, mutually satisfying sexual relations within their heterosexual marriage, including orgasm, was normal; if they were not, their bodies were not only medically and psychologically abnormal, but also spiritually lacking. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic authorities used the one flesh body to discipline their parishioner's bodies in ways that complied with their ideals of marriage and their respective schemas for gender roles, even if Protestant Churches left these vaguely defined.

The one flesh body also helped to define and negotiate each denomination's relationship to the powerful discourses on married sexuality emerging from the medical sciences. The Roman Catholic Church, unable to absorb the authority of a system too foreign to its own beliefs, created a chimera of medical discourses spanning from several different eras in order to counter the modern medical body politic that the Protestant Churches were able to more fully utilize. However, it should be noted that religious discourses differed from the medical in one critical way. Unlike the institutional biomedical authorities, who during the 1950s and 1960s were at the crest of their dominance over alternative medical ideologies, the religious community during the baby boom era was essentially a "free market" situation with many different types and levels of religious involvement from which someone could choose.¹⁵¹ As long as persons bowed to the authority of one of the "acceptable" faiths and lived within a framework of morality associated with the Church, the denomination or individual Church had only minor importance. Throughout this period, if the "faithful" felt that their needs were not being met at a particular church or within a particular denomination, they could (and did) change their allegiances or practice other forms of resistance such as non-attendance or selective adherence to religious doctrine. Some Catholics, for example, disappointed at Pope Paul VI's condemnation of birth control, became

¹⁵⁰ Genné, "We're Contradicting Ourselves," 5.

¹⁵¹ Children, of course, had limited ability to choose their religious affiliations being most often raised in their parent's faith. However, by the time of marriage it could be argued that a degree of adult autonomy would have been achieved. And some children did assert their religious will. Diane West recounted to me that after having a conflict with her Anglican Sunday School teacher she demanded to be able to attend Sunday School at the United Church across the road. Her mother agreed as according to Diane all that mattered to her mother was that Diane attended some kind of Protestant service. Diane West, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 July 2010.

Anglicans, rationalizing their choice with the belief that the difference between Catholicism and High Anglicanism was insignificant.¹⁵² Further, a spiritual diagnosis for living well carried less weight than a medical one. Priests and ministers had a harder time gaining full “patient compliance” to their spiritual prescriptions as, in postwar English Canada, immediate illness was a much more efficacious motivator than the potential of discomfort in a world after death.

Religious leaders of each denomination also created ideals of what defined an ordered sexual/spiritual body. Parishioners chose to try to live up to these ideals with varying degrees of success, especially as postwar theology stated that true perfection could never be attained on Earth. Faced with unavoidable failure, parishioners were told to do their best and beg forgiveness for their inevitable failings in what was an imperfect world. This diffusion of authority was compounded in the Anglican and United Churches by their adoption of Biblical criticism and focus on the Bible as metaphorical. Doing so encouraged even lay parishioners to interpret God’s teachings and infused their schema with a moral relativity that necessarily weakened their ability to discipline the body. Indeed, this moral relativity would continue to shape the Protestant denominations for years to come. Both faiths (in Canada) eventually extended their definitions of sexual normalcy to include previously deviant bodies such as homosexuals though this would cause a schism in the international Anglican faith.¹⁵³ Canadian Protestant one flesh bodies would not only cease to become necessarily heterosexual (though this would be, and continues to be, contested), but sexuality would no longer have the same vague mysticism and holiness it achieved during this time period.

However, while the doctrines of the three main Christian denominations might have been plural, and for the Protestants often ambivalent and conflictual, they added their authoritative discourse to others such as the medical community to further use the sexual body to police the boundaries of postwar normalcy. Further, all three denominations contributed to the ideal that the heterosexual married couple and the nuclear family were not only the primary unit of society but also, with the exception of those

¹⁵² Gauvreau notes this occurred in Quebec see: Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution*. 245-246. See also: LAC, MG28 I350, Fonds of the Association for Repeal of Canada’s Abortion Laws (ARCAL) Survey Returns. Several of my interview subjects also changed religion for various reasons throughout their lifetime. Florence Anderson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010; Glenda Baker, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010; Ruth Bell, (pseudonym), personal interview, 21 September 2010; Margaret Brown, (pseudonym), personal interview, 27 June 2010; Verna King, (pseudonym), personal interview, date unknown; Karen Rand, (pseudonym), personal interview, 7 July 2010; Small, interview, 19 September 2010; Shortt, interview, 5 July, 2010; Jean Simpson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 5 July 2010; Marjorie Taylor, (pseudonym), personal interview, 17 October 2010; West, interview, 19 July 2010.

¹⁵³ For discussions about the Anglican Church and the issue of homosexuality see: Stephen Bates, *A Church at War: Anglicans and Homosexuality* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004); John Jesse Carey ed. *The Sexuality Debate in North American Churches, 1988-1995: Controversies, Unresolved Issues, Future Prospects* (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1995).

with a Catholic vocation, the most important and viable unit of society. Like the medical community, the three denominations argued that achieving normalcy, in this fallen world, was difficult and could only be achieved if parishioners accepted the benefice of God, and more importantly, the authority of the Church. They also made it clear that to not attempt normalcy – in this case not to strive for the perfection found in the one flesh body – was to withdraw oneself from the community of the faithful and society at large. Whether or not one believed in the potential for everlasting life, adherence to a dominant Christian denomination was another way postwar women, couples, and families could demonstrate their acquiescence to societal standards of basic morality and therefore, postwar heterosexual normalcy.

CHAPTER FOUR

Performative Sexuality: *I Love Lucy*, the Lucy Body, and The Triumph of Domesticated Sexuality

Lucy and Ricky skirmish in the daytime so they can 'reconcile' at night...I think our audience could visualize Lucy and Ricky going to bed together and enjoying it. I got a fan letter addressed to Ricky from a guy who said, "Lucy must be pretty good in the hay for you to put up with all the crazy things she does."¹

Lucy was impulsive, inquisitive and completely feminine. Even with pie on her face she remained an attractive and desirable female, stirred by real emotion.²

Introduction – “The Diet”

On October 29, 1951, CBS aired “The Diet,” one of the first episodes in the show *I Love Lucy* – a program destined to permeate the cultural consciousness of a generation and live on in nostalgia through consistent reruns. “The Diet” portrayed a story line that would become one of the show’s “stock plots.” In the opening sequence we see Ricky, a Cuban-American band leader, and his wife Lucy having coffee in their apartment living room with their close friends and the building’s managers Fred and Ethel Mertz. As they all exclaim what a big meal they have just eaten Lucy discovers she has gained twenty-two pounds since her wedding. Lucy starts to wail and when Ricky tries to comfort her, she admits that her primary concern is that the weight gain will negatively affect her stage career. Ricky points out that she has no stage career. Lucy retorts that someday she will despite his efforts to thwart her. The phone rings, Ricky answers it to discover his dance partner has run off to get married. Lucy begs to be allowed to audition for the vacant part in his show. Ricky reluctantly agrees.

The next scene opens at the auditions and Lucy joins the other women hoping to get the part. There is a clear visual juxtaposition between the professional dancers and Lucy. (Figure 4.1)

¹ Desi Arnaz, *A Book* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1976), 270.

² Lucille Ball and Betty Hannah Hoffman, *Love, Lucy* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1996).

Notwithstanding the plot line of the show Lucy is not noticeably heavier than the professional dancers;



FIGURE 4.1

the main distinction is evident in the dancers' clothing which reveals bodies that are well toned and their posture that displays both a sexuality and comfort with their own attractiveness. The auditions commence. Despite the fact that Lucy is a terrible dancer – directly contrasted to the professional acumen of the other girls – Ricky tells her to try on the costume, a size twelve, to see if it will fit her. Lucy and Ethel rush off stage and we hear

ripping noises; Lucy, not a size twelve, has ripped every seam. In order to get rid of Lucy, Ricky promises her that if she can fit into the costume she can have the part; clearly he assumes she never will. Even though Ricky hires another dancer, Lucy is determined to lose the weight to fit a size twelve. With Ethel as her coach Lucy engages in a ridiculous fitness regime which includes her exercising constantly while subsisting solely on celery. Starving, Lucy engages in a comedic routine where she attempts to steal scraps from the dog during dinner. With five pounds still to go on the day of the performance, Lucy rents a sweat machine to get rid of the remaining weight.

In the next scene at the nightclub – the Tropicana – Ricky begins singing the “Cuban Pete,” a number that Desi Arnaz used in his variety show act.³ He wiggles his hips and even engages in some pelvic thrusts, flirting with the female audience members. However, Ricky is shocked when it is Lucy (now fitting into the costume) who enters singing the female part. Though Lucy does the steps fairly well her performance is clearly amateur as she not only ad libs throughout the performance – while Ricky's partners usually only sing their part and are otherwise silent – she also enthusiastically chews a wad of gum with her mouth open while she dances. Thus, though her performance is supposed to be that

³ Coyne Steven Sanders and Tom Gilbert, *Desilu: The Story of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993, 2011), 30.

of sexualized nightclub performer, her hyperbolic actions dissuade the audience from seeing her as a sexual being to be consumed. After the dance the camera cuts to a scene backstage where Lucy is being taken away in an ambulance stretcher. Ricky explains to her that she fainted backstage after the number, that the doctor has diagnosed her with exhaustion and prescribed three weeks of bed rest. As Lucy is wheeled away she gestures frantically to Ethel to open the door to the janitor's closet. Inside is the dancer that Ricky hired, tied up and gagged, stuffed into the sink.⁴

I Love Lucy had several stock plotlines that were constantly reinvented throughout the show's eight season run. This particular one, highlighting Lucy's desire to break free from her gender role as a wife, and later a mother, her ultimate failure to do so, the subsequent "splaining" to Ricky, and the ultimate resolution whereby Lucy was returned to the domestic sphere, remained the core narrative. Indeed, this was the premise that Jess Oppenheimer, a producer and head writer, registered with the Screen Writers' Guild. As he put it, the show was built around the premise that Ricky wanted to keep Lucy out of show business as part of his attempt to achieve the American dream: "the closest he can get to his dream is having a wife who's out of show business and devotes herself to keeping as nearly a normal life as possible for him."⁵

As the majority of episodes followed this narrative line Lucy becomes, upon reflection, a very inconsistent, even fractured, character. It seems odd that she would be willing to punish herself with a grueling exercise and diet regime only to concede defeat after one performance, indeed, this is one of the few episodes where Lucy gives an acceptable, rather than comically ridiculous, performance. Such character inconsistencies did not seem to trouble the audience as reflected by the show's extremely strong ratings.⁶ However, by using the lens of embodiment we can see how the comic physicality of the characters, primarily Lucy, was used to either distract the audience from seeing these inconsistencies or to normalize them. This allowed the creative contributors to *I Love Lucy* to play with issues such as sexuality, gender role deviance, and the opposing poles of the domestic interior world and the glamorous exterior world, while still maintaining, and supporting, the postwar status quo.

⁴ "The Diet," *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 29, 1951.

⁵ Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 35-36. It should be noted that while a stay-at-home wife was part of the American ideal this ideal was much more difficult to realize in Canada as different monetary situations meant that many women worked at least part time during their marriage only staying at home when their children were very small.

⁶ See Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 48; 57; 59; 66; 69; 75; 110-111; 133; 136; 142; 153; 160; 173; 185.

I argue that there were three key physical, or performative,⁷ elements within *I Love Lucy* that were simultaneously used to negotiate the troubled gender role politics that were central to the show as well as to ensure that Lucy Ricardo's sexuality was domesticated and therefore clearly reserved for her husband's sole consumption. These performative elements were, unsurprisingly, most often enacted by the undisputed star of the show: Lucille Ball; the body of Lucille/Lucy, which I term "the Lucy body," was at the centre of the show's discourse and the primary "site" through which the entire show's sexual and gender role politics were mediated. First, Lucille Ball, in playing Lucy Ricardo, used physical clowning techniques common to vaudevillian soubrette performers to create comedy out of situations which could be portrayed as drama or even tragedy allowing the audience to laugh at her continued failure to achieve her dreams.⁸ Secondly, the creators of *I Love Lucy* generated "zones" which helped to define the bodies of the characters that inhabited them. These zones were most often divided into a binary between the comfortable domestic and the glamorous public. When certain characters, primarily Lucy, transgressed the boundaries of these zones it signalled to the audience that the character's body was in an abnormal state, one which would inevitably be rectified within the space of a single episode. The binary between the domestic and the public and the bodies that inhabited them also served to glorify both the domestic setting and the domestic female body. In contrast, the show constantly depicted the glamorous public zone as a potential threat to the Ricardo marriage due to its population of sexualized, consumable bodies – usually the showgirls with whom Ricky worked. However, this danger was always proven a false threat; Ricky always rejected the temptations of his co-stars and happily returned home to Lucy's domestic body. Finally, the show used the sexual relationship between Lucy and Ricky Ricardo to glorify and maintain the boundaries of heterosexual monogamous marriage to the exclusion of all other sexualities and to promote healthy married sexuality as a way of maintaining marital bonds of fidelity and affection in the face of gender role conflict.

Entering TVland: Historiography and Media Theory

⁷ If, as Judith Butler famously contends, "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constructed by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results," then the deconstruction of gendered sexual relations within a performative piece should be no different than the deconstructions of any "real" set of behaviours. Theatre, or any of its derivations, is not the reinterpretation of an ultimate human truth but instead, paraphrasing, a copy of a copy. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 25; 31. The original quotation is "Thus, gay is to straight *not* as copy to the original but rather as copy is to a copy." (italics in original).

⁸ For information on the role of the soubrette see: Andrew L. Erdman, *Blue Vaudeville: Sex, Morals and the Mass Marketing of Amusement, 1895-1915* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company Inc., 2004); Albert F. McLean Jr. *American Vaudeville as Ritual* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965); John Springhall, *The Genesis of Mass Culture: Show Business Live in America, 1840 to 1940* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Television media history, still nascent in the United States, is even more limited in Canada with only two publications in recent memory: Paul Rutherford's extensive examination of Canadian broadcasting and content in *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952-1967* and Mary Vipond's much smaller examination of Canadian television in *The Mass Media in Canada*, now in its third edition.⁹ Rutherford's work is useful for his statistical analysis of Canadian television ownership, and consumption of American programming as he demonstrates that Canadians had access to, and avidly consumed, American television programs, speaking to the efficacy of this study.¹⁰ Beyond this viewership data, however, Vipond and Rutherford's works are of limited use to this dissertation because they are focused on the primary question that plagues Canadian media: can Canadian television and movie products compete in close proximity to the technological and marketing might of Hollywood? This query is important, but the role of Canadian television as "popular" culture, even within Canada, remains questionable. That is, even though Rutherford's in depth analysis of Canadian programming is well constructed, his models cannot be applied unproblematically to this study due to his focus on what essentially remains a specialized product for a specialized audience.¹¹

Instead, this chapter relies heavily on American-authored examinations of the way that popular television culture was produced and received within the United States. Particularly useful are the works of Lynn Spigel and William Douglas which interrogate the semiotics of the television program itself as well of the ancillary cultural products of a particular television "brand," including popular articles about the show, fan and star magazine content, and the consumer goods that allowed viewers to "live" like their favourite television personalities. As Spigel puts it in her 1992 monograph *Make Room For TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*, many postwar sitcoms were "an ambiguous blend of fiction and reality. By appealing to viewer's extratextual knowledge (their familiarity with television celebrities through fan magazines and other public materials) these programs collapsed distinctions between real life and television."¹² Understanding this extratextuality is especially important in the case of *I Love Lucy*. The show's writers and producers deliberately invited their audiences to break down the

⁹ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* 3rd ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2000).

¹⁰ Paul Rutherford, *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952-1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 76.

¹¹ There is currently a complete lack of sources examining the ways in which Canadians have historically engaged with American television media products such as the relationship between Canadian viewership and the sale of sponsored products and how Canadians identify with, or are alienated by, American imagery. This chapter makes some small inroads into these questions, though they are largely beyond the scope of this dissertation.

¹² Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 158.

barriers between the audience and the show using camera angles and shots that made it seem like viewers were guests in the Ricardo living room or customers at Ricky's club. This familiarity was furthered by several stunts designed to blur the lines between characters, principally Lucy and Ricky Ricardo, and the actors who played them, (the also married) Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. The epitome of this process was the staging of the simultaneous Lucy/Lucille birth in season two. After Ball became pregnant with her second child her pregnancy was written into the plot line and since the birth was a scheduled caesarean section she, Arnaz, and the producers were able to air the birth of "Little Ricky" on the same night that Desi Arnaz Jr. was born.¹³

This self-reflexivity was not limited to such obvious publicity stunts. It could be as simple as Lucy Ricardo reading a gossip magazine with Lucille Ball featured on the cover. More complexly, incidents from Arnaz and Ball's own marriage were often used by the writers, long-time collaborators with the couple, to create comedic drama. As Arnaz recalled in his autobiography:

Our type of comedy did get pretty wild at times. That is why setting up the reasons for getting to those antics had to be fundamentally solid. There is a very thin line between believable physical comedy routines and the "just trying to be funny" routines. But you better know where that line is and tread it carefully.¹⁴

According to Arnaz, he and Ball would discuss their own marital discords, often stemming from Arnaz's traditional Latin masculine upbringing and Ball's inability to fulfill his ideals of the submissive female helpmeet (who would have turned a blind eye to Arnaz's affairs), with the writers. The writers would then sanitize those scenarios for a middle-class audience and neutralize them by turning the incident into a scene of frivolous slapstick. Ball and Arnaz also had much more influence on the show than just as the "stars." One of Ball's main contract points was that the show be filmed in Hollywood rather than New York. Given the state of film technology at the time such a move required that the show be shot using movie film equipment to maintain consistent picture quality.¹⁵ Because using film- rather than TV-

¹³ In order to make sure that the pregnancy was treated tastefully on screen the script was examined by several religious authorities including a Catholic priest, a minister and a rabbi. Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 66; Ball and Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 166.

¹⁴ Arnaz, *A Book*, 259.

¹⁵ Producing the show from Hollywood rather than New York was a key point in the negotiations in the sale of the pilot to CBS. Lucille Ball was in advanced pregnancy with her first child (Lucie) and after several previous miscarriages she did not want to relocate at such a crucial time. However, the technological state of broadcasting at that time meant that those viewers closer to where the show was filmed would have a clear picture while stations farther away would have to broadcast the inferior kinescope picture. Therefore television shows were usually filmed in New York so that the much larger East coast audience would receive the superior picture. "Filming" the show with movie technology would be much more expensive though it should be noted that after Arnaz negotiated the deal to keep the show in Hollywood, television increasingly became broadcast in this way. Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 38-39.

quality equipment was expensive, CBS and Philip Morris asked Arnaz and Ball to take a severe pay cut to cover costs. Arnaz, always a brilliant negotiator, agreed to the pay reduction with the proviso that instead of Desilu (Arnaz and Ball's production company) being fifty percent owners of *I Love Lucy*, the company would own one hundred percent. This meant that Arnaz and Ball effectively owned the show.¹⁶ Not only did this pay off hugely when the show went into syndicated reruns, but it also gave Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball a great deal of oversight over the final product.

Spigel and Douglas both argue that such self-reflexivity, the calculated confusing of the public and the private, "reel-ity" and "reality," necessarily affected the viewers' experience of a text and the implementation of media texts into viewers' family lives, both at time of the show's airing and in later recollections of the way families were in the past. As Douglas notes:

In the most general sense, television portrayals are seen to affect cognition because together they form a public record of the family, and as such, provide a consensual reality to viewers, a shared way of thinking about and interpreting family life and family relations. Fictional families such as the Cleavers, Bunkers, Huxtables, and Conners have been invoked routinely in the debate about social and family policy, implying that such families represent, for many, something more than fictional characters engaged in fictional relationships.¹⁷

Further, as media scholar Ella Taylor notes, the dominance of these familial scripts – their normalization of middle class, nuclear family bliss – were further reinforced by the inherently repetitive nature of the early sitcom genre. According to Taylor one of the defining features of early sitcoms like *I Love Lucy* was its "copycat homogeneity" with each season an "endless rehearsal of the same themes."¹⁸ Stock plots such as that of "The Diet," repeated *ad nauseum*, did not bore the audience and prevent them from tuning in weekly; rather, repetition in *I Love Lucy* and other sitcoms served the same purpose as the standard plotlines in romance novels. That is, the predictability actually increased the enjoyment of the text because the assured lack of surprise created a sense of stability in everyday life.¹⁹ In both romance novels and *I Love Lucy* there was little tension or concern that everything would work out in the end.

¹⁶ Philip Morris was the original sponsor of the show as early television shows relied on a single sponsor rather than selling commercial time. In almost every episode Lucy and the other characters engage in smoking. However, during the pregnancy episodes, despite the fact that Lucille Ball continued to smoke during her own pregnancy, Philip Morris was uncomfortable with the idea of a pregnant Lucy smoking and so used other means to highlight the cigarettes. Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 66.

¹⁷ William Douglas, *Television Families: Is Something Wrong in Suburbia?* (Mahwah, N. J. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 2003), 2.

¹⁸ Ella Taylor, *Prime-Time Families: Television Culture in Postwar America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 23.

¹⁹ Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 205-208.

Thus, in “The Diet” Lucy dreams of a life beyond her narrow sphere epitomized by a role as a headliner in Ricky’s nightclub act. Her ambition is ridiculed by Ricky and then made ridiculous by her terrible audition and her inability to fit into the dress. Though Ethel and Lucy’s scheming eventually gets Lucy into the act, it is always clear that this is a temporary victory for Lucy. Her retreat back to the domestic sphere is not only socially stipulated, it is also backed up by medical science as she must pay for her gender role deviation with three weeks of mandatory bed rest. In this way the very real postwar tension surrounding women’s gender roles – the gendered division of the home and the workplace and many women’s dissatisfaction with the status quo – was opened up, displayed, and then contained, all within twenty-five minutes and seemingly to everyone’s satisfaction.²⁰ Therefore, while Spigel notes that it is nearly impossible to ever fully analyze how female viewers internalized the gendered messages of postwar television the

constant repetition [of those gendered messages] in popular media did provide a context in which women could find ample justification for their early marriages, child-centeredness, reluctance to divorce, and tendency to use higher education only as a stepping stone for marriage.²¹

One of the fascinating features about media studies, especially postwar television media, is that under the surface homogeneity of the dominant message there was ample space for viewer re-creation of the textual and visual discourses. This textual leeway makes the appraisal of the ways that the “Lucy body” was used to navigate postwar sexual and gendered message necessarily more complex than the analyses of the previous chapters. First, there is no “real,” corporeal “Lucy body;” it is neither the body of the character Lucy, who as a scripted fictional entity has neither flesh nor bone, nor is it the body of Lucille Ball who performs the character Lucy as she remains essentially separate from her character. Instead, the Lucy body is in its core shifting and ephemeral, the child of many parents. Each week the Lucy body was created by a team of script writers, shaped by producers and directors, and interpreted by Lucille Ball in conjunction with the other actors. This many layered body was then presented to each

²⁰ For discussions of North American women’s dissatisfaction with post World War II gender norms see: Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Beth L. Bailey, *From the Front Porch to the Back Seat: Courtship in the Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Wini Breines, *Young, White and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

²¹ Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 42.

and every individual viewer who could in turn reinterpret the Lucy body using the available information to mould Lucy to fit their own needs. Valerie J. Korinek exhibits this phenomenon in her study of the magazine *Chatelaine* and its readership. She demonstrates that popular texts such as *Chatelaine*, due to their multiplicity of authors and lack of clearly defined interpretive guidelines, could be deliberately misread or “creatively misunderstood” by their consumers who would twist the meaning of the text to make it more relevant to their own lives.²² Thus, while readers of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* or the religious discourses of Chapters Two and Three had either the strictures of medical practice or centuries of religious dogma to narrow their interpretative frame and create at least a surface homogeneity of reading, viewers of *I Love Lucy*, despite being guided by semiotics such as camera angle, costuming, and even the live audiences’ laughter, could exploit the text of the show in many different ways. Therefore, while the aim of this chapter is to evaluate the dominant gender narratives presented by the bodies in *I Love Lucy*, particular attention will be paid to those spaces within the text which would allow, or arguably even encourage, an alternative reading.

The complexity that is created by the myriad potential interpretations of *I Love Lucy* is also reflected in the historiography of the show itself; most authors, though they all spotlight the character of Lucy, express different, yet valid, interpretations of her character.²³ Lori Landay, in her essay “Millions ‘Love Lucy’: Commodification and the Lucy Phenomenon,” focuses her gaze on the role of Lucy as the epitome of postwar commodity politics. According to Landay, Lucy (and by extension Ball) is both the seller and sold. She argues that the theme of commodification was particularly highlighted in “Lucy Does a TV Commercial,” one of the show’s most famous episodes in which Lucy serves as a spokeswoman for the health drink “Vitameatavegamin,” and in which the self-reflexivity of the show’s commercialism were playfully explored. While Lucy sold the imaginary health drink, Lucille was simultaneously engaged in selling actual products including: Philip Morris cigarettes and thousands of consumer goods, from furniture to clothing to baby products, which allowed viewers to “live like Lucy.”²⁴ Landay also argues that consumption is presented in the show as a way to solve Lucy’s dissatisfaction with her postwar role as wife and mother noting the stock plots where Lucy, without an income of her own, must use trickery to get money from Ricky. Landay concludes in the end that Lucy

²² Valerie J. Korinek, “‘Don’t Let Your Girlfriends Ruin Your Marriage’: Lesbian Imagery in *Chatelaine* Magazine, 1950-1969” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33, no. 3 (Fall 1998), 85.

²³ Though there are relatively few historical analyses of *I Love Lucy* this paucity of sources is more a reflection of the comparative youth of media history/studies; there is actually more written about *I Love Lucy* than most postwar sitcoms.

²⁴ Lori Landay, “Millions ‘Love Lucy’: Commodification and the Lucy Phenomenon,” *NWSA Journal* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 30.

is a commodity in her own right to be consumed by the viewers' collective gaze and that when viewers bought any of the actual products highlighted in the show they were really trying to buy a bit of Lucy herself.²⁵

Alexander Doty, though also noting the commerciality of Lucy/Lucille presents her in a different light in, "The Cabinet of Lucy Ricardo: Lucille Ball's Star Image." Doty argues that because the character of Lucy Ricardo was a pastiche of Lucille Ball's former silver screen roles encompassing the ingénue, femme fatale, wife, and star, Lucy became both an "everywoman" and "no-woman," a fantasy figure to whom women could actually relate.²⁶

In contrast both Lynn C. Spangler's "A Historical Overview of Female Friendships on Prime-Time Television," and Darlene Jirikowic's "*I Love Lucy* and Ethel Mertz," focus on the complexities of the interrelationship between Lucy and Ethel. They both argue that the relationship between Lucy and Ethel, their desire to trick "the men" to gain what they want out of life, is one of sisterhood and should be seen as proto-feminist.²⁷ Jirikowic argues that Lucy and Ethel, caught between their desires to conform and their need to break out of that conformity, can "be viewed as symbolically representing the id and ego of the same woman."²⁸ That is, Ethel has a symbiotic relationship with Lucy through whom she can experience Lucy's crazy stunts from a place of safety while also serving as the example of the more obedient housewife.

Of the many analyses of Lucy,²⁹ only Susan M. Carini's essay, "Love's Labors Almost Lost: Managing Crisis during the Reign of *I Love Lucy*," expends any significant analysis on the role of marriage in the text of the show as a whole. She does so as part of her wider appraisal of the management of "points of rupture" within the show, including the handling of Lucille Ball's pregnancy, the Communism scandal, and the rifts in the Ball-Arnaz marriage.³⁰ Carini argues that the marriage of

²⁵ Ibid., 25-47.

²⁶ Alexander Doty, "The Cabinet of Lucy Ricardo: Lucille Ball's Star Image," *Cinema Journal* 29, no. 4 (Summer 1990), 3-22.

²⁷ Darlene Jirikowic, "*I Love Lucy* and Ethel Mertz: An Expression of Internal Conflict and Pre-Feminist Solidarity" (Paper presented at the Qualitative Studies Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1998); Lynn C. Spangler, "A Historical Overview of Female Friendships on Prime-Time Television," *Journal of Popular Culture* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1989): 13-23.

²⁸ Jirikowic, "*I Love Lucy* and Ethel Mertz," 2.

²⁹ For other views of Lucy see: Warren G. Harris, *Lucy and Desi: The Legendary Love Story of Television's Most Famous Couple* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1991); Judy Kutulas, "Do I Look Like a Chick?": Men, Women, and Babies on Sitcom Maternity Stories," *American Studies* 39, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 13-32.

³⁰ Lucille Ball's Communist scandal was traumatic for the star but short lived. Ball's grandfather was a socialist and asked her as a favour to sign a membership card for the Communist Party in 1936. She did it to please him as she had almost no political leanings (or even awareness) of her own. She was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee to explain the membership in 1953. Arnaz then explained the situation to the press and the live audience at the next taping. Lucy

Ricky and Lucy on the show was a “Coney Island mirror” reflecting a distorted fantasy image of American domestic bliss and the realities of Ball and Arnaz’s own troubled union.³¹ While working on the show together was originally a way to preserve Ball and Arnaz’s marriage, which was unstable due to the geographical distance between the couple (created in large part because of Ball’s much more successful acting career), it could not prevent their eventual estrangement. Carini argues that as Ball and Arnaz’s union fell apart, *I Love Lucy* became “the ultimate rewrite of their marriage.” While Ball and Arnaz were attempting to maintain their professional union while not being on speaking terms in private, “Lucy and Ricky...were reconciled at the end of every show.”³² This blurring of the lines between the fantasy of the Ricardo marriage and that of the Ball-Arnaz union was echoed by Arnaz in his memoirs. According to Arnaz, when he and Ball finally decided to file for divorce in November 1959, they still had the final episode of the *Lucy and Desi Comedy Hour*³³ left to film.

Doing that last *Lucy-Desi Comedy Hour* was not easy. We knew it was the last time we would be Lucy and Ricky. As fate would have it the very last scene in that story called for a long clinch and kiss-and-make-up ending. As we got down to it, we looked at each other, embraced and kissed. This was not just an ordinary kiss for a scene in a show. It was a kiss that would wrap up twenty years of love and friendship, triumphs and failures, **ecstasy and sex**, jealousy and regrets, heartbreaks and laughter...and tears...*I Love Lucy* was never just a title.³⁴

It is clear that in this moment Desi Arnaz was not just mourning the loss of his marriage but also the loss of the show that had given both he and Lucille Ball a fantasy of togetherness when their home life was becoming increasingly fractured. This quotation also demonstrates the important element hitherto untouched in the *I Love Lucy* canon (academic and popular): the importance of sex both as a theme within the show and as a crucial element in Lucy’s character. While some authors including Spigel and Stephanie Cootnz, recognize the general importance of heterosexual sexuality in understanding postwar marriages and society, none bring this element into their discussions of *I Love Lucy*.³⁵ Focusing on aspects of sexuality within the show and within the ancillary texts in Lucille Ball’s and Desi Arnaz’s memoirs and the popular histories of the show, the interactions between the Lucy body’s sexual and

received a standing ovation and there was very little public relations fallout. Susan M. Carini, “Love’s Labors Almost Lost: Managing Crisis during the Reign of ‘I Love Lucy,’” *Cinema Journal* 43, no.1 (Fall 2003), 54-58. For more information on the Communist scandal see: Arnaz, *A Book*, 240-257; Ball and Hoffman, *Love, Lucy* 185-193; Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 76-85.

³¹ Carini, “Love’s Labors Almost Lost,” 48.

³² *Ibid.*, 51.

³³ In the last three seasons the show moved to an hour long format.

³⁴ Arnaz, *A Book*, 316. (Emphasis added).

³⁵ Stephanie Cootnz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 184-195; Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 42.

gender roles creates new explanations for the show's success in engaging the postwar mentalités of the viewing audience.

Looking For Lucy: Chapter Methodology

Searching for sex in a 1950s television program is both arduous and simple. Arduous, because there is no overt sexuality in 1950s comedic television and it has to be mined from the subtext. Simple, because the cult of *I Love Lucy* has created numerous fan websites and popular works containing detailed episode synopses which were crucial in my ability to create a representative (in regards to sex) sampling of the show. Unlike modern television hits which rely on reruns to fill up a season and produce, at most, twelve to twenty new episodes a year, television shows in the 1950s were supposed to air a new episode each week; season one of *I Love Lucy* alone contained thirty-seven episodes. As it would be unwieldy to attempt to analyze every episode of the show's eight season run (the first five seasons in the traditional half hour format and the last three in the hour long format), I used the combined synopses from various fan sites and secondary literature to create a list of twenty-five episodes in which marriage, sexuality, jealousy, and/or children were the main foci of the plot. These twenty-five episodes provide the basis for the analysis within this chapter. This method created a fairly representative sample with episodes from each season, though there was a small bias towards the earlier seasons. This bias is justified, however, as the show continued to air, the writers and producers attempted to maintain interest in the characters by staging a variety of "stunt" episodes featuring celebrity guests such as Bob Hope and exotic locales such as Japan. These stunt episodes focused the action away from the normal domesticity prevalent in the first four seasons.

In analyzing each of these twenty-five episodes, I would initially watch the episode in its entirety to get a basic understanding of the plot and then several more times afterwards focusing on particularly relevant scenes for which I would: transcribe relevant dialogue, critique the positioning of the characters in the sets and in relation to each other, as well as focus on other factors such as costuming, comedic timing, and the laughter and applause responses from the live audience. Reflecting the overarching theme of embodiment within this dissertation, I also paid close attention to the roles that bodies played: how the visual nature of bodies added to the audio text, how they moved the plot forward, and the embodied negotiation of relationships between characters. In this, the body of Lucy/Lucille took metaphorical and literal "centre stage."

In order to get a better perspective of the show as a whole, I also engaged in a random sampling of non-marriage and sexuality specific episodes in order to place my analysis in a better context. The majority of these randomly sampled episodes are not discussed within this chapter, though occasionally they had relevant themes, such as in the cases of the episodes “Lucy and Ethel Buy the Same Dress,” and “Ricky Sells the Car.” The inclusion of these additional relevant episodes brought the total analysed to twenty-nine.

Laughing or Crying?: Physical Comedy as Misdirection

In the same ways that modern theatres have trouble staging a straightforward comedic representation of William Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*, audiences viewing Lucy Ricardo’s often desperate attempts to break free of her narrow gender role could, in the wrong hands, appear tragic rather than comedic. In some ways *I Love Lucy* is a temporal paradox. At the same time that many women were turning to subversive works such as Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* or the writings of *Chatelaine* contributor Dr. Marion Hilliard, audiences continued to tune in and laugh at Lucy’s failure to achieve her goals. I argue Lucille Ball’s slapstick comedic stunts simultaneously served to distract and shield viewers from uncomfortable parallels to their own lives and created a discursive space of abandon that was a mental “holiday” from their reality.

Ball, in preparation for the role of Lucy Ricardo, trained with Pepito, the famous variety show clown, in the tradition of a vaudevillian comedienne or soubrette.³⁶ In vaudeville the soubrette was a young lady who did not have enough talent to serve as a headlining singer or dancer but who used a combination of comedy and sensuality to create an act.³⁷ They, like Lucille Ball, had the difficult task confronting all comediennes: to be funny within a much narrower frame of propriety than was allowed to their male counterparts, always maintaining their femininity and sexual appeal. Even with Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz’s greater control over *I Love Lucy*, comedy is, by its nature, a gendered medium, and comediennes could not offend the studio, sponsors, or the viewing public – a “dance” described by contemporaries of Ball such as Carol Burnett and by more modern comediennes such as Tina Fey.³⁸

³⁶ Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 29.

³⁷ See: Erdman, *Blue Vaudeville*; McLean, *American Vaudeville as Ritual*; Springhall, *The Genesis of Mass Culture*.

³⁸ For discussions of the complexities of being a female comedienne past and present see: Marsha Lederman, “Comic Trailblazer Carol Burnett Applauds Funny Girls Past and Present,” *Globe and Mail* 15 February 2012, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/theatre-and-performance/carol-burnett-applauds-funny-girls-past-and-present/article546295/> In this article Burnett talks about the perils of going “blue in their material” and the importance of female solidarity in the face of the television of the television “old boys club.” See also: Tina Fey, *Bossypants* (New York:

While it cannot be argued that each time the Lucy body engaged in a comedic stunt that there was a deeper meaning, in dealing with gender role issues that were pertinent to the time and so potentially painful or awkward for the audience, the physical comedy of the Lucy body helped to defuse the societal tension. In this way the Lucy body could be seen as a kind of corporeal carnival – a safe space to highlight the inequalities of men and women in the postwar world while still making the situation seem ridiculous and outside the realm of the ordinary and, on the surface, non-threatening to the status quo.

The writers of *I Love Lucy* refashioned the taboo of Lucy's desire to work outside the home throughout the show's run. Though the main theme and story line remained the same, slight differences within the conventional plot demonstrate the different facets of societal pressure that created the domestic ideal. In one early episode, "Lucy Fakes an Illness," Lucy, discovering that Ricky has placed a call for new acts for the club in the entertainment magazine *Variety*, begs to be allowed to perform in any role in the upcoming shows.³⁹ Ricky refuses to even let her audition. Lucy, using a book entitled *Abnormal Psychology*, decides to get back at Ricky by pretending that his constant refusal to let her pursue her dream has caused her to have a psychotic breakdown. As proof of this breakdown she plays with a series of different personas including a starlet reminiscent of Tallulah Bankhead and then a sweet Southern belle, neither of whom recognize the bewildered Ricky. The act culminates with Lucy riding out on a tricycle while holding a sucker, pretending to have regressed to her childhood, throwing a violent tantrum and even kicking Ricky in the shin. Ricky says she can be in the show, hoping that giving in to her will return her memory. Later Fred enters and explains to him that he overheard Lucy and Ethel plotting and that Lucy is faking her psychotic episode. Ricky retaliates by hiring an actor playing a doctor to diagnose Lucy with a fake disease – "the go-bloods." At the end of the episode, by which time Lucy has been made to believe that she is truly sick, Ricky admits the joke and they reconcile. When Lucy reminds Ricky that he promised to let her in the show, he pretends to have amnesia; Lucy gives in, and the two embrace as the screen fades to black.⁴⁰

Lucy's clowning antics throughout this episode, including one instance where she plays jacks with one hand while smoking the requisite Philip Morris cigarette with the other, (Figure 4.2) distract

Little, Brown and Co. 2011). Fey discusses both the issues of being a female "boss" in television as well changing views of female comedians and the role of working mothers in television.

³⁹ "Lucy Fakes an Illness," *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, January 28, 1952.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

the audience from the poignancy of Lucy's plea to have a life beyond her domestic situation.⁴¹ Her fake crazy clowning both references and then dismisses the reality that women during this time period were being diagnosed with mental illnesses stemming from their inability to accept and be happy within their gender roles.⁴²



FIGURE 4.2

Lucy's desire to defy postwar gender norms increased in the season two episode "The Indian Show," which aired right after the Lucy character had given birth to Little Ricky.⁴³ Ricky decides to put on a Native American "Indian spectacular" at the club. Fred asks Ricky how he will keep Lucy from trying to be part of the performance. Ricky laughingly replies, "Well that's all over with. Lucy's a mother now. She's perfectly happy just staying home and

taking care of the baby." Lucy immediately contradicts this assumption by begging to be in the show, which Ricky forbids primarily because she is a mother. The argument ends when the baby starts to cry offstage and Ricky tells her to go and attend to "her public," meaning the only public she will be entertaining is their little boy. Lucy later asks Fred and Ethel to babysit Little Ricky so she can go to the club and continue to press Ricky to allow her in the show. Fred and Ethel refuse because Ricky has given them roles in the performance. Lucy eventually walks with the baby in a pram to the club and watches the performance, which involves a song and dance routine with Ricky, Fred, and Ethel, as well as a duet with "Juanita," the female headliner. Afterward, Ricky tells the band and Juanita that they will be doing a special ladies' benefit afternoon show and Juanita protests that that is the only time she has with her own baby. Lucy overhears and beckons Juanita over, telling her she has a plan so that Juanita

⁴¹ In the image it is clear that the double bed shared by Ricky and Lucy in prior episodes has been replaced (or separated) into two beds. One can surmise that it was deemed inappropriate for the double bed to remain while Lucy was pretending to be a child and Ricky believed the illusion.

⁴² Famous feminist Betty Friedan would invert this concept arguing that women were not mentally ill but rather bored and unfulfilled. She called it "the disease that has no name." Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc. 1963), 15.

⁴³ "The Indian Show," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, May 4, 1953.

can miss the show (to be replaced by Lucy) and spend time with her child. As Juanita and Lucy exit the stage it is clear that Little Ricky has been temporarily made an afterthought as Lucy pulls the pram behind her carelessly instead of pushing it in front of her – her role of mother subsumed by her desire to be a stage icon.

In the final scene Ricky begins the duet with Lucy in shadow, though as soon as she starts singing (off-key) it is clear that it is her and not Juanita. Forced to continue the number, the song moves from a love song to a verbal and physical altercation between Ricky and Lucy as he gets increasingly angry and tries to get to her while Lucy, still singing, hides behind a large stage silhouette of a full moon. The audience, having already seen Juanita and Ricky do the number properly during rehearsal, knows how badly Lucy is hamming up the act. Finally, when Ricky manages to reach Lucy he hisses “who’s taking care of the baby?” Lucy turns her profile to the audience and reveals Little Ricky dressed in stereotypical “Indian” garb, attached to her back as a stylized “papoose.”⁴⁴ (Figure 4.3)

In both “The Indian Show” and “Lucy Fakes an Illness,” Lucy is disqualified from becoming a



FIGURE 4.3

glamorous star by her complete lack of talent.⁴⁵ But her lack of talent is only one barrier in her quest for stardom as it is clear throughout the show and from the show’s original concept that in order for Ricky to live the American dream he needs Lucy to be a domestic housewife, especially given his ethnic disadvantage. Though seemingly fairly benign by current standards a mixed marriage between the white Lucille Ball

and Cuban-American Desi Arnaz was at the very least unusual, and selling the idea of a mixed race

⁴⁴ “The Indian Show,” May 4, 1953.

⁴⁵ “Lucy Fakes an Illness,” January 28, 1952; “The Indian Show,” May 4, 1953.

couple on a sitcom proved an initial barrier to the show finding a network and sponsorship.⁴⁶ Lucy's role in domesticating Ricky, her mitigation of his uncertain class and negative racial status by providing an anchor to a normal home life, is reinforced by the many times that Ricky returns home from the club, either for lunch or after a late night show, to find Lucy waiting for him, often having fixed him a meal.⁴⁷ It is clear that though his schedule is atypical, Lucy works around his performance and rehearsals to provide the trappings of a normal domestic life. In "The Indian Show," the stakes are considerably raised as Lucy is transgressing both the working married woman taboo and the much greater working mother taboo. The fact that she continues to desire a stage career after the birth of her son, especially as he is still very young, draws into question her motherly feelings and her role as a normal woman. However, Lucy's transgression is tempered by the fact that the show is an unusual one held in the afternoon, in front of a female-only audience. Lucy's body is not sexually displayed in the same way Juanita's is during late night performances in front of mixed audience. There is also some visual resolution. As the show ends, Lucy, Ricky, and Little Ricky are framed by the silhouette of the moon reinforcing their domestic togetherness as a nuclear family. Nonetheless, the episode remains slightly uncomfortable. Unlike most episodes that end with a reconciliation between Ricky and Lucy, this one cuts off before a full accord can be reached; there is no kiss to suggest everything is mended.

More importantly, there is the unresolved juxtaposition between Lucy and Juanita as well as Juanita and Ricky. Juanita, despite being a very lightly sketched character, raises some uncomfortable questions. Her protest that the afternoon – between the time of rehearsal and performance – is the only time she has to spend with her baby makes us wonder who takes care of the baby while she is working, the role of the child's father, and, in a time period which enshrined the nuclear family and the domestic role of the mother, the appropriateness of a mother working as a performer and displaying her body to be consumed nightly by a mixed audience. When she protests the extra performance, Ricky counters that at least she will make additional money that she can spend on the baby, leaving room for the supposition that Juanita might be a single mother forced to work.

Juanita not only serves as a mirror for the gender issues confronting Lucy, but also the class and racial impediments that Ricky faces. As a nightclub performer – until he gets his big break and becomes

⁴⁶ Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 29-37.

⁴⁷ See: "Be a Pal," *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 22, 1951; "Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer," *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 17, 1951; "Lucy is Enceinte," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 8, 1952; "Fan Magazine Interview," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, February 8, 1954.

a movie star in season four – Ricky’s class position is ambiguous at best. The show attempted to mitigate this in several ways, the most common of which was to blame Lucy’s ineptitude as a household manager for any lack of family funds as well the creation of a clear class hierarchy between the Ricardos and the perpetually subordinate Mertzes. The show also took any opportunity to demonstrate that Ricky was a successful business manager in his own right, as Desi was in real life.⁴⁸ However, the presence of Juanita, her clearly “Latin” name and her role as a working woman rather than a stereotypical middle class stay-at-home mother draws attention to Ricky’s deficiencies in claiming all the benefits of being head of a postwar nuclear family. His status is continuously called into question by his ambiguous class role and his extremely problematic position of a non-white man married to a white woman. Stephanie Coontz’s *The Way We Never Were* draws attention to the connections between ethnic and working class men on postwar television noting that for both groups it was their wives that created or fractured the image of respectable class status.

Acceptance of domesticity was the mark of middle-class status and upward mobility. In sit-com families, a middle-class man’s work was totally irrelevant to his identity; by the same token, the problems of working class families did not lie in their economic situation but in their failure to create harmonious gender roles. Working-class and ethnic men on television had one defining characteristic: They were unable to control their wives. The families of middle-class men, by contrast, were generally well behaved.⁴⁹

This echoes Oppenheimer’s statement that Lucy’s domesticity is key to Ricky’s realization of “the American dream.”

The multiple layers of race within “The Indian Show” episode allows the audience to consider the implications of the Ricardo and Ball/Arnaz mixed marriage and the role of such unions in postwar society. In some ways the Indian spectacle provides a safety net for such a consideration. Just as Juanita’s greater gender role deviance as a working mother makes Lucy’s single (within the context of the episode) performance seem nonthreatening, the heavily exoticized Indian bodies make Ricky’s ethnicity seem less problematic. The bowdlerized portrayal of “Indianness” as the exotic and dangerous “other” is established from the outset as Ricky gets the idea for the special show by reading a book

⁴⁸ Early in their marriage Desi Arnaz was very much in the shadow of Lucille Ball’s career. He was consistently turned down for roles for being too “ethnic.” When *I Love Lucy* became a hit Lucille Ball as Lucy remained the public face of the show though contemporaries in the business remained impressed by Arnaz’s technological innovations and business acumen. Sanders and Gilman, *Desilu*, 21-22, 56-57, 61-63, 100-101. Arnaz also talks about living in Ball’s shadow in his autobiography. Arnaz, *A Book*, 133.

⁴⁹ Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 28.

prominently titled, “Blood Curdling Indian Tales.”⁵⁰ This use of Native American bodies as a trope of dangerous difference is continued when the two Native American actors hired by Ricky for the show come to the Ricardo apartment and Lucy, opening the door, becomes terrified upon seeing them and goes running, screaming to protect her baby. It is maintained further when Ricky, Fred and Ethel don stereotypical “Indian” costumes and mannerisms for their number. The juxtaposition between Ricky as Cuban-American to the much more exotic raced Native American bodies, is made starker by the fact that the show panders to all the racial stereotypes about Native Americans, pushing Ricky’s body closer to white on the postwar racial spectrum. The audience is thus simultaneously induced to consider the fact that both the Ricardo marriage and the Ball/Arnaz marriage are deviant, in their racial mixing and their production of racially mixed children.⁵¹ At the same time the audience is misdirected away from judging Ricky’s ethnicity as too problematic by the racial scapegoating of First Nations bodies which were considered even more problematic in the postwar racial hierarchy.

These potentially problematic racially and gendered spaces are also completely closed by the culmination of the story. We know Lucy is returning to the domestic sphere; the baby on her back, her subordinate position slightly below Ricky in the moon’s silhouette and the narrative weight of all the previous shows all signal this. The three are also, curiously, racially hegemonized by their unified aping of Native American culture suggesting that at the end of the day Lucy will return to the domestic sphere, the whole family will also shed their potential “otherness” along with their Indian costumes, and Ricky’s racial and class position will once again be normalized and secure.

The gendered situation changes in season five when Lucy actually succeeded in finding her showbiz niche. Her lack of talent was no longer a valid excuse. During season five the producers and writers made the decision to temporarily relocate the Ricardos and the Mertzes to Los Angeles in an attempt to breathe new life into the show.⁵² According to the overarching seasonal plot, Ricky has finally been “discovered” and has been cast as Don Juan – another Latin lover – in a big budget film. In “Lucy and the Dummy,” the studio which holds Ricky’s contract asks him to perform at an executive party, but he refuses because he has already planned a fishing charter. Lucy tries to convince him to stay

⁵⁰ For theoretical discussions of the creations of “others” in racial binaries see, Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

⁵¹ It should be noted that Keith Thibodeaux who played “Little Ricky” on the show was not of any mixed heritage and looked unambiguously white in the black and white show and even more so in the colourized promotional material.

⁵² The writers recognized the boost the scripts got from the Lucille/Lucy pregnancy and tried to use the locale change in the same way. Note that they did not introduce new main characters or deviate from the standard plots – they simply adapted them into an exotic location.

and do a husband and wife act with her, but he declines and eventually leaves for his fishing trip.⁵³ While he is away Lucy concocts a plan with the help of both Ethel and Fred to do the tango with a dummy using the stunt head (which Ricky had brought home from the movie) that she names “Raggedy Ricky.” The plan is to do the number for a few seconds, pretend the Ricky dummy is ill and rush off stage, and then return and triumphantly finish singing and dancing the number on her own. Predictably, this plan goes awry when Raggedy Ricky remains attached to her costume and she is forced to drag it behind her as she tries to do what should be a playfully sensual number. Indeed, during a particularly suggestive part of the song she trips over the dummy, tumbling to the floor herself. She is eventually forced to carry the dummy in her arms and the act climaxes with the dummy’s head falling off and Lucy kicking it off stage. (Figure 4.4)

In the next scene, Ricky returns from his fishing trip and Fred and Ethel recount Lucy’s performance. Far from fooling the audience with Raggedy Ricky, the executives thought it was a



FIGURE 4.4

comedy act and offered Lucy a year’s contract as a comedienne with MGM. They tell Ricky that Lucy is out signing the papers as they speak. Despite helping her with the scheme in the first place, both Fred and Ethel plead with Ricky to find a way to stop her taking the contract because she cannot stay in Los Angeles for another year (as Ricky’s film is wrapping up). At first Ricky states he will simply forbid her to take the contract but then he stops and says he cannot because “she’ll throw it in his face for the rest of his life.” Instead, they have to use psychology.

When Lucy enters he tells her that he hopes she will enjoy herself out in L.A. by herself as he and the Mertzes and Little Ricky have to return home to New York. When Lucy points out they could stay and that she will pay the Mertzes’ expenses, Ricky argues that he has a contract to open at the Tropicana and Ethel says they have to get back to running their apartment building. Ricky then promises to show Little Ricky her picture every night so he will not forget about her. She begs Ricky to try and get his band booked out in L.A. instead, but he refuses.

⁵³ “Lucy and the Dummy,” *I Love Lucy*, James V. Kern, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 17, 1955.



FIGURE 4.5

In the next scene Lucy is pacing around while her previous conversation with Ricky and the Mertzes “haunts” her via a voiceover. (Figure 4.5) They are joined by the voice of a phantom producer who urges her to reconsider refusing the contract because she will be a big star. In high melodramatic style Lucy pantomimes accepting another Oscar (her twelfth) and then getting a call from Little Ricky crying which bleeds into Little Ricky’s real cries from the next room. Eventually, Lucy, complete with comedic hyperbolic weeping, tells Ricky she is going to forget about the contract because she only

wants to be with him, the baby, and the Mertzes.

Though on the surface this seems to be basically the same plot as “The Indian Show,” the major barrier of Lucy’s lack of talent has been removed. While Lucy cannot make it as showgirl she has genuine comedic talent and the only thing stopping her from achieving what Ricky himself admits is “what [she] always wanted” are the conventions of gender and her role in fulfilling Ricky’s American dream. The overwhelming press of these conventions are brought home by the fact that Fred and Ethel, who originally helped her with the plan, change sides; indeed, it is her sister conspirator Ethel who usually covers for Lucy who tells Ricky “you can’t let her sign that contract!” The silly “dream sequence” broken by Little Ricky’s crying not only reinforces the reality of her domestic situation – emphasizing that the stage career is a daydream – but also portrays Lucy as a mother sacrificing for her child, which to some viewers would be a much more palatable text than that of Lucy being forced by society and emotionally blackmailed by her husband into giving up her dream.

“Lucy and the Dummy” is also one episode that serves particularly as, to borrow Susan M. Carini’s concept, “a Coney Island mirror” reflecting the multiple distorted fantasies and realities of the Lucille/Lucy-Desi/Ricky relationship.⁵⁴ The most uncomplicated permutation of this fantasy image was that audiences dissatisfied with the response of the fictional Lucy giving up her career for her family could substitute the image of Lucille Ball who maintained a successful career, and at this point in the show’s airing, seemed to be also sustaining her domestic role. If Lucy could not “have it all” Lucille Ball could. This was supported by Ball’s public image which was carefully managed to perpetuate her

⁵⁴ Carini, “Love’s Labors Almost Lost,” 48.

own personal fantasy of domesticity where she played the central role of devoted wife and mother. In her posthumously published autobiography, *Love, Lucy*, co-written with Betty Hannah Hoffman, Ball painstakingly formulates this fictional reality, downplaying her career in favour of homey vignettes which complimented contemporary press materials that usually showed Ball in staged shots with her children.⁵⁵ Yet family members remember Lucille Ball quite differently – as a driven professional woman relentlessly promoting her and Desi Arnaz’s career. Her children Lucie and Desi Jr. were, by their own admission, often left to the care of a team of nannies, and quite aware of their secondary place in their mother’s life.⁵⁶ When asked by her cousin Cleo Smith, one of her most intimate confidants, what was most important to her, Lucille Ball allegedly replied that it was her career, not her family that she felt defined her.⁵⁷ Despite Ball’s attempts to have it all, even creating a show, *Here’s Lucy*, in which she starred with her real life children, in an attempt to bring her career and home life in closer alignment, she, like so many other mothers including Lucy Ricardo, found herself torn between work and home life.

Lucille Ball’s image as a devoted mother, whether personal fantasy, publicity stunt, or both, also reveals just how entrenched the postwar gendered standards really were. It seems that female stars, despite the fact that it was their successful careers that placed them in the spotlight, were still held up to domestic standards in a way that their male contemporaries were not. For example, three of Ball’s male contemporaries, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dick Van Dyke, also dubbed “family entertainers,” had long bouts of career-mandated separation from their families which resulted in marital and familial discord. Yet they, like many other postwar men, had wives to look after their children and were not denigrated (at least during this time period) for focusing on their careers at the expense of their domestic duties.⁵⁸ Crosby’s wife Dixie Lee was a more successful performer than he was when they met but her career was sidelined by the rapid births of their first three sons in two years; Lee’s lost celebrity was consistently thrown in her face every time she was recognized as the wife of a famous entertainer rather

⁵⁵ Significantly Lucille Ball’s greatest role as Lucy is hardly mentioned in her biography, not appearing until the last quarter of the book and then mainly as context for her story of the pregnancy and birth of her son Desi Jr. Ball, *Love Lucy*.

⁵⁶ Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 113-114. Lucie said that it was DeDe, Ball’s mother, who actually raised her and Desi Jr.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵⁸ Bing Crosby’s eldest son published a sensationalist memoir *Going My Own Way* in which he accused his father of being cold and distant as well as physically abusive. This caused a split between the brothers as Dennis and Lindsay Crosby supported Gary’s claims while his other son, Philip Crosby accused his brother of lying and writing the book solely for publicity and money-making purposes. See: Scott Haller, “The Sad Ballad of Bing and His Boys,” *People* 19 no. 11, 21 March 1984. <http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20084544,00.html>; Gary Crosby and Ross Firestone, *Going My Own Way* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983).

than a star in her own right.⁵⁹ Similarly Bob Hope's (a friend of Crosby's) reputation as an all-American hero for taking time off from movie-making to entertain the troops during World War II (and in several conflicts afterwards) was possible only because his long suffering wife Dolores cared for their four young, and recently adopted, children.⁶⁰ Even Dick Van Dyke, one of Hollywood's most iconic fathers, admitted that he played the role more frequently on screen than in real life.⁶¹ It seems that even for celebrities women were still encouraged to take their identity – real or imagined – from their home life rather than any career, a message that Ball seemed to have internalized.

The second textual reference in "Lucy and the Dummy" alludes to a different Hollywood double standard. Lucy, desperate to keep Ricky from going on the fishing charter so they can do the show together blurts out, "you love fish better than you do your own wife!" In his autobiography Desi Arnaz admits that while he loved Lucille Ball very deeply he was a serial adulterer. Arnaz blamed his highly patriarchal Cuban upbringing for his inability to conform to Western standards of domestic fidelity as in Cuba male infidelity was so common as to be woven into the social-sexual landscape. In *A Book*, Arnaz describes the phenomenon of the "Casa Chica," (little house) where a wealthy man would house his mistress and their children often in close proximity to the main estate where his wife and legitimate children resided. "Having two houses and two sets of children was very common among Latin men of means, and Latin women understood this and didn't make a fuss about it."⁶² Inducted into manhood by his uncle (under instructions from his father) who took Desi to a brothel to lose his virginity at age fifteen, Arnaz remained fond of prostitutes and would regularly hire several to travel with him on his boat during fishing trips in Mexico. He viewed those trips as a vacation from the pressures of his life, including his marriage vows. As he put it:

I'd go down there, rent a boat and go fishing with this Mexican fellow whenever I could steal a couple of weeks... For two weeks we'd fish and eat and drink, and if we'd found a couple of girls to take with us we'd screw – wiping everything else out of my mind. Of course, eventually the two weeks were over and I'd have to come back to work.⁶³

One of Kenny Morgan's (the Desilu press manager) primary functions was to keep Arnaz's double life from reaching the press.⁶⁴ In many ways, Ricky was a fantasy that both Ball and Arnaz could engage

⁵⁹ Gary Giddins, *Bing Crosby A Pocket Full of Dreams: The Early Years 1903-1940* (New York: Little, Brown and Company), 2001.

⁶⁰ Raymond Strait, *Bob Hope: A Tribute* (New York: Kensington Books, 2003).

⁶¹ Dick Van Dyke, *My Lucky Life In and Out of Show Business* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2011).

⁶² Arnaz, *A Book*, 11.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁶⁴ Morgan was even referred to within the Hollywood community as Desi's "pimp." Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 115.

with even if Desi could never live up to it. Unlike Desi, Ricky never strayed from his sexual loyalty to Lucy despite being consistently surrounded by beautiful women and the real jealousy that tore Ball and Arnaz's marriage apart was sanitized and bowdlerized as an amusing plot device.

No Room of Her Own: Domesticity, Glamour and the Spatial Politics of "Zones" in *I Love Lucy*⁶⁵

The contrast between the glamorous film and television star life of Lucille Ball and the character of Lucy who made her famous is an interesting one given that the creators and writers of *I Love Lucy* consistently played with the binary of the domestic and the glamorous outside world. The show actually created two zones of occupation that existed in opposition to each other. The first zone was the domestic, interior zone defined primarily by the three sets that made up the Ricardo living room, kitchen, and bedroom. These sets were contrasted to the glamorous outside world which was most often represented by the set of the Tropicana.⁶⁶ These sets were semi-permanent and served as a visual shorthand for the audience to situate themselves. Each zone also had a clearly defined population of bodies. That is, the domestic sphere of the Ricardo apartment was most often populated by Lucy and Ethel who undertook the majority of the activities, household chores, coffee meetings with the girls, food preparation, and childcare all of which "belonged" to that zone. Their domestic roles were further cemented by their clothing, which featured housedresses and hair up in curlers or tucked under handkerchiefs. Even on days when they are not involved in housework and so wear leisure outfits, the clothes, while smart, are clearly for a home setting. In contrast, Ricky, his band and the club's female dancers wear either formal attire or elaborate costumes. Even when they are only rehearsing Ricky wears a stylish suit demonstrating his authority and the girls wear revealing dance leotards. These zones and the static quality of the bodies that occupy them are crucial to the central theme in the show as Lucy continuously tries to change her domesticated body for the sensual body of the show girl. Much of the show's comedy comes from the incongruity of the domestic Lucy body acting within the public zone. Further, while it is clear that Ricky's zone is the public club, he, by virtue of being male in postwar America, gets to enjoy the benefits of the domestic setting usually facilitated by Lucy providing him

⁶⁵ This title is in reference to William Douglas's examination of the dynamics of television families. He suggests that the way postwar television usually confined women to the communal spaces within the home gives the sense that they have no place of their own, leaving their claims to power within the home ambiguous. Douglas, *Television Families*, 99.

⁶⁶ These sets did change over time as the show was relocated to Los Angeles in season four and the Ricardos and Mertzes move out to the country in season six. However, while the physical composition of the sets did change the zones remained largely the same with the Ricardo hotel room living room substituting for their apartment living room and then eventually being replaced by the living room of their country home.

with food or performing domestic tasks such as ironing his clothes or mending his socks. Ricky's fitness for the public zone is consistently reified as he is portrayed at his most masculine when working (without Lucy) in the club. For example, in the episode "Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer," Ricky, conducting a rehearsal, can tell that one instrument in the brass section is slightly out of tune entirely by ear.⁶⁷ Lucy is most successful and also seems most feminine when she sticks to her domestic sphere. There is also an important sexualized element to the bodies in each zone. The bodies within the glamorous public zone are consumable bodies. The female performers' bodies are more clearly sexualized, especially when they do not sing but merely dance, providing a frame for Ricky's performance. Ricky is also sexualized as he plays the part of "Latin lover" by shaking his hips and flirting with the audience. The performers' sexuality becomes a product which the audience "buys" the rights to view when they purchase their tickets. This juxtaposition is an important part of the stock plot line as, while Lucy continuously tries to exchange her domestic body for the glamorous body of the showgirl, the Lucy body is never sexualized in the same way. As already demonstrated, the sexuality of her performance is usually destroyed by comedic stage action. In "Lucy and the Dummy," though Lucy dances a sensual tango and sings the mildly suggestive song "I Get Ideas," which includes the lines "and when you touch me and there's fire in every finger. I get ideas. I get ideas," she fails to incite any passion as she constantly falls over the dummy.⁶⁸ However, while Lucy was usually made to look silly when she trespassed in the public zone, the writers actually used the strict bifurcation between the domestic body of Lucy and the glamorous public bodies of Ricky's showgirls to reinforce the superiority of the domestic Lucy body. They created a stock plot line that made the club and the show girls a false or benign threat to the Ricardo marriage that would inevitably be resolved by Ricky's return to his wife.

⁶⁷ "Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer," December 17, 1951.

⁶⁸ The desexualized nature of her performance is enhanced by the fact that Ricky sings the same song in the season one episode "The Publicity Agent" and long-time viewers could compare the two. "The Publicity Agent," *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, May 12, 1952.



FIGURE 4.6

The clearest example of this bifurcation of zones can be found in the season one episode “Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer.”⁶⁹ The episode opens with a scene of Lucy doing housework, reinforcing her domestic role. She runs the vacuum wearing a plain housedress, apron, flat shoes and with her hair up in a kerchief, a comically exaggerated version of the standard housewife’s attire. (Figure 4.6). The domesticity of the situation is increased when Ethel enters, wearing very similar dress and with her hair in curlers, and

Lucy shushes her because Ricky is still asleep.⁷⁰ Ethel shows Lucy an article in the newspaper that playfully suggests that Ricky is having an affair with his young dance partner at the club – Rosemary. Lucy laughs it off saying Ricky’s press agent put the article in as a publicity stunt to keep his name in front of the public. Ethel asks Lucy to describe Rosemary and when she does it is clear she is the opposite of Lucy: brunette, young, “wonderful figure.”

Later, the scene moves to the club where Rosemary enters, to the whistles of the entire band, wearing a transparent lace skirt and a halter top which bares her stomach. When she asks Ricky if the costume looks all right he replies, “It’s great if we don’t get raided.” They begin to practice their dance number and Ricky steps on her skirt tearing it. He says he will get it fixed and she puts it in his coat pocket so that Lucy can sew it back up. When Ricky returns home from dinner Lucy is also wearing a gauzy outfit but hers is a lacy smock over a full pantsuit with a high collar. When Lucy discovers the skirt in his pocket she accuses Ricky of having an affair and he explains he brought it home for her to fix. Thus, while Rosemary’s sexualized body is on public display Lucy’s domestic body will fix the costume, not as a seamstress or costumer or as part of an actual profession, but as a dutiful wife helping to facilitate her husband’s successful career.

⁶⁹ “Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer,” December 17, 1951.

⁷⁰ The incongruity of Lucy shushing Ethel for talking loudly while she runs the vacuum cleaner could be interpreted as a case of Lucy taking a little domestic revenge on her husband though it also serves to underscore how Lucy’s domesticity is crucial to maintaining Ricky’s class status. He is sleeping late because he worked a late night at the club – hardly the nine to five normality of the postwar businessman. Lucy’s vacuuming grounds her domesticity visually and serves to normalize the Ricardo’s lives in the face of what could be interpreted as a class based transgression of normality.

Still suspicious, Lucy schemes with Ethel to get Lucy on stage during the number so she can see if Ricky really does like Rosemary. It should be noted that in these stock “club as danger” plots there was never really any question for the audience as to whether Ricky is actually cheating. In this episode, it is clear that he is not interested in Rosemary as he treats her with the paternal affection of a big brother even calling her “kid.” In this and the other “club as danger” episodes the audience was never put in suspense and thus never allowed, even for a moment, to think badly of the Ricardo marriage.

The number in question which Ricky and Rosemary do together is a sensuous and dangerous routine “Jezebel.” Ricky plays a young man tempted by the passion of his lover (Rosemary) who turns out to be a devil and entraps him. While Ricky sings Rosemary gyrates slowly on top of the piano, holding on to a fake vine evoking the image of Eve. She is backlit so that the lace skirt becomes even



FIGURE 4.7

more translucent and the outline of her legs is clearly visible. (Figure 4.7) Rosemary then dances her way to Ricky and they embrace as a line of chorus girls enter with scarves doing a Salome-inspired dance around the couple.⁷¹ Lucy, disguised by a black wig, attaches herself to the end. Though Lucy has managed to enter the glamorous world of Ricky and the nightclub, her domestic body asserts itself in a number of ways which serve to create comedy via her juxtaposition to Rosemary, and to a

lesser extent the other chorus girls. At first glance her costume seems the same as the other chorus girls, consisting of a skirt with a thigh-baring slit and a halter top. But the fringe on Lucy’s costume is much more robust, covering her stomach, and her skirt has more fabric to conceal her legs. When we do catch glimpses of Lucy’s body it is clear that hers lacks the well-toned definition characteristic of the other girls’ professional bodies. Further, when the camera shows wide shots of the dancers Lucy is usually in the back or to the side hiding her body behind the other dancers or pieces of scenery. When the camera does zoom in on Lucy, such as when she does a comedic bit attempting to mimic the gyrations of the other girls, the camera only shows her from mid-torso up and we are forced to surmise that she is

⁷¹ The Salome-inspired dance was also a stock feature of vaudeville. It allowed the soubrette to dance suggestively under the guise of presenting the audience with a legitimately historical performance. Erdman, *Blue Vaudeville*, 107-108.

dancing only from the motions of her shoulders. (Figure 4.8) Thus, while the audience is welcome to consume the professional and sexualized bodies of the dancers, it is barred from gazing upon and sexualizing the Lucy body.



FIGURE 4.8

of temptresses. Not only does the first part of Rosemary’s dance evoke the imagery of Eve, but as “Jezebel” her sexualized body becomes overlaid with an impressive backstory. Members of the audience would presumably know that Jezebel was one of the “bad women” of the Bible and those better versed in scripture would have a deeper subtext to work with. Jezebel (Kings 1 and 2) is symbolic of the anti-woman, both in the Bible and in postwar culture. She is a highly sexualized woman who is punished for stepping outside

her gender role by engaging in politics behind the throne of, first, her husband King Ahab, and then later her sons. According to Biblical scholar Judith E. McKinlay, Jezebel’s death scene has been interpreted by many as a punishment allegory of women who step outside their role.

We as readers are to find a shocking dissonance in the picture of a woman with her femininity displayed engaged in a military encounter and uttering battle taunts. The writer wants us to understand that while this is indeed a woman in all the feminine senses, this is one who has not acted her part as a woman in Israel, and women who do not behave like women – according to this narrator’s gender construction – must fall from their place.⁷²

Less nuanced interpretations cast Jezebel simply in the role of a “painted,” meaning promiscuous, woman.⁷³ The parallels between the consumption of the Jezebel body as a prostitute and the Rosemary body as a “painted” nightclub dancer can also not be denied. Taken together the two myths of Jezebel (as both a woman rejecting domesticity and as a prostitute) overlaid on the already problematic body of

⁷² Judith E. McKinlay, “Negotiating the Frame for Viewing the Death of Jezebel,” *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no.3 (2002): 307.

⁷³ “When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; she painted her eyes, and adorned her head, and looked out of the window.” According to *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* many have interpreted the “painted” to mean that she was adorned as a prostitute. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* 3rd ed. Michael D. Coogan ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 548, n. 30-31.

Rosemary create a powerful postwar embodied allegory that Ricky ultimately rejects when he returns home to Lucy.

The Lucy body's juxtaposition to the Rosemary/Jezebel body and Ricky's rejection of the latter in favour of the former is confirmed in the next scene when Lucy rushes home with her coat on, disappearing into the bathroom and reappearing instantaneously in a modest, though prettily feminine, nightgown. She throws herself into the king sized marital bed and pretends to be asleep just as Ricky



enters from the club still in his dapper white tuxedo. She pretends to wake up as he comes in saying she went to bed very early. Ricky enters the bathroom and brings out the wig that Lucy wore during the number to demonstrate that her disguise never fooled him. The episode closes with Lucy and Ricky locked in a passionate embrace sinking into their shared bed. (Figure 4.9)

FIGURE 4.9

This “dangerous” plot line was repeated

several times throughout the show's run.⁷⁴ Each time pains are taken to separate the domestic Lucy body from those of her potential rivals from the beginning. In “Don Juan and the Starlets,” Lucy is contrasted to four starlets who are doing a publicity shoot with Ricky for his upcoming movie *Don Juan*. As they enter it becomes clear that they are professionals in the way that they greet Ricky, the press agent, and the photographer, and the way they take the photographer's instructions. In this case the glamorous public is particularly intrusive as the photo shoot begins in Lucy's living room in the hotel suite that they are staying at in Hollywood. At first Lucy tries to convince the photographer that he should “play up the domestic angle” by including her in the photographs to which the photographer retorts, “Don Juan is all about love! It's got nothing to do with marriage!” She then tries unsuccessfully to insinuate herself into the photo and eventually the photo shoot moves out of the Ricardo hotel room to the pool. Later in the episode a series of misfortunes makes Lucy think that Ricky was out all night even though he was in the apartment and did not want to wake her as she had fallen asleep on the couch.

⁷⁴ See: “Ricky's Old Girlfriend,” *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 21, 1953; “Fan Magazine Interview,” February 8, 1954; “Don Juan and the Starlets,” *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, February 14, 1955.

In each of these episodes the glamorous public zone is framed as one of danger, though the danger is always benign as it is only Lucy, and occasionally Ethel, who believes that Ricky has, or will, commit adultery. While the domestic body of Lucy is temporarily threatened by the public and sexualized bodies of the dancing girls, every episode ends the same way: Ricky returns home to his wife. These stock plots take on even greater significance when we consider the mechanics of postwar television viewership. Unlike modern middle and upper class households which often boast multiple television receivers, myriad channels, and subsequent viewing patterns broken down by age, sex, and other demographics, postwar primetime television was meant to be viewed by families as a unit. Indeed, family viewing was part of the ethos of early television. As media scholar Lynn Spigel notes:

Television, it was said, would bring the family ever closer, an expression which, in itself a spatial metaphor, was continually repeated in a wide range of popular media.... In its capacity as unifying agent, television fit well with the more general postwar hopes for a return to family values. It was seen as a kind of household cement that promised to reassemble the splintered lives of families who had been separated during the war.⁷⁵

Given this family-based viewership the sexualisation of the glamorous public nightclub or Hollywood bodies walked a fine line. The Rosemary body is the best example of this phenomenon. On the one hand the audience, particularly adult male members such as fathers, were invited to consume her sexuality – her primary role as a nightclub dancer is to provide visually consumable sexual display – and doing so was an expression of male heterosexual normality. On the other hand she had to be desexualized enough to avoid shocking the children who were watching, and perhaps more importantly, not to offend the wives and mothers who would also be present. As noted Rosemary's sexuality is diffused at the opening of the show by Ricky's paternal demeanour towards her. However it is the Lucy body who, in many ways, makes Rosemary's sexuality acceptable for a family situation. On the surface Lucy's comic actions, her arrhythmic dancing/barging in between Ricky and Rosemary, disrupts any sexual connection between her husband and the young dancer. Beneath the comedy, Ricky's consistent return to Lucy night after night, his fidelity in the face of such temptations, makes it clear that while men may temporarily gaze at such public bodies as a release for their stronger heterosexual, and thus, permissible, sexual drives truly fulfilling sexual contact occurring in the domestic setting, at home with one's wife. Indeed, "Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer" concludes with Ricky and Lucy in their marital bed, wrapped in each other's arms, a cue to the audience to imagine the logical next scene.

⁷⁵ Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 39. This spatial metaphor of family togetherness was reinforced by the fact that the television set often replaced the previously dominant family gathering spot – the piano.

This dominance of the domestic is also supported by the very few episodes in which Lucy is allowed to “win;” that is, when her schemes actually worked and were seen as clever rather than ridiculous. An example of this occurs in season one’s “The Marriage Licence”⁷⁶ in which Lucy discovers that Ricky’s name is misspelled on their marriage licence. Ricky, with the help of Fred, tricks her into believing that the document is therefore not legal and they are not actually married. This is a malicious trick as the thought of not being married clearly breaks Lucy’s heart. She decides that in order to rectify the situation she and Ricky must recreate the whole event starting with the marriage proposal. Ricky humours her very reluctantly and with bad grace. This is one of the few episodes where Ricky really looks like a bad husband, constantly performing the casually cruel misogyny that postwar gender politics allowed men (who were so inclined) to get away with, and that by Arnaz’s own admission was a feature in his marriage to Ball.⁷⁷ In the majority of the episodes Ricky only plays a trick on Lucy after she has begun playing one on him and Lucy’s discomfort is usually of her own making. However, in this episode not only does Ricky create Lucy’s misery, he keeps it going for an uncomfortably long time, and he refuses to be romantic during the re-creation and reassure Lucy of her importance to him. Thus, he makes Lucy feel that her role as his wife – the only role she is allowed to dominate and excel in within the frame of the show – is on shaky ground. For example, during the “re-proposal” he is more interested in the picnic lunch than in Lucy and when it comes to the proposal he hurts her further by pretending to hesitate before asking her to marry him and then laughing when she gets upset.

Ricky continues to emotionally wound Lucy throughout the episode by failing to get into the spirit of her re-enactment and dismissing her need to be reassured of her worth both to him in a romantic and sexual sense and in her role as his wife in wider society – a fear that many postwar wives with few socially approved options outside of marriage could likely relate to. However, Ricky’s attitude completely changes when Lucy puts on her wedding dress as a surprise. As she comes down the stairs Ricky stops worrying that he is missing his band’s rehearsal, kisses her hand and proposes again, this time with great love and sincerity. Though portrayed as a romantic interlude this moment underscores the fragility of Lucy’s position as a postwar wife. Ricky holds all the cards and it is only when Lucy

⁷⁶ “The Marriage Licence,” *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, April 7, 1952. The name on the marriage certificate was “Bacardi” which was an extratextual reference to the Bacardi rum family to whom the Arnaz family was connected. There were many extratextual references in this particular episode; for example, the name of the hotel in the episode is the “Eagle Hotel” whereas Ball and Arnaz eloped to “The Beagle Club.” Arnaz, *A Book*, 12; Ball and Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 175.

⁷⁷ Arnaz, *A Book*, 118, 174, 310

resorts to her “women’s weapons of the weak,”⁷⁸ her femininity, and the latent promise of access to her sexuality, that she is able to make him comply with her wishes.

However, it is in the famous season two episode “Lucy is Enceinte” that the superiority of the domestic Lucy body is truly asserted.⁷⁹ Lucy, having discovered she is finally pregnant after more than a



FIGURE 4.10

decade of marriage, tries to tell Ricky the big news but is constantly interrupted by outside forces, including his bad mood from a hard day at work and two emergency calls from the club. She goes to the club to tell him but again is interrupted by the demands of his job. Finally, she decides to tell him during his performance. She comes to the nightclub that evening and passes a note to the *maitre d'* requesting the song, “We’re Having a Baby, My Baby and Me.” Ricky visits each table trying to find who is having the

baby until he gets to Lucy and suddenly realizes she is pregnant. He pulls Lucy up on stage with him and sings to her as they dance gently together while she cries prettily. They also engage in a small back and forth joke act and then the show ends with him tenderly kissing her forehead. (Figure 4.10)

Unlike in previous and future incursions of the Lucy body into the public space of the club stage, she is not made to look ridiculous. As was demonstrated in chapters two and three of this dissertation, a legitimate pregnancy was constructed in postwar society as the primary function, and thus the epitome, of the ideal woman’s body. In “Lucy is Enceinte” the Lucy body, by fulfilling this normality, especially given the long period of childlessness in the Ricardo marriage, is given the power to take control over the public space of the Tropicana and Lucy is finally allowed to triumph on stage, though not as a performer but as a mother. Her triumph is supported by the contrast of the two songs that Ricky sings during the performance. As Lucy enters he is singing “The Lady in Red” which describes a young woman glittering out on the town and whom all the fellows chase around. However, the “Lady in Red” who, suggestively, is “nothing more than a pal,” is upstaged by “We’re Having a Baby, My Baby and

⁷⁸ I have adapted this term from subaltern historian James C. Scott’s idea of “weapons of the weak” – which refers to means of subversion used by people in subordinate positions. See: James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁷⁹ “Lucy is Enceinte” December 8, 1952.

Me.” Metaphorically, the pregnant Lucy outshines the publically glamorous woman in Ricky’s club. Indeed, in this case the “real” bodies of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz complemented the dominance of the pregnant domestic body over the pull of the sexualized world of show business. Arnaz and Ball both admit that the closest time of their marriage was when she was pregnant. Lucille Ball in her memoir, *Love, Lucy* stated that Desi Arnaz would, at least temporarily, become more tied to her and the home and give up his wilder antics during this period.⁸⁰

“We’re Revolting”:⁸¹ The Lucy Body Versus the Ethel Body

While Lucy was never allowed to break free from her domestic body and take on the role of the publically sexualized show girl, neither was she to be seen as frumpy. She was to be attractive while keeping her sexuality within the home for her husband. In order to reinforce the desirability of the Lucy body, the writers used the body of her good friend Ethel to make sure that the audience understood that Lucy was still an attractive woman. Ethel was almost always highlighted as older, fatter, dowdier, less feminine, and less sexually affectionate with her husband than Lucy, and this was constantly reinforced throughout the show in both dialogue and staged action.

The contrast between the “Ethel body” and the “Lucy body” was established prior to even filming the show’s pilot. Vivian Vance, who played Ethel, was more femme fatale than a frumpy landlady prior to that famous role. To offset this Vance was contractually obligated to be plumper than Lucy at all times, at least twenty pounds overweight, partially to mask the fact that she was only a year older than Lucille Ball.⁸² The show’s first episode that aired, “The Girls Want to Go to a Nightclub,” firmly established that the Lucy body was more attractive than the Ethel body and that Ricky and Lucy, as the younger, more attractive, couple were engaged in a much more romantic, sexually fulfilling marriage.⁸³ The whole premise of the episode is that Ethel, desperate to go to a nightclub to celebrate her eighteenth wedding anniversary, asks for Lucy’s help in convincing Fred to take her despite his assertion that he is going to celebrate by going to a steakhouse and watching a boxing match. Ethel confides to

⁸⁰ For an account of Desi Arnaz’s numerous affairs see his autobiography: Arnaz, *A Book*. In her autobiography Lucille Ball stated that Arnaz even stopped driving his car over the speed limit, and that just before the birth of her daughter was the best time in their marriage. Ball and Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 203-204.

⁸¹ This line is part of a well-known exchange from one of the series’ most famous episodes “Pioneer Women.” Ethel and Lucy go on strike because they want electric dishwashers. They tell Fred and Ricky “We’re revolting.” Ricky replies: “No more than usual.” “Pioneer Women” *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 8, 1952.

⁸² Harris *Lucy & Desi*, 174

⁸³ “The Girls Want to Go to a Nightclub” *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 15, 1951.

Lucy that Fred has never taken her to a nightclub on their anniversary. The initial crack about Ethel's weight occurs in the first five minutes of this episode. Ricky, trying to convince Fred they can charm the girls into going to the fight, says, "Now look everybody knows that you can get around a woman with a little sweet talk." Fred replies, "Well that's alright for Lucy but it's a little longer trip around Ethel."⁸⁴ Later, both Ricky and Lucy trade compliments, she calling him "Latin Lover," as they both try to convince the other to follow their plans for the evening. Fred refuses to compliment Ethel, remarking sourly, "I'll pass." The couples fail to persuade each other and finally break into an argument with both the men and women saying they will find their own dates to their own particular amusements. Throughout the episode as Ricky becomes increasingly worried at the prospect of Lucy going to a nightclub with another man, Fred is largely unconcerned and even glad to have Ethel occupied so he can go to the boxing match. It is only when Ricky suggests that he can get them a couple of beautiful blond dates to make the girls jealous that Fred agrees to give up going to the fights.

Further, while both Ethel and Lucy have "domestic" rather than "public" bodies, it is clear that Ethel's body is more comfortably domestic and less concerned about keeping up appearances. In "The Diet," Fred, Ethel and Ricky all admit they have packed on a little extra weight since they were married but Lucy refuses to believe that she has.⁸⁵ When confronted with the fact that she has gained twenty-two pounds, Lucy is very upset. Though Ethel gladly serves as her coach, Ethel does not participate in either the exercise or the diet. Indeed, that evening when Lucy munches on a lone celery stick Ethel cheerfully consumes a big meal of a large steak, potatoes, green beans, and several biscuits – the same as the boys eat. In "Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer," Lucy cooks a special dinner for Ricky but they get into a fight. Ethel, who stops by after the altercation, eagerly consumes Ricky's dinner emphasizing once again that she is not worried about maintaining her figure.⁸⁶ This small piece of stage business where Ethel dives into a "man-sized" portion of chicken and rice, though fleeting, plays an important part in this episode as the audience, as discussed above, is invited to make comparisons between the commercially sexualized body of Rosemary/Jezebel and Lucy's domestic sexuality. Thus, in this episode it is particularly important that the audience also be able to compare the Lucy body to the Ethel body who, by always being slightly less sexualized, slightly plainer, legitimates the Lucy body and prevents her from being seen as too domestic and therefore sexually unattractive.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ "The Diet" October 29, 1951.

⁸⁶ "Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer" December 17, 1951

The Ethel body's role in promoting Lucy's sexual desirability is made clearer when the script called for the Lucy body to be perceived by other characters as unattractive. For example, in the season three episode "The Charm School," Lucy and Ethel, amazed by the poise of a friend, go to the Emerson Charm School for a free check-up.⁸⁷ They are graded (out of a hundred) on their physical appearance



FIGURE 4.11

including hair, skin, make-up, posture, and voice. Mrs. Emerson, the director of the school, examines them both and while she tells Lucy that her face powder gives her an unnatural look, only to find that Lucy is not wearing face powder, she says to Ethel that her skin is not bad only to end with, "You're very well preserved," drawing attention to the fact that Ethel is older than Lucy. When the girls receive their scores Lucy is given a thirty-two, so the Ethel body must get a slightly lower score of thirty. Later, when the ladies reveal their new personas to Ricky and Fred, Lucy is much more glamorous causing both Ricky and Fred to become speechless. When Ethel enters, also wearing a form-

fitting dress, the side-by-side comparison draws attention to the fact that Ethel is heavier. Lucy is also wearing false eyelashes which Vivian Vance was forbidden to wear on set.⁸⁸ Further, according to Carini, Ball's costumes were designed by the Oscar-winning costumer Eloise Jenssen while Vance's were bought off-the-rack with a clothing allowance.⁸⁹ (Figure 4.11)

The Lucy body's greater attractiveness and her greater sexual appeal in comparison to the Ethel body was particularly emphasised in the episode "Ricky Sells the Car."⁹⁰ After a comedic accident on an ancient motorbike Fred gets a stiff shoulder. Lucy, coming to talk to the Mertzes, starts to absentmindedly rub it for him. Fred enjoys it slightly too much. Ethel, who is also present, does not mind at first until the girls get into an argument and then Ethel seems to realize the inappropriateness of Lucy touching her husband in such an intimate fashion and angrily exclaims, "What are you doing over here anyway? Massaging his shoulder? *I'll* rub it if it needs rubbing!" On the surface the dialogue

⁸⁷ "The Charm School," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, January 25, 1954.

⁸⁸ Sanders and Gilman, *Desilu*, 45.

⁸⁹ Carini, "Love's Labors Almost Lost," 48.

⁹⁰ "Ricky Sells the Car" *I Love Lucy*, James V. Kern, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 24, 1955.

focuses mainly on Ethel's anger over a monetary dispute but there is a subtext that demonstrates her anger both at Lucy's inappropriate behaviour as well as the fact that Fred enjoys being touched by her best friend in an intimate matter. Eventually Ethel takes over rubbing Fred's shoulder and is quite rough with him. Though this is a slapstick comedy convention, the juxtaposition between Lucy's soft feminine touch and Ethel's brusque treatment remains to the detriment of the latter.⁹¹

Later in the episode Lucy tries to resolve the monetary issue by slipping some train tickets that Ricky forgot to buy into Fred's jacket pocket while he sleeps in a chair. As Lucy attempts to place them into Fred's inside jacket pocket he rolls over in his sleep, trapping her arm and making it seem as if she is embracing him just as Ethel enters. With both surprise and hurt in her voice Ethel asks Lucy three times: "What are you doing?" Lucy, not wanting to reveal the real reason, pretends to rub Fred's (opposite) shoulder saying that she is rubbing his shoulder because it was her and Ricky's fault that Fred got in the accident in the first place. As Lucy stammers out her excuses, Ethel becomes increasingly angry and Lucy eventually bolts from the apartment.

The misunderstanding is eventually resolved when Ricky and Lucy explain they forgot to buy the Mertzes's train tickets, but Ethel seems a little too quick to forgive Lucy for touching her husband. Part of the problem is that the issue of Lucy's rubbing Fred's shoulder is only a secondary bit in the main comedic plot about the train tickets. This means the massage incident must be resolved in only a few seconds of dialogue to free the cast to move on to the resolution of the main issue of the episode. However, it is more the way that Vivian Vance plays the scene of catching Lucy with her arms around Fred that makes the episode so uncomfortable. Instead of shouting dramatically the way that Lucy does whenever she (always mistakenly) thinks she has caught Ricky being unfaithful, Ethel is truly bewildered and hurt, like a dog unexpectedly kicked by a favourite master. It is as if she always knew that Fred would rather be with the prettier and more sexual Lucy body, but she never thought that Lucy herself would be betray her. Thus, she is angrier with Lucy for touching Fred than she is with Fred for allowing the unsuitable intimacy. Though Ethel usually takes her place at the bottom of the sexuality spectrum in good grace, in this episode the ugly underside of that role becomes clear.⁹² This resentment at always being cast as the frumpy friend was echoed in reality by Vivian Vance who reportedly hated

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² It should be noted that Fred was outside of the sexuality spectrum altogether as his character's sexual appeal was not a question in the show (he had none) nor was his lack needed to reinforce Ricky's already well-established Latin masculinity. Fred's position outside of the gendered spectrum is actually a function of postwar gendered politics that made Ethel's beauty, her ability to keep up appearances, a problem to be dealt with, while, in contrast, Fred's position as a man and husband was not tied to issues of his appearance.

being identified as Ethel. During the show's summer hiatus she would always slim down only to be forced to gain her contracted extra weight once the show began filming again.⁹³

The only episodes in which Vance was allowed to display her attractiveness were in the episodes



FIGURE 4.12

where Lucy/Lucille was pregnant. In “Pregnant Women are Unpredictable,” Lucy is depressed because Ricky has gone from viewing her as a wife and lover to the vessel containing his child.⁹⁴ Ethel suggests that Ricky take Lucy out dancing to remind her that he is not just in love with her as the mother of his child but also as a woman. She and Fred go along as well. The difference in their dress is marked. Lucy wears a high-necked shapeless dress in dark shades with no portion of her body clearly outlined – she

even has long sleeves. Though this is clearly glamorous maternity-wear trimmed in jewels and likely much nicer than any of the pregnant audience would be wearing, it is in striking contrast to Ethel's strapless, light coloured, form-fitting, and frilly gown which boasts a plunging neckline; Ethel even wears a pearl choker which draws attention to the large expanse of cleavage she is exhibiting. (Figure 4.12) Even though Fred jokes about Ethel being overweight, for once the age difference between Vance and Frawley is visually very clear. Further, unlike the dress in “The Charm School,” which demonstrated the flaws in Vance's figure, her gown in “Pregnant Women are Unpredictable” is very flattering. It is clear that once again the pregnant Lucy body maintains dominance and, just as she was able to claim the stage in the episode “Lucy is Enceinte,” in this episode she does not need the Ethel body to reinforce her domestic sexuality – the evidence is literally out front for all to see.

“Grandpa” and the “Fat-Ass”: The Mertz's Marriage as Guarantor of the Ricardos' Sexuality

⁹³ Ball and Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 276.

⁹⁴ “Pregnant Women are Unpredictable” *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 15, 1952.

Just as the Ethel body served to prevent Lucy from becoming completely unattractive, the marriage between Ethel and Fred served to underscore the desire within, and the desirability of, the Ricardo marriage. From the very first episode, “The Girls Want to Go to a Nightclub,” Fred and Ethel engage in banter about their incompatibility, their lack of desire for each other, and the general lack of romance in their marriage.⁹⁵ For example, Fred invites Ricky to join him “in the commemoration of an eighteen year old tragedy” – his wedding anniversary with Ethel. In season two’s “Vacation from Marriage,” the girls decide it would be a good idea to spend some time apart from their husbands because they have all gotten stuck in rut.⁹⁶ Lucy tells Ricky that she knows him too well and that things are too predictable. Ricky replies, “After you’re married for eleven years you’re supposed to know each other like a book.” Fred chimes in, looking up at Ethel, “It’s the same after twenty-five years. Only the cover gets more dog-eared.” However, it is not only Fred who expresses dissatisfaction. In “The Camping Trip,” Lucy and Ethel find out that a friend’s marriage is breaking up. Their unnamed friend says, “every marriage reaches a point when the honeymoon’s over.” Ethel quips, “Yeah our honeymoon was over on our honeymoon.”⁹⁷

In addition to their deprecatory dialogue, Ethel and Fred are almost never physically affectionate on the show and even when they are, their displays of marital intimacy fall short when compared to Lucy and Ricky. This is made particularly clear in the season three episode “Equal Rights.”⁹⁸ The girls decide to claim “equality” which the men turn against them when they refuse to pay for their dinners.⁹⁹ With no money, Lucy and Ethel are forced to wash dishes alone after the restaurant closes to settle their bill. They decide to “cry wolf” by phoning their husbands and claiming that they are being attacked. The boys rush over to help them, after calling the police, only to peek through the window and find it was a trick. The boys decide to dress up like bandits and pretend to kidnap the girls but are caught by the police and the girls go to bail them out. When asked to identify the men the women at first pretend not to recognize them with Ethel saying she assumes that the old one (Fred) is the younger one’s (Ricky) father. Lucy says that, as she looks at the younger one, he looks better and better and, wondering how he kisses, gives him a kiss on the lips. Ethel wonders how “grandpa” kisses and leans through the bars.

⁹⁵ “The Girls Want to Go to a Nightclub” October 15, 1951.

⁹⁶ “Vacation from Marriage” *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 27, 1952.

⁹⁷ “The Camping Trip” *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, June 8, 1953.

⁹⁸ “Equal Rights,” *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 26, 1953.

⁹⁹ This episode also reinforces the status quo of postwar gender roles playing to the old stereotype that if women claim equal rights men will stop being chivalrous and women will actually be worse off.

Fred puckers up, but Ethel never actually touches his lips, though she makes a smooching noise. Then she shrugs her shoulders disappointedly and says dismissively, “eh.”¹⁰⁰

The only episodes where Fred and Ethel were allowed to be more sexually demonstrative than Ricky and Lucy happened when that sexuality was an integral part of the plot. In the fifth season episode “Second Honeymoon,” the Ricardos and Mertzes take a cruise together with Ricky working as the ship’s orchestra leader.¹⁰¹ At the beginning of the episode Lucy is thrilled, sure that this will be a second honeymoon for her and Ricky. Ethel stops by, and though Lucy is optimistic, Ethel states that Fred would never be romantic enough to make the trip their second honeymoon and that since he gets seasick they would never have a second honeymoon on a boat. Lucy says that Ethel can accompany her and Ricky as they enjoy the ship’s amenities but Ethel responds they will not want a “chaperone.” Ricky arrives and tells Lucy he will not be able to do all the things she wants to do as he is booked solid with performances and rehearsals. Lucy and Ethel decide they will have to have fun together when Fred enters calling Ethel “baby doll.” He has taken seasickness pills and the relief has put him in a good mood. Fred and Ethel never actually kiss, instead cuddling up to each other and rubbing noses. However, like in the other episodes when Fred and Ethel’s marriage serves to underscore how loving Ricky and Lucy are, in this episode their function is to demonstrate how lonely Lucy is as she is the only one on the cruise without a partner. For example, when Lucy goes walking on the deck in the evening she keeps running into couples. When she tries to go up a flight of stairs which are hidden from view Fred’s voice calls out, “Can’t a man sit on the stairs with his wife without somebody butting in?” It is important to note that even in this episode we never see Fred and Ethel engage in on screen intimacy. Reportedly, Vivian Vance and Bill Frawley refused to kiss each other as they loathed each other. Vance was much younger than Frawley and thought him to be a cantankerous old drunkard; she would allegedly read through each script as soon as she got it, hoping not to have any scenes with Frawley.¹⁰² When Desi proposed a spin-off series focusing on Fred and Ethel, Vance turned him down despite the fact they would both get pay increases.¹⁰³ Frawley, in turn, disliked Vance, calling her all sorts of gendered derogatory names including “fat ass” and even “cunt.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ “Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “Second Honeymoon,” *I Love Lucy*, James V. Kern, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, January 23, 1956.

¹⁰² Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 49.

¹⁰³ Harris, *Lucy & Desi*, 225.

¹⁰⁴ Arnaz, *A Book*, 216; Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 49.

Hot Friendships: Ethel as Lucy's "Emotional Husband" and the Creation of Sexually Ambiguous Spaces

A simple description of *I Love Lucy* is that it is a show revolving around the adventures of two couples – one dominant and the other subordinate within the story line. On the surface this refers to Lucy and Ricky Ricardo and their interactions with their friends Ethel and Fred Mertz. However, if one was to define “couple” differently, it could just as easily be conceived as a story about the misadventures of Lucy and her best friend Ethel and their interactions with “the boys” Ricky and Fred. Indeed, there are many episodes where Lucy and Ethel share much more screen time together than they do with either of the male characters. Additionally, throughout the show’s run, Lucy and Ethel remain spatially and emotionally close and are always being granted free access in and out of each other’s homes. This familiarity is assumed from the beginning of the show. In “Be a Pal,” the show’s second episode to air, Ethel not only lets herself into the Ricardo apartment while Lucy busies herself with the morning chores but she also takes a cup, pours herself a cup of coffee, and takes a doughnut from a canister on the counter.¹⁰⁵ She is clearly as at home in Lucy’s kitchen as she would be in her own. Further, Lucy, aware of her friend’s presence, does not protest her familiarity.

Viewing the Lucy and Ethel relationship through the embodied lens of marriage gives new insight into the mechanics of the relationship between these two women. In the postwar era, men and especially women, were supposed to find complete fulfillment – emotional, spiritual, and physical – within their “companionate” marriage. Engaging in a companionate marriage was to claim the postwar label of normality that was typically associated with white, middle-class heterosexual respectability. While the Mertz’s marriage never lived up to this ideal this was narratively consistent with their role in making the Ricardo marriage look good by comparison. However, the periodic emotional estrangements between Ricky and Lucy are more difficult to dismiss and challenge the Ricardos’ claim to middle class married normalcy. As with their uncertain class position, part of this marriage non-conformity is due to Ricky’s patriarchal Latin upbringing which mirrored Desi Arnaz’s. Like Desi, Ricky never completely accepts that within their marriage Lucy is meant to be equal – one of the central premises of the companionate ideal. For example, in the aptly titled “Equal Rights,” Ricky, annoyed that Lucy keeps

¹⁰⁵ Other neighbours who visit the apartment also used the more casual back door entrance but always knocked first. See, for example, the entrance of Miss Lewis in the episode “Lucy Plays Cupid.” “Lucy Plays Cupid,” *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, January 21, 1952. Fred also enters the Ricardo apartment freely but always stops and explains why he is there. For example in “Fan Magazine Interview” Fred walks into the kitchen with his tools without knocking but immediately explains he is there to fix the sink. “Fan Magazine Interview,” February 8, 1954.

interrupting him as he attempts to tell a story, begins haranguing Lucy about her flaws. Lucy, momentarily cowed, stammers, “Yes sir.” He continues, “We are going to run this house like we do in Cuba where the man is the master and the woman does what she is told.” He ends by ordering her to get her coat. Lucy visibly (though comically) submissive leaves and reappears with her coat. Suddenly she snaps out of this meek and compliant state and, cheered on by Ethel, turns on Ricky. She yells, “I don’t know how you treat your women in Cuba but this is the United States and I have my rights!” Yet by the denouement of the episode the women’s demands only get them into trouble making it clear that equal rights, even within the limited spheres of their marriages, will at best be a temporary measure. Instead, Lucy and Ethel must turn to each other for their emotional support and companionship. For Lucy, Ethel’s presence as an “emotional husband” allows Lucy to engage in a kind of composite companionate marriage as she is sexually fulfilled by Ricky and experiences equality and support through her relationship with her best friend. Further, as the Mertz’s marriage is completely fractured and largely desexualized, Lucy provides Ethel with what is sometimes her only companionship.

The emotional dependency that Lucy and Ethel have on each other is made clear by the fact that during the series wherever Lucy and Ricky go, Fred and Ethel go too. When Ricky lands a movie role and moves Lucy and Little Ricky out to California the Mertzes go along and then follow them as they tour throughout Europe. Further, when Ricky decides to buy a house and move the family to the country, Lucy begs him to try and get the deposit back because she cannot bear to leave Ethel. Ricky angrily says to Fred, “Well if I’d known that the Bobsey twins were going to pledge eternal friendship I wouldn’t have given that guy a five hundred dollar deposit this afternoon!”¹⁰⁶ Lucy and Ricky eventually do move to their country home – finally unambiguously claiming middle class status by moving to the suburbs – but as soon as they make that move both Lucy and Ethel convince their husbands to go visit the other couple. A mix-up occurs and, ironically, both couples end up hiding in the same closet in the country home. The women, upon recognizing each other, burst into tears, crying how much they missed each other and then embrace while Fred and Ricky also hug, though much more loosely, in the background. For a few episodes the Mertzes make the trip from the city to visit every weekend but soon, in “Lucy Raises Chickens,” the Ricardos hire the Mertzes to come and farm their chickens, even offering them a house on their property, thus inverting the previous arrangement as now the Ricardos are the Mertzes

¹⁰⁶ “Lucy Wants to Move to the Country,” *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, January 28, 1957.

landlords.¹⁰⁷ In the span of only five episodes, the couples leave each other, reunite, and practically recreate their old living arrangements.¹⁰⁸

Though the couples remain together, it is clear that Ethel and Lucy's relationship is much closer than that of Ricky and Fred who do not depend on each other for emotional fulfillment. In "Lucy Fakes an Illness," Ethel not only sits by Lucy's bedside when she is faking her symptoms but nurses her when both believe she is actually sick with "go-bloots," prompting Fred to call her "Florence Nightengale."¹⁰⁹ Ethel is also much more concerned about Lucy's illness (when she believes it to be real) than Ricky is when he thinks Lucy is actually ill. Lucy and Ethel's interdependence also explains other plot elements. For example, in the episode "Lucy and the Dummy," even though Ethel helps Lucy in getting the contract with MGM she immediately double crosses Lucy, telling Ricky what has happened and joining in the scheme to prevent Lucy from accepting the deal. This originally seems an incomprehensible betrayal but becomes more rational if we realize that Ethel, as much as Ricky (if not more), needs Lucy to come home with them. The deeply close nature of Lucy and Ethel's relationship is also demonstrated in the famous episode "Lucy is Enceinte."¹¹⁰ Again, it is Ethel that Lucy confides in when she is feeling ill and it is Ethel, not Ricky, who first gets the news that Lucy is pregnant. Both women become dreamy at the thought of having a baby and when Lucy breaks the news to Ethel she says quietly, "Ethel, we're going to have a baby!" To which Ethel replies, "We are?!" Though this gets a laugh, it is clear in those few moments that the baby belongs solely to the two women and the secret surrounds them as a couple temporarily locking out their heterosexual partners.¹¹¹

According to their backstories, Lucy even met both Ethel and Ricky at the same time furthering the image that for Lucy, Ricky and Ethel together create a complete marriage relationship. In the flashback episode "Lucy Takes a Cruise to Havana," a still single Lucy goes on a cruise with her friend "Susie," played by Anne Southern.¹¹² Lucy and Susie intentionally take the cruise to meet men but they

¹⁰⁷ "Lucy Raises Chickens," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, March 4, 1957. By making the Mertzes essentially their employees the Ricardos also solidify their middle class position by comparison.

¹⁰⁸ Those episodes are, in order: "Lucy Wants to Move to the Country," January 28, 1957; "Lucy Hates to Leave," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, February 4, 1957; "Lucy Misses the Mertzes," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, February 11, 1957; "Lucy Gets Chummy With the Neighbors," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, February 18, 1957; "Lucy Raises Chickens," March 4, 1957.

¹⁰⁹ "Lucy Fakes an Illness," January 28, 1952.

¹¹⁰ "Lucy is Enceinte," December 8, 1952.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² "Lucy Takes a Cruise to Havana," *The Lucy-Desi Comedy Hour*, Jerry Thorpe, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, November 6, 1957.

find themselves in a homosocial environment as the ship is full of young women with the exception of Rudy Vallee, who does a cameo of himself, and Fred, who is on a belated honeymoon with Ethel. Both Susie and Lucy leave with Cuban lovers Ricky and Carlos (played by Caesar Romero); however, Lucy explains that Susie and Carlos eventually had a “falling out,” and broke up. On the one hand, this is merely a plot device to tie up loose ends and explain why two celebrity characters will not be returning. On the other hand, one could argue that without an Ethel to fill in the emotional gaps, Susie’s relationship with Carlos (another patriarchal Latin) just was not enough. The episode also creates clear demarcations between Lucy’s single life in which she was interested in pursuing both men and female friendships and the time she settles down, satisfied with both Ricky and Ethel. Indeed, Lucy and Ethel’s relationship would outlast Lucy and Ricky’s. After the end of *I Love Lucy*, Lucille Ball and Vivian Vance teamed up again for *The Lucy Show*. It was not supposed to be a direct continuation of *I Love Lucy*, though the characters of Lucy and “Viv” (Vivian Vance) were extremely similar to Lucy and Ethel, especially as the writing team remained the same. Even the opening credits of the show that featured stick figures of Lucy and Viv was reminiscent of stick representations of Lucy and Ricky used in the *Lucy-Desi Comedy Hour*.¹¹³ The fact that Ball played a widow and Vance a divorcée furthered the potential connection between the two shows in the viewers’ minds.

According to Valerie J. Korinek, social experts in the postwar era supported women’s close friendships while at the same time constructing them as a potential danger to the development of what they saw as much more important heterosexual connections. Strong female friendships were even portrayed by some “sex-perts” as a gateway to lesbian activity which Korinek notes was defined extremely broadly. “The attraction between women was defined as an emotional bond *that in some instances* would lead to sexual relations.”¹¹⁴ This broad definition of lesbian behaviour certainly could apply to the case of Lucy and Ethel allowing for a space for viewers to engage in what Korinek terms a “perverse reading” that placed Lucy and Ethel as the central couple – whether purely emotional or sexual as well – within the show. Indeed, as Carini notes, the “I” in *I Love Lucy* was always ambiguous and “[i]n the more than fifty years since *I Love Lucy* aired for the first time, many other claimants have imagined themselves part of television’s most famous valentine.”¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Vivian Vance refused to play Ethel ever again and as part of her contract for the new series, the character was renamed “Viv.” Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 153.

¹¹⁴ Korinek, “Don’t Let Your Girlfriends Ruin Your Marriage” 93.

¹¹⁵ Carini, “Love’s Labors Almost Lost,” 44.

Lucy and Ethel enter what Korinek's experts identified as potentially dangerous intimacies in the episode "Vacation from Marriage."¹¹⁶ Ethel and Lucy propose a scheme by which Lucy will move in with Ethel and Fred with Ricky so that they can experience bachelor(ette) life for a few days and shake up their dull routines. In the scene when the women propose the scheme to their husbands, Lucy assumes a suggestively masculine persona, commanding the room as she strides around it giving a lecture to the men, who remain sitting in a submissive position, why they must adhere to this planned separation. This is one of the few scenes in the early seasons of the show where Lucy wears slacks, furthering the masculine image.¹¹⁷ The next scene shows the girls in the Mertz bedroom, and though the beds are separated, the image of the women as bachelorette roommates lounging around in their nightgowns suggests a more subversive visual element, even though the dialogue remains strictly heterosexual. Indeed, as the girls struggle to find some male dates to parade in front of their husbands to make them jealous, they end up alone together – on a date with each other. They eventually become locked out and spend the night huddling on the roof of their building in their nightdresses for warmth. Combined with Lucy's gender-bending dress and manner (clear signs of a lesbian personality to contemporary sexual experts) this suggests that a subversive reading of Lucy and Ethel's vacation from marriage could include a sexual interlude. Indeed, as Lucy and Ricky's sexual relationship was largely inferred based on their embracing and kiss as metonym standing in for a sexual relationship behind closed doors, it would not be a stretch for "perverse" viewers to imagine an off-screen dalliance between Lucy and Ethel. There were other small and subtle cues that could allow the audience to engage in a perverse reading of the visual and spoken text. In "The Adagio," Lucy, annoyed at being teased by Fred and Ricky, says to Ethel, "Oh Ethel did you ever wish there was something else to marry besides men?" To which Ethel replies, "Often."¹¹⁸ The closeness that Lucille Ball and Vivian Vance shared both on and off screen even angered Vance's estranged husband Philip Ober so much that he yelled that Vance and Ball "ought to be more careful about the hugging and kissing you do on the show. You behave like a couple of dykes in heat."¹¹⁹ Though this might simply be further evidence that postwar men used gendered terms to delegitimize all close female friendships, there does remain some discursive space to manipulate the relationships of the characters. This is particularly true in the case of Ethel. As previously

¹¹⁶ "Vacation from Marriage," October 27, 1952.

¹¹⁷ In later seasons when the show moves to the country Lucy wears slacks more often but in the first seasons she almost always wears a dress or skirt.

¹¹⁸ "The Adagio" *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 31, 1951.

¹¹⁹ Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 87; Harris, *Lucy & Desi*, 209.

noted, one of the functions served by the Mertz's onscreen relationship was to demonstrate, by providing contrast, the healthy sexuality between Ricky and Lucy. Thus, while viewers could make use of the cues described above to align their focus on Lucy and Ethel rather than Lucy and Ricky it was also made clear in every episode that the Lucy body was profoundly heterosexual. The same cannot be said of Ethel. Though sex-perts had very few reliable characteristics with which to identify lesbian characteristics, one that was clear "was not a sexual relation with women, but rather a disgust with heterosexual sex and an attraction (however actualised) to women." And while Ethel expresses a "healthy" attraction to some men, throughout the series, with few exceptions, she continuously expresses her disgust for any intimacy with Fred. Thus, while the narrative space for Lucy as a lesbian, or at least a passionate friend, is always closed by physical expressions of intimacy with Ricky, Ethel's space is left open, especially as renowned sexual expert Alfred Kinsey noted that some women could be partially, if not fully, lesbian in their desires.¹²⁰

Homosexuality, much more overt, also occurred in other places during the series' run. For example, in the episode "The Quiz Show," Lucy goes on the radio show "Females Are Fabulous" to win money to pay off her outstanding bills.¹²¹ As part of the show she must pretend that an actor who shows up at her house is her first husband for a certain amount of time to win the gameshow's top prize. However, a tramp played by John Emery comes in instead and takes on the role of her long-lost husband as a way to get a free meal.

The idea of the Ricardos letting a street person into their home, especially one who makes sexual overtures to Lucy as part of his acquired role, is one that could fit more into a drama than a light comedy. However, John Emery defuses this potential danger, especially the sexual danger, by putting on a stereotypical campy, effeminate personality. His mannerisms, combined with his role as a tramp and the fact that throughout the scene he purloins several of the Ricardo's belongings, neatly fits the medicalized image of the maladjusted homosexual as an overly feminized social misfit. At one point, as Ricky shakes him down for the goods he has stolen, he gives a high pitched giggle and ends the exchange by suggestively handing Ricky a sausage that he had hidden in his top pocket. Throughout the scene, however, it is made clear that the super-masculine Ricky, demonstrated during a Latin explosion of temper in which he threatens the tramp, will not only be able to subdue the tramp if necessary, but

¹²⁰ Korinek, "Don't Let Your Girlfriends Ruin Your Marriage" 91.

¹²¹ "The Quiz Show," *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, November 12, 1951.

that his masculine sexuality will ultimately beat the tramp in the (admittedly false) battle for Lucy's love.¹²²

Despite such guest characters, and the fact that the show allowed the female characters of Lucy and Ethel some leeway in expressing affection, the show never allowed a similar subtext to occur between male characters, specifically Ricky and Fred. This was congruent with postwar gender and sexual norms as, given the much higher medical and social profile of homosexuality, its greater "threat" to social and familial integrity, men's affections were confined to a very narrow social frame.¹²³ Thus, while Ricky and Fred do hug during the episode "Lucy Misses the Mertzes," theirs is a much more subdued embrace. Significantly, while in the episode "Vacation From Marriage" Lucy and Ethel are shown together several times in the Mertz bedroom in their nightdresses, the men are always pictured more formally dressed and in the less sexualized zone of the Ricardo living room.¹²⁴

More than Just a Kiss: The Kiss as Metonym for Sex and the Reassertion of Heterosexual Dominance

The comedic use of stereotypical "campy" characters, while it opened the door to perverse readings, served to retrench the dominant heterosexual mores of the show as a whole. These mores were enshrined in the marriage between Lucy and Ricky, and their sexual relationship. Though limited in the amount of married sexuality which they could display by postwar norms of good taste, the writers and actors on *I Love Lucy* made it clear that Lucy and Ricky engaged in frequent and mutually-satisfying married coitus, usually by using the metonymic device of a kiss, which ended almost every episode, to symbolize greater sexual contact. Allowed some extra leeway by the censors because they were married in real life – Ricky and Lucy were the first husband and wife characters to share a double bed onscreen –

¹²² The idea of male homosexuality was used to get a laugh in other episodes as well. For example in "Lucy Thinks Ricky is Trying to Murder Her," Lucy at one point reads out a list of names which she thinks are of women whom Ricky might be having an affair with. The list is in fact of the names of dogs for an act Ricky is booking at the Tropicana. At the end of the list Lucy reads out with some confusion the name "Theodore," which got a response from the audience who knows that the list is of dogs. "Lucy Thinks Ricky is Trying to Murder Her," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, November 5, 1951. In another episode, "The Matchmaker" Lucy and Ricky get in a fight and Lucy spends the night in the Mertz's apartment. Fred fed up with the women's chattering goes to sleep in Lucy's bed. When Ricky returns (having stormed out) and apologizes tenderly to the body under the blankets on Lucy's bed not realizing it is Fred. Fred finally reveals himself saying in a falsetto, "I forgive you darling." However, the potential homosexual undertones of this scene are undercut by the fact that the boys are not alone in the bedroom; the audience can see the girls peeking through the door and eavesdropping. "The Matchmaker," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 25, 1954.

¹²³ "Lucy Misses the Mertzes," February 11, 1957.

¹²⁴ "Vacation from Marriage" October 27, 1952.

their sexuality still had to be kept within strict bounds.¹²⁵ The kiss shared between Lucy and Ricky was a symbolic cue to the audience, assuring them of the heterosexual intercourse they could assume was going on behind closed doors and this assertion of intimacy was crucial to the show in many ways.

A strong sexual relationship with one's husband in which the wife was completely satisfied was supposed to help women feel fulfilled in their narrow postwar roles of wives and mothers. It is therefore significant that most episodes ended with Lucy and Ricky kissing, in particular those episodes which ended with the unraveling of one of Lucy's schemes to trade her domestic role for a public one. For example, at the end of the aforementioned episode "Lucy Fakes an Illness," after Ricky reveals that there is no such disease as the "go-bloots," Lucy is initially enraged.¹²⁶ However, when Ricky points out that he was only playing a trick on her because she played a trick on him, Lucy throws her arms around Ricky and they kiss. While their kiss would not be considered particularly passionate by contemporary standards their interlocked arms and intense focus on each other signals to the audience that this is an intense kiss. This impression is heightened by the fact that Fred and Ethel and several members of Ricky's band (who Ricky had gathered at Lucy's bedside to play her a farewell dirge) are shepherded out quietly by Ethel, suggesting that they are trespassing on an intimate moment. This places the audience in the role of voyeurs who get to stay longer and witness this private interlude in the Ricardo bedroom. This kiss, and the inferred sexuality it promises, also signals to the audience that Ricky has ultimately won and that the proper gender roles have been, for at least the time being, restored to everyone's satisfaction. Most significantly, Lucy herself seems satisfied and makes no more protests

¹²⁵ There has been relatively little scholarship on the role of sexual censorship in early American television with more work being focused on the way that censorship and issues of race intertwined and how the move from the audio-based medium of radio to the visual-based medium of television brought issues concerning African American performers to the literal light of day. In regards to sexual mores it seems that while the networks and television producers were technically under the preview of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) they were largely self-regulating for two main reasons. The first was that the networks wanted as little interference from the FCC as possible and so set up the Television Code in 1952 (based on a similar Code created by the movie studios) which was a cross-network unified set of rules to present a united front to the FCC and keep it at arm's length. The Code was supposed to enforce the limits of good taste symbolized by the role of a television program as a "guest" in the viewers' homes. Just as it was impolite to bring up controversial issues such as sex, religion, or politics at a dinner party these topics were also supposed to be avoided on the small screen. This was reinforced by the second reason for self-censorship – television programs were supported by single sponsors. This, more so than fear of FCC involvement, caused programs to adhere to conservative valuations of "good taste." Shows were wary of alienating sponsors and sponsors wanted to appeal to as broad a range of consumers as possible. These two factors gave the FCC very little work to do in the early years of television. Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 60-81. See also: Bob Pondillo, "Racial Discourse and Censorship on NBC-TV, 1948-60," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 102-114; Robert Pondillo, *America's First Network TV Censor: The Work of NBC's Stockton Helffrich* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010).

¹²⁶ "Lucy And Ethel Buy the Same Dress," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, October 19, 1953.

about being in the show. Her seemingly easy acquiescence demonstrates to the audience that a sexually fulfilled wife would be more likely to accept the inequality of gender roles.

The writers also found other ways beyond the metonymic kiss to infer a sexual relationship without running afoul of the censors or offending their sponsors. For example, in the flashback episode “Lucy Takes a Cruise to Havana,” which opened season seven and introduced the show’s new hour long format, Lucy and Ricky tell gossip columnist Hedda Hopper (playing herself) how they met and fell in love.¹²⁷ Ricky is a tour guide and while initially he and Lucy dislike each other that changes when he and his friend (Cesar Romano) take the girls to a conga club. Ricky grabs a conga drum and sings the song “That Means I Love You.” In the song each time he beats a rhythm out on the drum it is supposed to, according to the lyrics, mean “I love you,” or another expression of affection. At one point Lucy begins to match the pattern Ricky beats by beating on her table. The beats get increasingly complicated until Lucy and Ricky are engaged in a kind of “duelling congas.” At one point Ricky, not taking his eyes off Lucy, loosens his tie and unbuttons the top button of his shirt. They continue to beat the drum and the table, starting out slowly and building up to a crescendo mimicking the change in tempo of lovemaking. Finally, gasping and out of breath as if after a sexual encounter, Lucy finally exclaims, “What did we say?! What did we say?!” Ricky, also gasping, puts his hand on her shoulder and says, “Not here please,” suggesting that they have committed a private sexual act.

Mutually satisfying coitus was also supposed to protect marriages from sexual dysfunctions including jealousy. This too was demonstrated in *I Love Lucy* as in the episode “Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer,” where Ricky uses sex to reaffirm the strength of his commitment to Lucy. Lucy, concerned that Ricky is attracted to the dancer Rosemary, sits on their bed and physically gives him the cold shoulder metaphorically cutting him off from accessing her body. Ricky moves closer and strokes her cheeks and kisses her ear. He assures her, “There’s nothing between Rosemary and me honey.” When she replies somewhat tearfully, “Cross your heart?” he answers, “I think I have a better way to convince you.” He pulls her into a long kiss which lasts almost ten seconds of screen time. When they pull apart, Lucy’s eyes are crossed, she breathes deeply and smiles contently. This expression goes beyond simply conveying pleasure at a common kiss to suggest sexual orgasm, making the kiss symbolic of a mutually satisfying sexual relationship. Indeed, the ability of a woman to orgasm in sexual relations with her husband was considered key to successful marital intimacy. Ricky, too, has a post-coital expression and when he asks her, “Did that convince you?” She replies dizzily, “What were we talking about?” He

¹²⁷ “Lucy Takes a Cruise to Havana,” November 6, 1957.

answers, also dazed, “I don’t know.” Thus, the Lucy body’s dominance over the publically glamorous bodies that populate Ricky’s work world is not only demonstrated by his leaving the club and returning to the domestic sphere, but also by the physicality between Ricky and Lucy.¹²⁸ Ricky may dance suggestively with his co-stars, as he does with Rosemary in the Jezebel number, but he never kisses them. It is important to note that unlike the actor Desi Arnaz, Ricky is never actually unfaithful to Lucy. Infidelities would signal a fractured marriage, perhaps beyond the power of married heterosexual coitus to repair and could potentially alienate the audience and anger the sponsor. However, feminine jealousy, a much more minor and common dysfunction, could be ameliorated by both a dominant husband and his concomitant virility. In this way the metonymic kiss between Ricky and Lucy served another function – it was a constant reminder to the audience that no matter how much they fought, Lucy and Ricky’s marriage was strong. This ideal of sex as a barometer of overall marital health was even supported by Desi Arnaz. In his autobiography, Arnaz remembers when he finally admitted to his father that his marriage with Ball was over. Though they had endured previous strife he was finally forced to acknowledge that their union was beyond repair. He told his father that his marriage to Lucy was, “crippled... We haven’t slept together in over a year.”¹²⁹

Conclusions

The bodies present in *I Love Lucy* are malleable and subject to interpretation while at the same time consistent in their enforcement of stereotypical postwar gender and sexual roles. This seeming paradox is achieved especially by the central character body of Lucy who, because she was layered with multiple and even conflicting fantasies, remains an often conflicted and conflicting body. For example, the fictional Lucy Ricardo dreams of becoming a showgirl whose body is both publically sexual and consumable. Yet Lucy’s domestic body consistently reasserts herself impairing that dream, whether it is because she has no talent, she is tied by societal convention to a certain set of roles, or because her sexual compatibility with her husband both depends on her domestic role and aids in her acceptance of that role. This makes the fictional Lucy extraordinarily complex. However, there are additional layers; the Lucy character is overlaid, undertaken, by the flesh and bone body of Lucille Ball who, though she facilitates Lucy Ricardo’s domestic entrenchment through her performance, also contradicts that performance by her own lived experience. Lucille Ball in many ways lived Lucy Ricardo’s dream at the

¹²⁸ “Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer,” December 17, 1951.

¹²⁹ Arnaz, *A Book*, 314.

same time Lucy was the domestic fantasy that Ball could never achieve in real life, as demonstrated by her eventual divorce from Arnaz and her guilt over her inability to fully relate to her children. In many performances this incongruence between the fictional life of a character and the life of the physical body portraying that character would be less fragmenting, but *I Love Lucy* consistently broke down the barriers between Lucille and Lucy, actively courting this kind of slippage. In fact, when asked about the show, many of the interviewees slipped back and forth between discussing Lucy Ricardo and Lucille Ball without realizing it, not exactly conflating the two bodies into a single entity but leaving both the character Lucy and the woman Lucille in a grey zone where they blended together, separated, and then blended together again.¹³⁰ This slippage is particularly important given the entrenchment of gender and sexual roles that the show promoted. By creating the distinct private and public zones, framed by consistently used sets, the show's collaborators made the Lucy body an outsider in certain settings – most notably that of the Tropicana. The Lucy body was made a comedic figure whenever she crossed these boundaries and it was only when she was pregnant and fulfilled the ideal domestic body that she was able to finally realize her dream of sharing the stage with her husband; even then it was only as a wife and mother and not as a public performer.

This is the paradox of the Lucy body. At her core she fulfills the domestic ideal of the wife and mother. She cooks Ricky's meals, cleans his home, and bears his child. Yet she strives to be more than she is and because she ultimately fails and returns to her domestic life, her body remains a safe space through which to mediate the discussion of postwar gender roles. Her essential duality, coupled with the bleeding of the Lucy character into the person of Lucille Ball, gives her tremendous scope, making her a type of everywoman. Her catholicity of character meant she spoke to both viewers who dreamed of life beyond the home as well as those for whom the label of subversion was dangerous or distasteful. Further, the comedy within the show and the comedic action of the Lucy body acted like a candy coating on a bitter pill spiking viewers' interest in the issues raised by the show's action while remaining "jolly" and inoffensive. According to Arnaz, the show was never meant to serve a pedagogical function. As he put it: "As far as messages were concerned, even though we never tried to deliver any, once in a while one sneaked through to someone."¹³¹ When viewed this way, the fractured nature of *I Love Lucy* makes sense. Without necessarily intending to, in its role as a distorted mirror of marital life, the show created,

¹³⁰ Glenda Baker (pseudonym), personal interview, September 20, 2010; Margaret Brown, (pseudonym), personal interview, June 27, 2010; Joyce Martin (pseudonym), personal interview, January 7, 2011; Karen Rand, (pseudonym), personal interview, July 7, 2010.

¹³¹ Arnaz, *A Book*, 267.

reflected, and also distorted, the atmosphere of conflict and tension, advance and retreat, which characterized many relationships during this time period. Tensions that were created as people tried to reconcile the gendered and sexual shifts of the war, the desire for home and security, and the beginnings of the different social movements that would characterize the next generation.

CHAPTER FIVE

Cracking the Leviathan: Oral Histories and the Engagement of Individual Bodies with the Ideal

It was awkward. I remember when I knew I was getting married and of course I went back to camp and I remember sitting in the bath and getting out and drying myself and I thought how is it all going to work? We never looked at ourselves. I knew there was something going to happen but I couldn't imagine how it would happen.¹

Margaret Brown discussing the night before her wedding in 1947.

Introduction

In the spring and fall of 2010 I undertook a series of trips across Western Canada to visit those women who answered my call for female interview participants who were married between 1939-1966. After examining the different postwar body politics, the fabrication of so many “straw women” created to negotiate, and make sense of, postwar sexual and gender norms, I wanted to know how real, corporeal bodies compared. How did women, who lived with these ideal Leviathan figures of femininity, engage with, acquiesce to, or defy, their messages in their normal day to day existence?

In private homes, apartments in seniors residences, and occasionally over the phone, usually while sipping a cup of tea or coffee, eighteen women told me of their experiences as wives and mothers during Canada's postwar period. Initially, the frankness of my narrators was astonishing. They confided in me, a comparative stranger, stories about losing their virginity, experiencing their first orgasm, and dealing with sexual violence, marital infidelity, loneliness, and illegal abortion. The challenge in conducting interviews with my narrators was not getting them to open up about their past, it was getting my narrators to articulate what it was like to have a sexual identity that society had deemed “mainstream.” Due to its dominance – its existence as common sense or normal – being a heterosexual married woman was rarely analyzed by the women who experienced it, effectively making it invisible both to them and the public at large. The community of the “normal” is both everywhere and nowhere. In many ways my narrators did not have to look to societal structures to reaffirm who they were: society was constantly doing that for them. Thus, participants expressed a certain amount of consternation when

¹ Margaret Brown, (pseudonym), personal interview, 27 June 2010. It should be noted that all of the narrators in this dissertation were given pseudonyms. This was not my original intention as I felt it most ethical to allow narrators to choose whether or not to have their real names recorded as part of “owning” their own stories. However, I was told by the Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan that my study would not be allowed to continue to if I did not assign all interview subjects a pseudonym. For an excellent article exploring the politics of University Ethics Departments see, Nancy Janovicek, “Oral History and Ethical Practice: Towards Effective Policies and Procedures,” *Journal of Academic Ethics* 4 (2006), 157-174.

confronted with the question regarding what it was like to be a married heterosexual woman in the time period under review. As Jessica Bateman explained, heterosexual marriage was seen as practically inevitable; it was something one just did.²

Though all eighteen narrators enjoyed the benefits of their adherence to the dominant postwar heterosexual norms, their bodies were never uncomplicated or perfect reflections of those norms. In this way the corporeal bodies of the narrators expose the paradoxical strength and weakness that characterizes the dominant body politics expressed in the previous chapters. All around them dominant body politics created a social frame that served to demark the divisions between normal and abnormal. That is, the corporeal, “real” women’s embodied experiences supported and strengthened the dominant body politics in their continued performance of those dominant bodies’ main characteristics. At the same time, however, the very individuality of their corporeal experiences challenged the authority of these dominant norms. Leviathan body politics by their very nature are static and generalized. It is only ever possible to follow the “spirit” of their prescriptive discourses – no real body is ever a perfect carbon copy of the ideal.

My narrators, therefore, engaged in a process of acceptance that was consistently mediated by simultaneous defiance. That is to say the Leviathan bodies of the dominant body politics that surrounded them created a discursive social frame that encapsulated certain actions and reactions as normal. My narrators almost never directly challenged the confines of that frame but their actions did stretch its boundaries, enlarging the margins of normality, thus weakening the structural integrity of the previously rigid separation between acceptable and deviant bodies and acts. The fact that the eighteen chose to manipulate that social frame rather than defy it outright does not make their acts of non-compliance meaningless or unimportant. Indeed, attaching such an outsider valuation to their acts only serves to entrench the idealization of immediate postwar era as a conservative oasis between the more easily identified militant acts World War II and the second wave feminist movement. Instead, I want to explore how the eighteen narrators engaged in strategic negotiations within postwar dominant body politics that made those scripts shift to fit their lives and experiences but that did not threaten their “right” as heterosexual married women to collect on “the dividends of normality.”³

² Jessica Bateman, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 July 2010.

³ I have adapted this term from masculinity scholar R. W. Connell’s term “patriarchal dividends.” She describes this as the process by which all men, even if they do not engage in the more visible or harmful elements of patriarchy, get a benefit, both social and monetary, simply for being male. In the same way my narrators receive “dividends of normality,” which are mainly social, by performing their day-to-day acceptance of postwar heterosexual normality. One of these dividends is the

In this chapter I interrogate five main sites where such strategic negotiations occurred: (1) the importance of gender role divisions within marriage; (2) generational constructs of the significance of purity versus sexual knowledge; (3) the importance of pregnancy and children; (4) the need for the mother body to modify itself to benefit the health and wellbeing of the family; and (5) the importance of sex as both a barometer and guarantee of the overall success and happiness within a marriage. In each of these cases the majority of the women parroted at least some parts of the dominant discourse demonstrating at least partial acceptance of the overall message while also problematizing those same discourses with the nuances of their own situations. I also interrogate two cases where the dominant body politics were silent or insufficient in their policing of a particular sexual theme in the narrators' lives. Though several of the narrators discussed issues of marital infidelity and two narrators had experiences of sexual danger, the Leviathan bodies rarely – if ever – interacted with such events creating silences around them and further demonstrating the weaknesses of dominant body politics to define all facets of sexual life.

“Memory is Fragile”: Walking the Tightrope of Oral Historiography and Sexuality⁴

The fragility of memory, especially sexual memory, was a consistent concern in my interviews. Though their memories were usually quite vivid, the personal quality of their histories made them as eggshells: strong and yet intensely vulnerable to shattering if poorly handled. Dealing with the sexual life histories of narrators – the interweaving of the good and the bad – left me as interviewer and academic walking a tightrope between the need to take apart their recollections for analysis and my desire to treat their stories with delicacy and respect. In my search for relevant oral historiography to inform my methodology it became clear that despite widespread acceptance of oral history methodologies within gender history there was no directly equivalent works to apply uncomplicatedly to my own oral history subjects. Oral histories mapping the facets of a dominant sexuality simply do not exist.⁵ That is, in the realm of gender, oral historiography has primarily focused on bringing subordinate voices, those unrepresented in traditional textual archives, from the margins into the centre of history. Historiographies with this focus, such as examinations of the gendered facets of Aboriginal women's

ability to create change within the dominant body politic from the inside without being seen to directly challenging its norms. For an explanation of patriarchal dividends see: R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

⁴ Janovicek, “Oral History and Ethical Practice,” 160.

⁵ This is not to say that oral histories of dominance do not exist – they are abundant in the genre of biography especially in regards to “great men and women.” However, these models cannot be applied outside of that particular historical genre.

lives, as well studies which map the “hidden” sexual histories of gay, lesbian, and trans subjects are increasingly robust. Despite differences in the analysis between dominant and subordinate sexualities it was the latter historiography that was most relevant to this project.⁶

No longer viewed as a conduit to a “pure” unadulterated truth, oral histories are increasingly being treated as texts that require analysis. In their ground-breaking oral history of butch-femme bar culture *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis noted that while they were looking for histories of working class lesbian social-sexual mores, what they received from their narrators were life histories which then had to be analyzed as individual historical “documents” in order to bring forward the information they sought to confirm.⁷ They, as I, found that sexual histories are never delivered straightforwardly but are understood by the subject, and thus presented to the interviewer, as part of a much larger narrative containing information that is crucial to their understanding of the past but outside of the interviewers’ proposed analytical framework. In an effort to facilitate their analysis and yet maintain the context crucial to the understanding of their information Kennedy and Davis focused on leaving what they termed an interview’s “seams” visible to the reader. That is, they quote long sections from their interviews verbatim, with minimal editing, and separate their analysis from the interview “text.” This approach, recommended by other sexuality historians including Nan Amilla Boyd, is useful.⁸ It not only allows the reader to engage with a narrator’s text but because it foregrounds the pauses, the stutters, the use of metaphor, and interjections that make oral history texts unique, it also provides clues to the underlying emotion that might otherwise be lost when translating the oral to the textual.⁹

Kennedy and Davis’s technique also foregrounds the relationship between interviewer and the interviewee; the impact of the former on the interview narrative, even in cases of open-ended interviews, has long been a concern of oral historians. Joan Sangster, in her reflections on the oral history process, noted that many of her interviewees, suspecting her feminist politics, emphasised their activism in an attempt to please her.¹⁰ This kind of “bleedthrough” of the interviewer’s ideals is somewhat inevitable, a

⁶ Primarily because Aboriginal women’s historians usually negotiate and work within a community’s already existing oral traditions and have to negotiate the colonial factors present in the subject–interviewer relationship – elements not present in this study.

⁷ Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 24.

⁸ Nan Amilla Boyd, “Who is the Subject?: Queer Theory Meets Oral History,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 2 (May 2008), 182.

⁹ Kennedy and Davis, *Boots of Leather*, 25.

¹⁰ Joan Sangster, “Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history,” *Women’s History Review* 3, no. 1 (December 2006), 7.

fact that Sangster and others readily admit. However, I argue that Sangster, Kennedy and Davis, and others could increasingly mitigate, or at least increasingly illuminate, the power imbalances between the interviewer and the narrator by further reviewing their relationship to their interview subjects. This would involve making more transparent other influencing factors such as the environment where each interview took place, the situation of the narrator at the time of the interview versus the time being recalled and, perhaps most importantly, the knowledge of the interviewer's own life, including sexual and feminist politics as presented to, and understood by, the narrator. If, as Sangster, Kennedy and Davis recognize, all narrators to a certain degree tell us as historians what we want to hear, we should scrutinise who they think we are. I attempt to employ this in my own work by noting when appropriate the circumstances of the interview, including my own part. For example, in the last group of interviews I was visibly pregnant and this, at times, influenced the directional flow of the conversation.

In addition to understanding the dynamics of the interview relationship and process, it is also crucial to understand the ways in which memory is constructed over time both as an individual experience and as part of a larger collective memory. As historian Nancy Janovicek explains: "Memory is fragile. What we remember and how we make sense of it depends on how we understand our current situation."¹¹ Yet the issue is even more complex. As British oral historian Kate Fisher demonstrates in her study of twentieth century contraception use, conceptualizations of contemporary social (especially sexual) mores are often viewed, especially by people who have experienced great change in their lifetimes, as more extreme than they were. For example, her subjects would refer to the clichéd, hyper-sexualisation occurring in contemporary popular media as evidence of actual current practices and based their comparisons of their own sexual history on those false markers.¹²

This creation of memory, grounded on the assumed deficiencies of the present is what historians of memorialization such as Christopher Shaw, Malcolm Chase and David Lowenthal describe as "nostalgia" – a distinct process of memory creation.¹³ According to Lowenthal, the more a person or group is dissatisfied with the present time the more likely they will falsely reconstruct the past as stable and positive.¹⁴ This impulse increases as we age as the approaching conclusion of our lives alters the

¹¹ Janovicek, *Oral History and Ethical Practice*, 160.

¹² Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex, and Marriage in Britain 1918-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 25.

¹³ Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, "The Dimensions of Nostalgia," in *The Imaged Past: History and Nostalgia*, ed. Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, 1-17 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989); David Lowenthal, "Nostalgia Tells It Like it Wasn't," in *The Imaged Past: History and Nostalgia*, ed. Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, 18-32 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989).

¹⁴ Lowenthal, "Nostalgia Tells It Like it Wasn't," 21.

way the past is personally negotiated. Neil Sutherland explains: “These circumstances may contribute to a coherent life story or autobiography that satisfies the teller’s or writer’s need for a life that he or she can look back on as being worthwhile.”¹⁵ These understandings of the complexities of human memory are crucial to the evaluation of the larger life narratives supplied by my interview subjects – especially when narratives contradict each other.

A prime example of this need for analysis occurred in my own work with two very different accounts of sexual danger during World War II and the hazards that mobilization could pose to sexually vulnerable populations of women and children. Karen Rand, a war bride, described the situation in her birth country of England in the following way:

We were never afraid during the war. That was another thing too if you were walking along the road and an air raid siren went off you’d have to find the nearest place to get in, sometimes it was a ditch! And if there was any troops on the road all the time well he’d jump in the ditch with you but he’d hold his arm over you. You might be fifteen years old or sixteen years old but you were never afraid. You never felt afraid during the war of being...and I mean it was a blackout totally darkness. You’d meet all these servicemen and they say “hi babe” if they were Canadians or whatever. You knew you were never going to be molested in any way at all. You just felt safe with them. It was a different era.¹⁶

Fiona Shortt, who was a young child living in England during the same time period, presented a much different narrative. When I asked for clarification on a prior comment she had made – that the war made her afraid of men – she told this story:

And there was one park that had wooden swings. And my sister wanted me to go there with her and I said no it was too far away for me. I was...I didn’t want to go so far but I gave in. And we were swinging and we were just going to leave the park and this soldier came up to us. And offered us a bar of chocolate. If I’d go with him you know? And my sister said “Don’t! Don’t!” And I went [with him] and she ran off home. And so that was it.¹⁷

The context, as well as the language, of these quotations is crucial. Karen made her statement near the end of the interview as part of a larger discussion comparing her marriage to her children’s – a question I would pose to get my narrators to discuss how they thought things had changed. She went on to say:

It was a different era. Than today. I think that the young children at the age of twelve they’re become so...they’re more advanced in every way shape or form as we were at the age of twelve. And as I say by fifteen or sixteen they have a boyfriend and they’re upset because the boyfriend

¹⁵ Neil Sutherland, “When You Listen to the Winds of Childhood, How Much Can You Believe?” *Curriculum Inquiry* 22, no. 3 (1992): 239.

¹⁶ Karen Rand, (pseudonym), personal interview, 7 July 2010.

¹⁷ Fiona Shortt, (pseudonym), personal interview, 5 July 2010.

looked at another girl and that causes a fight. I mean we never went through that even during the war.¹⁸

For Karen the war was conceptualized as a place of sexual safety and innocence in part because of her own experiences; she would also meet the man who she would later marry during that time. The reference to soldiers saying “hi babe,” is crucial – they were the first words her future husband ever said to her. They met when she was sixteen and corresponded throughout the conflict, getting married three years later at war’s end. Her memory of the relative sexual safety during wartime and framing soldiers as protectors rather than predators was therefore highly influenced by her nostalgic image of her deceased husband and the romance they shared. Moreover, she further emphasized her mental separation of then and now by contextualizing her story with commentary regarding modern media’s portrayal of sex and over her grandson’s avowal of love for a young woman whom she thought was taking his focus away from education. Fiona’s story, in contrast, is stripped bare, only sketched in. She expended more words explaining to me that she and her sister went to the park specifically to use the wooden swings (as the metal swings at the closer park had been removed for scrap) than she did explaining the actual molestation. Her story is also specific, about a singular event, rather than a generalization about a longer period of time.

In some ways both narratives are “true,” in that they hold a verified resonance with the narrators and that future decisions and choices were made on the basis of those “truths;” however, Fiona’s account is more “accurate.” Karen felt safe during the war with the particular soldiers that were stationed near her family farm. They would get water from her house and gather around the family piano to hold sing-alongs when they had time off. She discursively linked those soldiers with the fresh excitement of young love, conducted within the safety of Karen’s own home under the watchful eye of her benevolent parents, in her mind and memory. However, as Fiona’s narrative demonstrates, sexual safety during wartime was not a reality for many women – a fact confirmed by another war bride narrator, Florence Anderson. Florence remembers that she and her husband first met on a double date as she and a girlfriend always chose to go on dates with soldiers together because of an incident where some military men sexually “interfered” with girls at a local secondary school, getting several of them pregnant.¹⁹ By examining the three discourses together, and in relation to their individual contexts, we gain not only more information about Karen’s relationship with her husband – a deep affection that

¹⁸ Rand, interview, 7 July 2010.

¹⁹ Florence Anderson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010.

continued to colour her memorialization of all military men during the war – but also about the realities of both the positive and negative effects that the mobilization of thousands of young men, far away from the watchful eyes of friends, family and community could have on women, and the ever present sexual danger for the vulnerable within any society.

Fiona and Karen's stories also demonstrate the need, when doing oral history, to take a person's entire life into consideration rather than limiting one's analysis to those events which occur only within the study's time period. Karen's current perspective as an economically comfortable widow, surrounded by loving children and grandchildren, helped her to see the past through the window of contented nostalgia. In contrast, Fiona's sexual narrative often focused on her role as a victim; molested as a child, she also fought off a sexual assault in her fifties. Neither of these events happened within the postwar era of my study but they affected her relationship with her husband as well as the way she remembered that relationship and her sexual life as a whole, and so must be included.²⁰

Asking “Cheeky Questions”: Interview Methodology and Data Collection²¹

The direct comparison of a single idea or theme, as demonstrated above, though often not possible due the variability of individual experience, is valuable when available. Amongst the eighteen narratives, my analysis is thus the most nuanced and complete between the war bride narrators because they represent the majority of interviews. Of the eighteen women interviewed, eleven were born in the United Kingdom who met and married Canadian soldiers during World War II and subsequently immigrated to Canada. Of the other seven, three were married between 1950 and 1959 and four between 1960 and 1966. Such a disproportionate representation of narrators is not unusual in oral history, though in most cases the bias is towards the later rather than the earlier period. That the war brides responded in greater numbers, however, makes sense given the methodology of soliciting interviews.

In the spring of 2010 I created mail-out packages with information about my project.²² Strategically, I targeted seniors' social and residential organizations, as they were the most likely to house concentrated numbers of my intended age group. In congruence with the geographical limits of

²⁰ Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010.

²¹ Verna King, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010.

²² These contained: a cover letter giving my background, ethics information and sample forms, and an explanation of the project as well as posters with a brief description of my project and my contact information. I later followed up, when possible, with a phone call making sure the package had been received and answering any questions the contact person might have had. With only one exception the facilitators at these organizations were excited about the project and displayed the posters in common areas. Only one organization refused to post the information.

the project, I restricted these mail-outs to those organizations within British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Similar packages were also sent out to those provinces' war bride associations.²³ At the same time as these packages were being delivered, the Western Canadian war brides were having their final reunions. A previously semi-annual event, this gathering took place for the last time in Saskatoon in 2010 as travel for the surviving war brides was becoming difficult and their overall numbers were declining, making the theme of the ending of an era prevalent within the minds of the war bride subjects. Of the eleven interviewed, only two were not widowed and all of them had seen many of their fellow brides pass away in the recent years. Many of the women I interviewed were also suffering from chronic illnesses that would, in all likelihood, be their eventual cause of death. Unlike the women married in the 1950s and 1960s who were considerably younger in many cases (having also married later in life than most of the war brides) there was a sense of urgency in their contacting me as they felt this was the last opportunity to tell their stories. Unfortunately, this proved true for several of the women who have since passed away in the period between the completion of the interview process and the finalization of this dissertation.

Kennedy and Davis, in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, note, regarding the subject of ethics in conducting oral history, that at the very least all oral history subjects benefit from the experience by being given the opportunity to reflect on their lives and share their stories with an attentive and engaged listener.²⁴ For the war brides, several of whom had already engaged in historical enterprises in previous years, my study gave them an opportunity to reflect on aspects of their married lives – both the sexualized and the negative – that had not been featured, or had even been actively suppressed, by other publications.²⁵ Though initial participation was garnered through the mail-outs, a degree of snowballing occurred as my information was passed on to other war brides who were encouraged by friends to contact me. This level of internal connection and organization, combined with the fact that war brides were used to being seen as the subject of historical interest and therefore believed that their lives had historical value, also increased their numbers within the study.²⁶ It also became known early on within

²³ Ultimately this mail out garnered a total of twenty-one contacts. Of those eighteen were interviewed, the majority in person in the narrator's own home. Of the remaining three contacts one decided not to be interviewed after learning more about the project as a whole, one had to cancel the scheduled interview due to a personal tragedy and subsequently chose not to contact me afterwards, and one woman unfortunately became too ill to continue with the interview process after the initial contact had been made.

²⁴ Kennedy and Davis, *Boots of Leather*, 21.

²⁵ This was especially true of World War II and war bride commemorative works.

²⁶ Several feminist oral historians have noted that one of the main issues with recruiting female narrators is that many women, especially those born prior to the second wave feminist movement, are not able to see why their lives are of historical interest. Joan Sangster discusses this phenomenon in her article, "Telling Our Stories," 7.

this enclave that I am the granddaughter of a Scottish war bride, which some women said reassured them that I would treat their stories and confidences with respect.

Conducting oral research on the sensitive topic of sexuality within a short time frame is difficult.²⁷ There is little time for a rapport and trust to be built up between interviewer and narrator. In order to mitigate this, and on the advice of a mentor who belonged to the same age group as the women I was seeking out, I deliberately made open my own sexual and marital status, specifically inviting them to contact “Mrs. Heather Stanley” on the recruitment poster.²⁸ My mentor’s assertion that women of that era would only be willing to tell intimate details to another married woman proved astonishingly accurate. From the first interview to the last (by which time I was also visibly pregnant) it became clear to me that most of the narrators viewed me less as a researcher from a distant university and more as a junior member in a club over which they were the prevailing matriarchs. They routinely peppered me with questions about my own married life – most often how I met my husband, our gender roles, and our plans, if any, to have (more) children. I answered them as fully and as honestly as possible and included these answers in the transcripts with a few exceptions.²⁹ More frequently, they gave me unsolicited advice about all matters relating to marriage including managing money, gender roles, managing my husband, raising children, and, most poignantly, how to survive financially and emotionally should my husband predecease me. This kind of self-identification with me as a young heterosexual married woman did a great deal to break down the barriers that normally exist in such situations and created an interesting power shift within our interaction as I was often placed by the narrators in the subordinate position of acolyte learning from expert elders. The advice they gave me also proved incredibly illuminating; upon further analysis, this advice revealed much concerning how they characterized their marriages as a whole, what they felt was important in maintaining a marriage, and what they saw as their roles and responsibilities as a married woman. Often this advice told me more about how they felt about their marriage more clearly and concisely than the rest of the interview taken together.

²⁷ Unlike in other oral histories there was no really defined community (outside of the war bride group) through whom the normal process of interview integration could be achieved first at the community and then at the individual level.

²⁸ Unsurprisingly my heterosexuality was assumed by all the participants who presumed I was married to a man without question despite the fact that it was not made clear on any of the recruitment material.

²⁹ For space, clarity and privacy reasons I deleted those stories about my own life that did not seem, upon analysis, to have any bearing upon the discussions at hand. Also, following ethical protocols I deleted any mention of third parties including members of my family and my husband. Interestingly almost none of the women asked me the private sexual questions that I asked them. Their main concern was clearly to place me within their own lexicon of what a married woman was, or should be, in order to frame the advice that always seemed to follow any inquiry into my family life.

After each interview the audio recordings were transcribed and those transcripts returned to the narrators for their correction and approval. In the cases where the narrators chose not to be recorded, my notes were transcribed and provided to them. They were allowed to correct, comment on, and excise any of their statements and the transcripts were then amended and sent to them for a final approval. Interestingly, very few narrators chose to modify their stories significantly and the majority of the corrections made were minor data changes such as the spelling of names or the corrections of dates. All participants were also asked if they could be contacted at a later date to confirm or provide further details at the time of analysis. Though all agreed, this proved difficult in some cases as many interview participants moved addresses without contacting me between then and the time of analysis.

“Let the husband be the boss”: Gender Role Divisions³⁰

Given the wider history of women’s liberation and the second wave feminist movement, it would be easy to assume that the oldest participants in the study would be the most conservative. Based on this linear, positivist view of history awareness of women’s rights and a concomitant blurring of gender roles would occur as time moved forward with the result being that the youngest narrators would report the most equal marriages and greatest feminist awareness. However, this was not always the case. Almost all the women interviewed had ambiguous or even self-conflicting views about gender roles within marriage and the way those roles changed over time.³¹ It is true that several of the oldest women interviewed supported the idea that divisions in gender roles within marriage was both normal and desirable. Lois Adamson, (married 1945) for example, centred her whole interview on her role as housewife and mother.

But I never felt like oh I want to work and have my own car and that. The minute the babies – well not the minute – *before* the babies were born, I was home. I never had to go out and work. My husband wanted it that way so that when they came home from school I was there and I was very happy. I didn’t need a car of my own to go to work and have some stranger bring up my babies while I worked.³²

She went on to discuss her successes as a mother, clearly drawing pride, self-worth, and self-identity from that role much in the same way other narrators did from their working lives. Edith Small (married 1945) had a similar response when I asked her about her opinions of second wave feminism in that she

³⁰ Alice Hall, (pseudonym), personal interview, 28 June 2010.

³¹ This was very similar to the ambivalence expressed by the Protestant churches. However, I think this reflects more the general gender role ambiguity of the time rather than a direct transfer of ideals.

³² Lois Adamson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 March 2010.

expressed concern that women had gone too far and lost as much as they had gained including their powerful role as mothers.³³

Margaret Brown (married 1947) had a very different answer my question about feminism. She said it was sad that some of the more attractive feminist leaders did not find themselves a nice young man. She noted, “And Greer was good looking! I was surprised at that. Friedan I could see why but Greer I thought: ‘you know gee whiz I think a man would find you a nice companion!’ Did she ever marry anybody?” When I informed her that Friedan had been married she responded, “He must have been quite a bloke! No I’m...I really still think that men were made as God created them. I think they were probably meant to be the strong influence.”³⁴

Margaret presented her assessment of feminism as a joke but the subtext beneath her words makes it clear that for her feminism was a pastime reserved for “ugly” women who would find it difficult to get married. This kind of gendered judgement especially coming from other women – that



FIGURE 5.1

feminists were embittered masculine, (or lesbian), women unable to get a man – has been a millstone around the neck of feminists since the first wave suffragettes were lampooned in political cartoons as spinsters “who have never been kissed.”³⁵ (Figure 5.1) Indeed Margaret’s

casual, joking reference to such stereotypes denotes just how pervasive they were and the uphill battle that second wave feminists would have in counteracting such insouciant, ephemeral sexism as well as more direct misogyny, from both men and women.³⁶

On the surface, and taken in isolation, comments about letting your husband be “the boss” seems nothing more than the expression of “antiquated” gender roles. Yet at the same time there was no sense

³³ Edith Small, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 September 2010.

³⁴ Brown, interview, 27 June 2010.

³⁵ This refers to the famous political cartoon. *Suffragettes Who Have Never Been Kissed*, 1909, Mary Evans Picture Library, London.

³⁶ And of course homophobia would weaken the second wave feminist movement from within, as leaders, most famously Betty Friedan, cast lesbian feminists as the “lavender menace.” Friedan and others argued that lesbian visibility within the movement would confuse the main issues of women’s rights but were also clearly motivated by their own homophobia and concerns that the homophobia of other women would prevent them from joining a movement associated with lesbian activism. Many lesbian feminists have been extremely critical, and rightly so, of how such divisions have been lost in the celebratory historical narrative of the second wave movement. For more information on the history of feminism, second wave feminism, and lesbian activism see: Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: the History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002); Kathleen A. Laughlin and Jacqueline L. Castledine, *Breaking the Wave: Women, their Organizations, and Feminism, 1945-1985* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: the Making of an International Women’s Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

that this strategy made Lois, Edith, and Margaret or the others who made similar statements feel disempowered. For them it was an eminently practical solution that not only made for peaceful interactions within their marriages but also helped their husbands, for whom they felt a great deal of love and affection, feel important and secure in their role within the family. Further, it is clear from the rest of the interviews that their husbands were, at least in the way they presented them to me, by far the most considerate and their marriages the most compatible. Margaret's husband, for instance, had brought her a cup of tea in bed every morning of their marriage for over fifty years, and he completed other domestic chores such as cooking and baking bread. Edith recounted several anecdotes which demonstrated her husband's attention to her needs. All three women were involved in the family finances, with Margaret even supporting the family when her husband went back to school. Even Lois, who never worked outside of the home and discussed at length the proper ways a man should treat a lady (such as opening her door and pulling out her chair), admitted that she handled all the family finances.³⁷ Further, Lois despite not contributing financially to the family in the form of an income, did not see her status as secondary to her husband. This was particularly clear when she talked about owning a home and the difference in her socio-economic status to that of her parents. "I had everything I could think of because in England we had very little.... My mom and dad paid rent until the day they died and I owned my house at eighteen.... I did! I owned it and it was very nice."³⁸ Her sense of ownership over the home, it is *her* house, note that she repeats the possessive several times, is particularly important as she is claiming the value, both materially and ideologically, of her unwaged labour in the home – a claim that would become a central tenant of the second wave feminism movement.

The above narratives demonstrate that even when women accepted the division of labour along gender lines their mentalities did not always follow the same tracks. Edith, Margaret and Lois, more so than any of the other women interviewed, were able to "toe the party line" about separate gender roles not only because their husbands were particularly loving and considerate but because appearing to accept those roles had placed them in very comfortable circumstances. These three women were amongst the most well-situated at the time of the interview, both socially and financially, and reflected upon their lives with a great deal of contentment. Yet, at the same time they appeared to epitomize postwar gender role acquiescence, and they framed their marriages as unequal, in reality they wielded a great deal of power in their relationship with their husbands.

³⁷ Adamson, interview, 19 March 2010.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

There were other strategies to change the gendered power dynamics while still accepting a more strict separation of gender roles. One approach was to acknowledge that it was important for their husband to be the “boss” while simultaneously rationalizing this as a particularly male weakness. Ruth Bell and Alice Hall, both war brides who married in 1943 and 1945 respectively, reflected this mind-set in their narrations. Both gave these statements in response to questions about what advice they would give to young women getting married today. Alice Hall stated quite baldly:

Alice: I think you have to let the husband be the boss.

Heather: And how come?

Alice: Because it makes them feel stronger.

Heather: And so do you mean in terms of the money or...?

Alice: Well just overall I mean you can tell them what you think, give your opinion, but they can override you if they...[trails off]

Heather: So they kind of have the last say?

Alice: Yeah.³⁹

Ruth elaborated upon her position more than Alice did, saying:

You know men are much more fragile than women. That is my opinion. And they need to feel that they have a...they need to feel supported. They need to be – even if they’re not really running things they need to feel [that] they are. And I think sometimes that modern young women have got to the point where they have to have their ability to control known to everybody and that has caused in some instances a lack of control. Sometimes the most important thing is they’re not overt.⁴⁰

Ruth’s last statement about the covert nature of managing one’s husband is key. It denotes that Ruth and the other women who employed such strategies were aware they were claiming some kind of power over their husband and that they had to thus mask that power by situating it “behind the throne.” It is clear that for many of the women, especially those in the earlier era, letting their husband *feel* like the boss when he was not inclined to exploit that privilege, or in some cases, was being carefully managed from the sidelines, allowed these women to fulfill highly-structured postwar gender roles and maintain a certain amount of agency.

³⁹ Hall, interview, 28 June 2010.

⁴⁰ Ruth Bell, (pseudonym), personal interview, 21 September 2010.

Other narrators made similar statements about how modern women emasculate men when asked to evaluate their children's marriages, usually when critiquing their daughters-in-law.⁴¹ The latter presents an interesting, though perhaps unsurprising, inconsistency as the narrators were more likely to push for equality of gender relations when it came to their daughters and their daughters' husbands and be regressive in regards to their son's relationships with women. However, the same also seems to have held true for some of the men in this transition era. For example, Fiona Shortt noted that while her husband had strict expectations that Fiona would fulfill a more traditional role, he was horrified at the idea that his daughter would face similar constraints.⁴²

Other narrators embraced the exhausting double day and arranged their lives so they could "do it all" without asking their husbands to move out of their gender roles by, for example, helping out around the house or participating in childcare. Karen Rand (a war bride, married 1945) wanted to contribute financially to the building of their house. Though trained as a nurse during the war, there was no nursing work in the town in which they lived and moving was not a consideration because her husband had a successful job where they resided. Instead, she accepted an unskilled job as a mess-hall cook at the nearby lumber camp. In order to be home for her children she worked only night shifts, while her husband worked days. She described her often gruelling schedule quite cheerily noting the only bad part was that she only got to see her husband for two hours a day and on weekends. Thus, despite the fact that they were both working, Karen arranged her schedule so that her husband had the minimum amount of childcare responsibilities and was never called on to engage in female designated tasks such as the preparation of meals. While this seems deeply unfair to modern, feminist sensibilities, Karen made it clear that it was worth the exhaustion for her to have a feeling of ownership and contribution to the building of their dream home. Ironically, just as the house was nearing completion, her husband was transferred and they sold the property without ever having lived in it; Karen once again had to bend herself to new circumstances created by her husband's breadwinner role which she did (allegedly) without complaint.

Joyce Martin (a farm wife, married 1961) had a similar strategy, but she made it clear that she expected her children, a son and daughter, to pick up the slack, both within the house and the female-signified farm chores such as caring for the garden, when she returned to work as a teacher.⁴³

⁴¹ Brown, interview, 27 June 2010; Jean Simpson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 5 July 2010.

⁴² Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010.

⁴³ Joyce Martin, (pseudonym), personal interview, 4 October 2010.

Interestingly, while she deemed it improper for her husband to help out with domestic tasks this gender division did not apply to her son. Though her son tended to do more chores outside on the farm and her daughter to do more housework indoors, Joyce felt it was important that her son take some responsibility for, and be capable in, the domestic sphere.

And I can remember coming home from taking her [Joyce's daughter] to music lessons once when our son was about eleven and when we walked in the door at nine o'clock at night he's in the living room watching television and the supper dishes are sitting on the table. I rounded the corner to the living room and I said, "[son's name deleted] the supper dishes need to be done. Both [daughter's name deleted] and I are going to watch TV." I said, "around here when there is work to be done we work at it until it's all done and then we all have time off."⁴⁴

Joyce's ambivalence towards the separation of gender roles went beyond raising her son to follow different standards than did her husband. As a teacher she felt strongly that having a stay-at-home mother was crucial to a child's development yet she also felt that as mothers were providing a service to society by staying home that they should be adequately compensated out of public funds. "And as a kindergarten teacher all my life I would like to see the government to pay parents and pay mothers enough...pay one parent enough to stay home with their kids until they're at least six years old. I think it would really help out society in a lot of ways."⁴⁵

For these women, again mostly of the older generation, this seemingly ambivalent attitude worked for them. Whether they chose to let their husband be the boss, let him only think he was the boss, or found other strategies to combine outside work and household duties, their ability to strategically manipulate dominant gender expectations allowed them freedom without engaging in active conflict with their husbands. Other narrators who attempted to change the status quo were often not so lucky.

Marjorie Taylor, also a war bride, though stating she had always seen herself as a modern woman, did not immediately identify with the feminist movement. She subsequently joined when her daughters and a close female friend persuaded her of its relevance. Her husband reacted badly to Marjorie's new activist point of view, and Marjorie believes it was then, when she first started to express her own ideas and believe that they had value, that her marriage became estranged; though they remained married, her husband became increasingly distant.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Though Joyce backtracks and changes "mother" to "parent" the rest of her interview makes it clear that, in her mind, a woman would be best suited to such a role.

⁴⁶ Marjorie Taylor, (pseudonym), personal interview, 17 October 2010. It would be years later in the 1980s, after her husband became very ill and required constant nursing from Marjorie, that they finally reconciled. They moved into an assisted living

A similar situation occurred with Jessica Bateman, married in 1964, who was a trained nurse while her husband was an unskilled labourer. After nine years of marriage and two children, Jessica, who had returned to work when her children were “a bit older,” felt unsatisfied with the marriage and wanted to leave. Her husband was at that time underemployed and reportedly threatened that if she did leave he would sue her for alimony and take half her pension. This frightening prospect, combined with a deep religious commitment to marriage, kept Jessica from leaving. They eventually reconciled until Jessica started her own business in 1989. During the 1980s, Jessica’s husband was diagnosed with celiac disease which was difficult to manage at that time due to the scarcity of gluten-free food products outside of major centres. Jessica solved this problem by contacting a gluten-free distributor in Vancouver. She claims that at some point the company made a mistake and thought she was ordering goods to distribute in her area, rather than a small order for personal use, and sent her an entire container truck load of gluten-free products. She used the surplus to begin a home-based business selling gluten free-foods out of her basement.⁴⁷

I was immediately suspicious of this account, though Jessica stuck to the narrative when I questioned her. She never answered why, if it was the company that had made the mistake, she did not simply refuse to accept the order, redirecting the question however it was framed. Her narrative suggests that setting up the business was always her intent – she had already created many contacts through her husband’s celiac support group as well as through her nursing experience – and made up the explanation of the mistake to forestall her husband who would never have allowed her to set up a business in their home. This strategy, however, did not work. According to her, her husband was furious because the business took up much of Jessica’s time and he felt she ignored her domestic responsibilities; he eventually retaliated by engaging in an extended affair. At the time of the interview in 2010, the couple, though still married, were almost completely estranged and living in separate rooms in their house.

Even when Jessica attempted to manage her husband by massaging the truth about her desire to start a home business, she presented their difference in education and earning potential as constantly eating away at him and poisoning their marriage. Just as Ricky Ricardo needed Lucy to remain in a domestic role to facilitate him achieving the masculine American dream, Jessica’s husband’s masculine

facility and, though they maintained separate bedrooms within their apartment, Marjorie says they became very close, finally talking about contentious issues that they had hitherto avoided. Whether this was an actual reconciliation where Marjorie’s husband began to treat and value Marjorie as an equal, a power shift as Marjorie’s husband became totally reliant on her, or the fact that Marjorie, in nursing her husband for six years, was returned to a more “normal” domestic role that her husband could accept, is impossible to tell.

⁴⁷ Bateman, interview, 19 July 2010.

image of himself depended on her maintaining an appropriately subordinate feminine gender role. When she attempted to change that dynamic, already strained by her higher education and greater work success, he retaliated by threatening her future livelihood and by having an affair.⁴⁸

The varied strategies and responses to the idealized separation of gender roles clearly demarks the baby boom era as one of change; it was not linear progression towards increased freedom and rights for women. Instead, it was a messy negotiation undertaken by each woman on an individual basis. Those whose husbands tended towards kindness and consideration, and who were able to maintain a loving relationship with their wives over the long term, were the most likely to be remembered fondly as “the man of the house,” as, even when the wives did move out of their specific sphere such as working or handling the finances, their husbands did not protest. Other women, perhaps forced by less flexible husbands to bear the burden of such a gender dynamics, reframed it as a weakness on the part of their husbands, thus rhetorically, if not in actuality, placing themselves in a position of power. What is clear from all the interviews is that the authoritative views perpetrating the ideal of separate and rigid gender roles transferred to men and women and, whatever the arrangement engaged in by the couple, had to be dealt with.

This is particularly evident in the narrations of Mary Johnston and Jean Simpson, married in 1952 and 1963 respectively, both self-proclaimed feminists married to men who they identified as feminist men. Mary recalled how she was the envy of the neighbourhood because her husband, who had been a widower with young children when they married, was extremely involved with all the children, even changing diapers.⁴⁹ Jean Simpson recalled that her husband was a “feminist” in part because he had grown up in a household of women including six sisters.⁵⁰ Both women related these facts to me with a clear sense that their situation was distinctive and that they needed to give reasons why their husbands were able to break the mould. By focusing on that difference and the uniqueness of their situation, they actually demonstrated how pervasive such ideals really were. Further, it should be noted that while Mary’s and Jean’s definitions of what made a feminist man – being more involved with the children and giving their wives a more equal say in the marriage – would not be considered particularly radical by

⁴⁸ Other women, such as Fiona Shortt whose husband was emotionally abusive, found themselves completely trapped as their husband’s use of their patriarchal power to maintain the status quo by forbidding their wives to work outside the home, thus maintaining the gender norms that so benefitted them, by force. Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010.

⁴⁹ Mary Johnston, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 April 2010.

⁵⁰ Simpson, interview, 5 July 2010.

feminist standards today, they saw their husband's actions as a major step forward and something that was better than most women had.

“As Pure as Could Be:” Gender and the Changing Dynamics of Claiming a Sexual Identity⁵¹

Kate Fisher, in her interviews with British couples who married primarily during the interwar period, noted a deep gender division between how men and women presented their sexuality. She argues that, contrary to the accepted wisdom which assumes that women, as child bearers, would seek out the most knowledge about the mechanics of sex, procreation, and its prevention, her female narrators largely felt those issues were the province of their husbands – or at least pretended that was the case – to better preserve the veneer of sexual naivety that was central to their sexual identity.⁵² This theme of innocence and purity was also present in many of the war bride narratives which is interesting due the explosion of sexual education discourse during this time period.⁵³

On the surface, my narrators followed the general trajectory of knowledge acquisition suggested by Fisher's framework. Older brides often discussed their own innocence while the younger ones provided evidence that they had greater access to sexual information. However, a cross-generational analysis makes it clear that the situation was complex. Many of the war brides chose innocence as a primary part of their own sexual identity; however, as time passed and they had their own children, they came to reject innocence as a useful or worthwhile sexual identity for young women. This change, as well as the fact that there were several different tropes of purity used by different narrators, suggests an element of choice in framing one's sexual identity.

Ruth Bell, a war bride who married in 1943, remembered with the humour of hindsight how she, not knowing it was normal for virgins to bleed after their first time having sex, ceased sexual relations with her husband after their wedding night, believing that she had gotten her period. As she put it: “Now can you imagine? Nowadays I can't imagine that there's grade school children that are that innocent.

⁵¹ Adamson, interview, 19 March 2010.

⁵² Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain*, 26.

⁵³ The medical and religious authorities expressed concern about the lasting psychological harm that could be caused by complete sexual ignorance. Further, both medical and religious authorities recognized the importance of controlling the new stream of sexual education discourse in order to maintain the correct balance between esoteric sexual knowledge and practical innocence prior to marriage. They were especially concerned about controlling the flow of discourse due the perceived threat posed by the increasing allowance of sexuality on screen in shows such as *I Love Lucy*.

But I was. I was completely virgin and I had no experience. [laughs] I didn't know what to expect, to be truthful.⁵⁴

Florence Anderson, also a war bride, characterized her innocence slightly differently, remarking that while she had heard some things about the mechanics of sex, being stationed with other girls in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), that it was the emotional impact that she was unprepared for.

Florence: I sort of had an idea. But (um) Mother had never said anything. And you sort of heard odd bits and pieces after I joined the WAAF. I was an only child and I had no siblings to...but once I was in the WAAF (um) and training I was thrown all of a sudden...I was thrown into this hut with all these girls in. Some were married some weren't. Some were like myself engaged and (ah) and you kinda heard stuff eh? But you didn't really at least I didn't (um) I didn't worry about it. I don't think I really totally knew or even had an idea of (um) the emotions – the feelings?

Heather: Were the emotions very intense?

Florence: For me they were. And I believe so for him too. And our relationship was a very loving, caring...he was most considerate. And I think [he was] a little apprehensive you know? As I was too.⁵⁵

Others such as Karen Rand extended their claim to innocence by remaining deliberately ignorant of their husband's sexual pasts. When I asked Karen about how much she knew about her husband's sexual history she dismissed the question.

Karen: No, no he had lots of girlfriends. I mean before when he was in the army. (um) I don't know...I think he did anyway. He was very young. I mean they all did I'm sure. I mean he would go on leave somewhere and I never really... (um) But he certainly wasn't a virgin. I know that.

Heather: And you didn't ever ask him about that or his...?

Karen: No I never asked him about that.

Heather: You just didn't want to know or didn't think it mattered?

Karen: No I never thought about it. You know I mean I was married to him and he was my husband and so I never needed to ask him what he did before.⁵⁶

Like Kate Fisher's earlier female narrators, most of my older interviewees made it clear that for them innocence as a sexual identity was a feminine ideal. However, while Fisher's female narrators' trope of

⁵⁴ Bell, interview, 21 September 2010. This was also echoed by fellow war bride Glenda Baker. Glenda Baker, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010.

⁵⁵ Anderson, interview, 20 September 2010.

⁵⁶ Rand, interview, 7 July 2010.

innocence carried a concomitant sexual passivity, most of my interviewees were only passive, if at all, in the beginning of their sexual relationship. In this way they clearly differentiate themselves from Fisher's women who maintained sexual passivity, or at least the appearance of passivity well into their married lives.

Claiming an innocent identity in the past could also serve contemporary political motivations as demonstrated by Verna King's assertions to me that I set the story straight about war brides' sexuality. Verna, who found my sexual questions extremely "cheeky," said that one of the reasons she agreed to be interviewed was that she and other war brides had suffered some verbal abuse upon their arrival in Canada. Specifically, people suggested that the war brides "caught" their husbands by being sexually promiscuous.

I would like people to know that all the people that came here were not whores. Some people were accused of it – you know they were they were ill-treated. Quite a few of the war brides were eh? ...I think that people should know that a lot of the women were not whores.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, it is impossible to use a comparative analysis to evaluate just how important the war brides community image was in their use of the innocence trope as no women from the same era who were not war brides responded for my call for interviews.

The above recollections are in direct contrast to the younger cohort of my study group. While the older brides all noted their mother's reticence (or complete refusal) to discuss sexual matters, for the younger brides their mothers were usually their primary conduit of sexual information. Though she could not recall the exact circumstances where her mother sat down and told her about the "birds and the bees," Jean Simpson knows that her mother did talk to her about sex. Laughingly she said, "I think probably knowing my mother she gave me a book from the library."⁵⁸ Diane West's mother, a nurse, not only explained the mechanics of sex and reproduction to her but also encouraged her to get a diaphragm to avoid an unwanted pregnancy.

Diane: I guess when I was dating we talked about sex. "Don't let the boys go too far" and all that. Particularly when I started dating men that were older and were out of school and by older men I mean twenties.

Heather: But she didn't talk to you about anything like birth control or...

Diane: Yeah we did. We did talk about [it] at one point before I was married because I knew about the (um) that rubber thing you put inside you.

⁵⁷ King, interview, 20 September 2010.

⁵⁸ Simpson, interview, 5 July 2010.

Heather: Oh a diaphragm?

Diane: [nodding] Sometimes words escape for a few minutes.⁵⁹

It is hard to know due to the small sample size of the later brides whether Jean and Diane's mothers were anomalies, perhaps due to their mother's higher education level. However, there is further evidence for change over time in transmission of sexual information from mother to daughter. First, many of the earlier brides, in retrospect, expressed dissatisfaction with their lack of preparedness for marital intercourse. Marjorie Taylor (married 1946) mentioned that her sexual life was okay but that it would have likely been better if they had had more information going into the marriage and spent less time having to learn everything on their own. In addition, all the earlier brides noted that when it came to their own children, especially their daughters, they wanted to them to be better prepared. Marjorie, in particular, noted that she, unlike her parents, recognized that sex was important and passed that information on to her children.⁶⁰

Sexual knowledge also had a significant spatial component that was somewhat unexpected. That is, narrators from rural backgrounds, specifically those who grew up on farms, rejected the trope of innocence as unsustainable given their upbringing. Without exception rural women described having an understanding of the sexual process prior to the time of conscious memory – it was something they were aware of their entire lives. When I asked Joyce Martin (married 1961) how she first learned about sex she replied simply, “Behind the barn.”⁶¹ She then elaborated about how living with animals generally led to her asking questions and receiving information about breeding and sex more generally. Nancy Wilson, also from a farming background, echoed this statement noting that she did not need a sexual education course at school. “I lived in one!”⁶²

Finally, it has to be mentioned that the trope of innocence amongst the war bride narrators was likely heavily influenced by a feeling of nostalgia for a time that they perceived, through the lens of reminiscence, to have truly been more innocent. This imagined past of incorruptibility, and the role of their own naivety within that past, was created in part to offset what they viewed as hyper-sexualized modern society. Significantly, Alice Hall, when discussing what she saw as rampant over-sexualisation in the modern world, said: “I would really prefer that the young people didn't have so much sex thrown

⁵⁹ Diane West, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 July 2010.

⁶⁰ Taylor, interview, 17 October 2010.

⁶¹ Martin, interview, 4 October 2010.

⁶² Nancy Wilson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 April 2010.

on them on TV and I'm sorry for the *boys* that have to watch these girls with hardly any clothes on. I don't think it's kind at all. No I really do feel strongly about that.”⁶³ In focusing her sympathy with the boys in being exposed to the girls, rather than the girls who are exposing themselves, Alice unconsciously reinforces an ideal that it is women who should control the sexual tone by their reticence as men, inherently more sexual, cannot be expected to.

Nostalgia aside, it is clear that while the earliest brides in this study assumed a sexually innocent sexual identity for themselves, by the time they had had their own children, especially if they were daughters, such an identity had lost both its appeal and usefulness for young women; none of the brides felt it was important for current generation to adopt. For some, such as Marjorie Taylor, it is clear that the decision to educate one's daughter more fully was because she believed that the innocence trope had actually harmed their generation. In other cases the reasoning behind the generational shift is more opaque. For most of the women in my study the immediate postwar period was a time of change where at least the appearance of sexual awareness was no longer seen as taboo. The simultaneous, negative reactions of many of my narrators to the hyper-sexualisation of society may have masked this and other signs of their early sexual “feminism” and resulted in the broad paint strokes of them, and the period, as sexually conservative. Yet the generational shedding of the innocence trope, as well as the passivity trope that Fisher describes, suggests a greater continuity between the seemingly quiescent immediate post war years and the sexual freedoms of the so called sexual revolution.

“They Just Popped Along.” – The Importance of Children and Pregnancy⁶⁴

Doug O'ram, in his history of the baby boom generation, comments that the boomers “were born into a world of children.”⁶⁵ This image, of a world where babies permeated every aspect of English Canadian society and culture, was certainly made clear in the authoritative discourses. For the medical community pregnancy was the only way that women could reach full psychological maturity and all three of English Canada's main Christian denominations upheld the ideal that no marriage was complete without children. Additionally, the media was in love with the idea of babies and *I Love Lucy* saw its highest ratings when Little Ricky/Desi Jr. finally made his appearance on screen and in real life. Given

⁶³ Hall, interview, 28 June 2010. (Emphasis added)

⁶⁴ Evelyn Carter, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010.

⁶⁵ Doug O'ram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 82.

this societal normalization of children as essential to marriage, it is not surprising that all the women I interviewed had families that included children.

Motherhood was a feature of many of the interviews. In the case of the last group of interviews, conducted in Manitoba, it was an even more prominent topic; it is likely my noticeable pregnancy influenced narrators to dwell longer on that subject, which included giving extra advice on child care as well as on marriage. For many women their abilities as mothers were a source of pride as they looked back on their lives and for some having children was the most profound experience in their personal history and their life's central purpose. For example, I asked Lois Adamson, a war bride, if she felt lonely being so far away from her parents who were in England. She replied by reframing the discussion around her role as a mother.

Lois: No. I mean sometimes I would feel lonely but like I said I had the puppy and I had my little girl. And I was a good little mum! Oh I used to walk her to the clinic and get her weighed all the time and you would laugh if you knew some of the things I did. I used to slide her diaper to the side, a newborn baby, and hold her over the toilet and the cold air of course would make her pee! I'd open up one side, slide it around and hold her little legs and sure enough she'd give a little shiver and pee. (laughs)

Heather: (laughs) So she was potty-trained really early.

Lois: Oh she was!

Heather: And how did you know to do that? Was that in like a book you read or...?

Lois: No nobody! You know, there's no babies in my family... I had no trouble with any of them.⁶⁶

In this excerpt, Lois was adamant that her motherhood skills were neither learned from a book nor from prior familial experience. She maintained that she was an excellent mother by natural instinct alone. Karen Rand, also a war bride, echoed this ideal, saying that she too was not lonely because she had her two children to raise. "And I was not homesick either. Mind you I was too busy. I had two children right away. I used to love it."⁶⁷

Both Lois and Karen created an image in their narratives of their families as islands of intimacy populated mainly by themselves and their children, along with their husbands who returned to the

⁶⁶ Adamson, interview, 19 March 2010.

⁶⁷ Rand, interview, 7 July 2010. To clarify, Karen's statement "I used to love it." was not a statement expressing current regret but instead a recognition that her children were now grown and she was not a mother to them in same way as she was when they were young.

domestic centre at specific times. Their ideals meant their homes fit the postwar stereotype of the domestic stronghold of the nuclear family. Lois, in particular, repeated the phrase “my own world” when describing her life, noting that while she lived within a suburb with many other mothers who had children the same age, she chose not to mix with them very much. “Yeah there were young people out where we were but it was (ah)... we didn’t have a car to get around so, you know, we’d have to take the tram and all this so I never really got involved with anyone else. I was quite happy in my own little world.”⁶⁸

Children, within the dominant discourse, were also constructed as necessary to a woman’s happiness in her domestic role and the most common cure should she become bored with it – something that Alice Hall referenced in her interview.

Heather: And do you mind if I ask why there was such a large gap between [your children being born in] ’48 and ’61?

Alice: Well I’ll tell you having two babies in two years [laughs] I didn’t want to know anything about diapers for a while and then when they got to be in their teens I guess, one was thirteen and one was fourteen, I got the empty nest syndrome and my husband said “well we better have another baby or you better get a job.”

Heather: [laughs] And you chose the baby.

Alice: [laughs] Yes.⁶⁹

Alice’s boredom is a classic example of the “housewife dissatisfaction” discussed by myriad experts, from the medical community to Betty Friedan. However, the choice as presented by her husband – to either go out and get a job or stay home and have another baby – is interesting as it clearly demarks a spatial and temporal divide between working women and homemakers. That is, Alice’s husband was asking her to choose between remaining temporally tied to childbearing, in essence continuing to define herself as a mother/potential mother and staying home, and the alternative of completely severing her connection with that biology. By saying she was done with childbearing Alice would enter a new life phase and would be allowed to enter the outside workforce, as, though her children would still need parenting, they were past the socially accepted age where they needed her constant presence. In this way Alice’s narrative confirms the image that baby boom women were allowed to work only during specific times of their lives: before marriage or before children and then

⁶⁸ Adamson, interview, 19 March 2010.

⁶⁹ Hall, interview, 28 June 2010.

after the children were of school age and the couple were sure they would have no more. This socially endorsed compartmentalization of women's lives would have made it difficult for women who wanted, or were forced to by circumstances, to blend the identity and become "working mothers."

Alice chose to stay home longer and have another child. Her choice, and the choices of many of the other narrators, make it clear that while authoritative discourses had immense influence in how women perceived the postwar world they were not slaves to a particular vision. They had choices, even if these were limited, and there is no doubt that many of the women interviewed truly wanted children and saw their vocation as mothers as one of the primary sources of their identity. In many ways being a housewife gave Alice a great deal more freedom than if she was to return to work – a fact she was well aware of. What makes this particular theme confusing, however, is that narratives centred on the primacy of motherhood seem in direct contrast with ambivalent narratives of pregnancy.

If, as the authoritative discourses demonstrate and the above narratives confirm, motherhood was a defining structure of many postwar women's lives, why were so many of my narrators blasé about loss of fertility or miscarriage? Far from equating their situations with a loss of femininity or of womanhood, those narrators who faced infertility regarded it, at most, as a nuisance. Several of the women interviewed had complications conceiving. The most complex case was that of Joyce Martin, who was diagnosed with low fertility and had to take medication in order to increase her chances of becoming pregnant. When asked about her experience with infertility, however, it was the annoyance she felt at the logistics of her treatment that was the most prominent in her mind.

Heather: So tell me a little about what it was like to be treated for infertility at this time. Was it... 'cause a lot of women today find it really traumatic.

Joyce: It was a pain because I had to use the thermometer. I had to keep a record and I had to collect my urine for twenty-four hours and take it back. We were living in [town's name removed] and I was doctoring in [city about four hour's drive away] because we had been living in [city about four hour's drive away] when I was trying to get pregnant at first I just kept with the same doctor. I don't know it just seemed like it was forever.⁷⁰

For Joyce the experience was basically a nuisance due to the long drive and the mechanics of fitting the treatment into her busy life on the farm. Edith Small was equally unconcerned when her first pregnancy turned out to be ectopic and burst, destroying one of her fallopian tubes and cutting her chance of conceiving in half.

Heather: And what did you think about that when they told you that you'd lost a fallopian tube?

⁷⁰ Martin, interview, 4 October 2010.

Edith: Well I was so glad to be out of this thing – I mean it was pretty painful and pretty serious. And I don't really go into tizzies about things you know, not unless it's really necessary. They had told me that it might be difficult to get pregnant then you see cause they said usually it's your best side that goes but I wasn't in the habit of worrying about things ahead of time and look at it we had six pregnancies after that so....⁷¹

Edith Small was equally quiescent about retelling her story of a miscarriage which she only brought up by way of explaining the large gap between two of her children.

Heather: And tell me about the miscarriage. How far along were you?

Edith: Um I think it would be about the three month mark. I was running down this set of steps with something or other to do with the lunch and I fell. And then I never really thought too much about it 'cause I didn't hurt myself badly you know. But I was conscious of the fact that I was [pregnant] when I fell, I remember thinking this is not good you know? But anyways I did go to the doctor's the next time he was in town and everything seemed to be fine. But then, then I lost it so.... [trails off]

Heather: And how was, what was that like?

Edith: Uh well it sort of happened during the night. I remember the doctor, there was a nursing home in town at that time and the doctor came and picked me up at the house and took me to the nursing home. And I can remember seeing [husband's name deleted]'s face at the living room window seeming so anxious. You know he wasn't a worrying kind of person at all but he looked very concerned then.

Heather: So was there a lot of sadness and grief about losing this baby?

Edith: Well there was some but it wasn't (ah) but it didn't terribly throw us for a loop. That was very much I think the way we felt. Certainly didn't make us feel "we're never going to do this again" sort of thing you know.⁷²

How do we reconcile these seemingly contradictory discourses both venerating motherhood and yet seeming unconcern over issues of fertility and even miscarriage? Edith Small, Joyce Martin and the others who had trouble conceiving, despite their unconcern about infertility, were no less involved with their children or willing to be mothers than Lois Adamson, Karen Rand, or Alice Hall who constructed their children as central. Part of the reason for their nonchalance, especially regarding fertility, can be ascribed to the distance between the time they gave their account and the time of the actual event. Time may not heal all wounds but it does dull emotion and give a sense of perspective. Moreover, Edith and

⁷¹ Small, interview, 19 September 2010.

⁷² Ibid. Nancy Wilson had a similar experience. She lost an ovary when it was taken out in a cyst operation by a doctor. It then took several years for her to get pregnant with her first child. This puzzled her but did not distress her unduly. Wilson, interview, 19 April 2010.

Joyce both managed to have children. Thus, while many of the Leviathan bodies, especially the medically derived ones, told women that their femininity was directly tied to their biological capabilities to reproduce, most women did not conceptualize their bodies in such a way especially as long as they fulfilled their imperative to motherhood eventually.⁷³ In this way the mental connection between pregnancy and motherhood was more tangential rather than being a direct, linear continuum.

This ambivalent attitude towards pregnancy is further supported by many of the narrators' ad hoc approaches to birth control; with a few exceptions, most women saw a specific time where they went off birth control in order to conceive a child as somewhat of a foreign concept. For the older narrators, who bore their children before easy access to simple and effective birth control measures such as the Pill, this nonchalance was partially due to the unreliable nature of their birth control especially if they were using the rhythm method. Lois Adamson (married 1945) laughingly told me that she became pregnant with her only son because her daughter saw the marks her mother made on the calendar each month (denoting her fertile periods) and when told they marked "special days," proceeded to mess up Lois's system by marking down her Brownie picnic with a similar symbol!⁷⁴

Those born in the later period such as Nancy Wilson, Jean Simpson, and Diane West, (married 1966, 1963, 1957) who had easy access to the Pill, as well as condoms and diaphragms, reported only using those methods to delay pregnancy for a set period of time, usually at the beginning of the marriage and then resuming their use after the desired number of children had been born. However, all of them reported the intermediate time – the time when they chose to be "mothers" as a being somewhat of fertility free-for-all. As Nancy Wilson put it: "We chose not to have one for the first year and then after that we had fun."⁷⁵ Thus, the women chose to engage in motherhood rather than planning each, individual child – a direct contravention of the ways that the medical and Protestant body politics envisioned how intelligent, middle and upper class women would use new birth control technologies and the dominant middle class, professional ideal that persists today.

Birth control and class issues are intimately intertwined. The pragmatic planning of each child, spacing them out for optimal development by using new methods of contraception, as espoused by the medical and Protestant discourses were clearly middle class ideals. Innovations such as the Pill and IUD cost money, required somewhat regular access to a doctor, and a degree of forethought that was, and

⁷³ Women whose infertility did not allow them to conceive at all might present a different point of view. However, they were not represented within the interviews so I cannot speak to that within this analysis.

⁷⁴ Adamson, interview, 19 March 2010.

⁷⁵ Wilson, interview, 19 April 2010.

continues to be, constructed as beyond the abilities of the working class and/or non-white populations.⁷⁶ While all the women enjoyed the trappings of middle or even upper class life when I interviewed them – trappings such as comfortable living circumstances, including home ownership as well as the fact that most had children and/or grandchildren receiving post-secondary education – many were born into working class families or families that hovered on the brink between working and middle class status.⁷⁷ Yet, regarding birth control Nancy, born to a poor farming family and having never finished high school espoused the same unconcern about fertility control as Jean and Diane, both of whom had a middle class upbringing and university degrees. It seems that in the immediate postwar era regular contraception use was not yet consistently internalized as a part of professional, middle class identity as it is now.

As each child was not planned out, unanticipated instances such as miscarriage or initial difficulty conceiving were not seen as major events in contrast to the ways they are currently constructed in the modern middle class female body politic.⁷⁸ Instead, the important thing was to have some children at some point and most women chose to take them as they came. This is especially clear in Glenda Baker's narrative of the 1948 birth of her twins – a boy and a girl. Glenda told me, quite matter-of-factly, that the boy had died four days after his birth due to kidney failure. When I asked her how this affected her Glenda admitted she was sad but quickly dismissed that emotion stating she was simply happy to “bring one baby home.”⁷⁹ Due to her ability to still be a mother to her little girl she was able to cope much more easily with the death of her son.

The difference between choosing each conception/pregnancy and choosing to be a mother is slight, but crucially important. It explains why my narrators were blasé about fertility complications and

⁷⁶ See: Nancy Ehrenreich ed. *The Reproductive Rights Reader: Law, Medicine, and the Construction of Motherhood* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); Dorothy E. Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997).

⁷⁷ With the exception of Fiona Shortt who, though currently living in comfortable circumstances, was facing some financial instability as a result of her divorce.

⁷⁸ This focus can be seen by the myriad of publications (both academic and self-help) on how to deal with the emotional effects of miscarriage and infertility. See: Heidi Eisenberg, *What To Expect When You Are Expecting*, 4th Edition, New York: Workman Publishing Group, 2008; Ingrid Kohn and Perry-Lynn Moffitt, *A Silent Sorrow: Pregnancy Loss: Guidance and Support for You and Your Family* (New York: Routledge 2000); Janet Jaffe, Martha Ourieff Diamond, and David J. Diamond, *Unsung Lullabies: Understanding and Coping with Infertility* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2005); Marc Sedaka, *What He Can Expect When She's Not Expecting: How to Support Your Wife, Save Your Marriage and Conquer Infertility!* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2011); Ilse Sherokee, *Empty Arms: Coping with miscarriages, stillbirth and infant death* (Maple Plain: Wintergreen Press, 2002); Pamela Mahoney Tsigdinos, *Silent Sorority: A Barren Woman Gets Busy, Angry, Lost and Found* (Charleston: Booksurge, 2010). Not only are many of these books bestsellers, speaking to market for such works but they are all relatively recent publications.

⁷⁹ Baker, interview, 20 September 2010.

miscarriage while at the same time being devastated by postpartum depression (PPD). Postpartum depression was described by those who admitted to suffering from it as a very traumatic experience. Women with PPD felt unable fulfil their goal of motherhood, and this made them feel, as Marjorie Taylor described, less than a woman.⁸⁰ For Marjorie the social role of mother was connected to her understanding of herself as a female whereas the biological reproductive roles was not. Even Fiona Shortt who had a hormonal imbalance *during* pregnancy and was “fine” afterwards, framed her depression as a problem only because she could not take care of her children that were already born while she was experiencing symptoms.

It was horrible. Because I would be standing baking or something and it was like a blanket coming down. I could feel it coming all the way down my body. And I would say if I run to the other side of the room it won't get me. That's how physical it was! And with my second child I was very, very depressed and I thought I'd have to kill myself and my daughter because I couldn't leave her for my husband to look after.

Fiona ties remembrances of her depression with the domestic task of baking, demonstrating the clear break in her mind between her functioning as normal, engaged in a household task and properly fulfilling her role as a mother, and the time under the depression. In the latter circumstance Fiona conceptualized herself as failure as she was not only unable to take care of her elder daughter but a danger to her. It is important to note Fiona's concern that she might kill her living daughter was not extended to her unborn child demonstrating that she considered the relationship with the two entities as fundamentally different – to her daughter she was a mother while she had not taken on that role in regards to the unborn child.

“I saved him.” The Familial Body and Mother's Modification⁸¹

One of the strongest characteristics of the wife/mother body in the dominant body politics was that the mother body was constructed as always willing to sublimate its needs to serve the needs of the family. Mothers were expected to modify their behaviour and even their bodies to ensure the happiness and well-being of their husbands and children. To avoid doing so was to reject one's identity as a woman. Even Lucy Ricardo, whose attempts to move beyond her domestic sphere was the central plot device in many episodes, always (eventually) prioritized her role as a wife and mother over her dream of stardom. There are elements of this ideal in the narratives of many of the women I interviewed. The

⁸⁰ Taylor, interview, 17 October 2010.

⁸¹ Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010.

clearest, most uncomplicated example of personal sacrifice for the family occurred in Diane West's history. Diane (married 1957) found great joy and fulfillment in her employment as a teacher and continued to teach after her children, a daughter and then a son, were born. However, just two weeks after her son was born her husband died suddenly of acute pancreatitis. Not only did Diane assume extra work such as selling Tupperware to make ends meet, but eventually she decided to leave teaching because of her inability to teach and deal with her son's constant ill health as a single parent.

I discovered that teaching is not the answer for a single mom with a teenager and a sick baby cause [son's name deleted] was born premature and he had real lung problems at first. You wouldn't know it now he's a big strapping man but at that time he was sick a lot. So I thought I'm going to go back to school and I'm going to take business administration and I'm going to work in human resources.⁸²

Later in the interview when I asked Diane about what was most important in her life she went back to her experience as a teacher.

Diane: Oh yeah. I loved teaching far more than I ever loved working in business. You're teaching and you're working to try and explain something to a child and you go six ways from Sunday and nothing seems to work and you aren't getting through and all of a sudden you see that light go on. And it makes your whole day worthwhile.

Heather: Yeah. So was it really hard to give up then since you had to give it up?

Diane: I had to give it up because I just didn't have the energy for it.

Heather: And was that another loss almost?

Diane: It was tough. It was another loss. Yeah I would say that.⁸³

Diane went on to talk about how she had regained some of that lost experience through her involvement in her local Rotary Club's adopted school. However, it was clear that leaving the job she loved to go into the much less demanding business administration sector was a sacrifice she made for her family, specifically her son, in the wake of her husband's sudden death. It was a sacrifice made at the cost of her own happiness and sense of fulfillment in her work.

Diane's story – the only narrative of a single uncomplicated and totally selfless sacrifice for the family – was an anomaly. There were other narratives of sacrifice and modification, including sacrifices that were particularly embodied, but in those cases the narrative scripts were altered and the overall

⁸² West, interview, 19 July 2010.

⁸³ Ibid.

meaning of the act changed. That is, though in some ways the women followed the prescriptive discourses of previous chapters they either consciously or unconsciously complicated those discourses by altering their overall meaning.

Fiona Shortt's marriage was not healthy. Her husband emotionally abused her before suddenly divorcing her and leaving her in a difficult emotional and financial position at the time of her interview. In an effort to please her husband and bring her family together, Fiona consistently modified herself and her situation throughout their marriage. She agreed to leave all her family and immigrate to Canada, internalized the blame for her husband's passive-aggressive bouts of silence, and agreed to stop having children when he said they had had enough.⁸⁴ Fiona even went back to work at the advice of her husband's doctor.

Fiona: I can remember my ex-husband had high blood pressure in his thirties and so he was taken into hospital. [The hospital doctor] he said to me "your husband will live a minimum of ten years and a maximum of twenty-five so get off your butt and go out to work and take some of the financial strain off of him!" I was in a state of shock. So I phoned my doctor and he said "well Fiona that could be true." He said "not only that he could die and you'll have all of them to look after." You know the children to look after.

Heather: And that didn't happen though obviously.

Fiona: No. I saved him. [laughs bitterly] I was told not to let him worry. If there were any problems with the school I dealt with it. I dealt with my children. I never, you know, took problems to him and I just did whatever I could. And then we moved to [city name removed] and I went out to work and my son said to me "please mum don't go out to work." I said to him "it's better that I be a working wife than a working widow." I never told him [her husband]. What the doctor said.

Yet Fiona framed this sacrifice as not living up to the assurance of family safety and harmony promised to her by the dominant discourse. Instead she blamed the miscarriage of her third child on her overstretching herself and the stress of her husband's condition.

About a year later I went into shock. I was just going to bed and I collapsed on the living room floor crying my eyes out. And I knew it was shock. [Her husband] said, "What's the matter? What's the matter?" And I didn't tell him. And that's when I had a miscarriage. I became pregnant and I was terrified of having another child. I mean we'd always planned on having another child before. But I was thinking with high blood pressure and another mouth to feed and after what the doctor'd told me. I was absolutely terrified. And I think that's why I lost the child. I'm convinced that's why I lost the child. I've heard it said that babies know when they're not wanted.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

In direct opposition to Fiona's narrative is Margaret Brown's narrative of her illegal abortion. In both the medical and religious discourses obtaining an abortion was the ultimate act of selfishness on the part of a woman; it signalled her emotional and spiritual alienation from the family and maternity. Yet, Margaret Brown framed her abortion as a supreme sacrifice that she made for her family. Far from being a singular or selfish act, it was one she undertook with her husband as a married couple. As she tells it, her husband, who originally had trained as a television antennae installer, had to quit his job because of a bad back injury. He returned to school to train as a teacher and Margaret went back to work temporarily as a bookkeeper in a real estate office to make ends meet.

And anyway suddenly I found out I was pregnant. And we I cried a lot. I cried and I said, "You know what this'll be the end of the dream. You'll have to stop what you are doing... I don't know what you're gonna do." It spoiled everything. And of course him being Catholic he was pretty upset. I said, "I want... I'll have to get an abortion." I knew that's what I had to do. And then I thought well that's easy [husband's name removed] who gives them? Who do I know that does that?⁸⁶

A short time later Margaret found out the name of a doctor who would perform illegal abortions from a male colleague at work. She went to a secret office with her husband and had the procedure and described the aftereffects. "It was worse than having a baby. Oh God! Cause then you lose it. That was when I lost it and oh we did cry. We both cried. I wish I had never done it. But I had no choice! It was either that or I don't know what he would have done for a living. He had no other skills."⁸⁷ Margaret further explained that both she and her husband would have liked to have had another child had the circumstances been different. Though not ashamed of the decision, she said, "I feel regretful though. I'm sorry I had to do it."⁸⁸ According to the prescriptive body politics such an event should have shattered the relationship between Margaret and her husband; instead, the abortion was both a shared decision and a shared pain that brought them much closer together and at the time of the interview they were still married and continued to care deeply for one another.

These more singular events aside, there was a general sense from most of the women that they would have to bend more than their husbands to make the marriage work. Most claimed that they had to make many sacrifices over the length of their marriage.⁸⁹ Glenda Baker, a war bride, talked about the

⁸⁶ Brown, interview, 19 July 2010.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ It is possible that the men in those marriages also felt they were making sacrifices and it would be interesting to see if they would frame those sacrifices within the gendered scripts of the day – for example having to work long hours to provide for

difficulty in returning to see her family in England as she always had to travel there with her children by herself. Her husband, who had had a “bad war,” refused to return to a place so fraught with painful memories.⁹⁰ Other war brides, such as Lois Adamson, Verna King, and Alice Hall, all talked about forcing down their loneliness from being so far away from their families and refocusing their energy, most often towards their children, when life got really bad.⁹¹ Still other war brides, such as Florence Anderson and Karen Rand, dealt with the more serious issue of their respective husband’s drinking problems to cope with war experiences. Karen notes that she finally learned to drive when she could no longer rely on her husband to be sober enough to drive them home.⁹² Florence almost left her husband, even packing her bags and going to the Greyhound bus station, while her husband was out drinking and her boys were asleep. However, Florence said she came to realize that her husband’s drinking was not his fault and she returned home without him ever knowing she had left. She noted that though she had seen some of the devastation of the war working as part of the WAAF, it did not compare to the horrors her husband had witnessed.

It’s hard to say this because I saw a lot myself at the [WAAF] station where I was. I saw these people coming in off the planes just scraps of humanity, badly wounded, liberated from the camps, just skeletons. I saw that. But my husband saw worse. And was actually living in it. Like I was in England. I was safe. You know those men they came home to Canada or wherever they were and they weren’t given the help. They weren’t given the understanding. Their refuge – a lot of them was to go to the different clubs you know Army, Navy, Legion, different veterans clubs were they could commiserate and be with their buddies. Well that I guess instead of really helping them it just continued it you see?⁹³

Florence framed this discussion by talking about how the current military treats men in similar situations, based on her son’s experience in the Navy. In this way for Florence, and for some of the other war brides, the sacrifices they made, be they small day-to-day modifications or larger forfeits, were a continuation of the Home Front spirit in which they engaged during the war. They were, in their minds, making small changes to comfort and protect the men who had, again according to their rationale, made much bigger sacrifices and so deserved support.⁹⁴ This seems to have given these women a sense of peace and pride, especially in those cases where their marriages failed to live up to their expectations. In

their families when they would rather be home with them. However, such an examination is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

⁹⁰ Baker, interview, 20 September 2010.

⁹¹ Adamson, interview, 19 March 2010; Hall, interview, 28 June 2010; King, interview, 20 September 2010.

⁹² Rand, interview, 7 July 2010.

⁹³ Anderson, interview, 20 September 2010.

⁹⁴ Fiona Shortt also conceptualized her modifications in this way excusing her husband’s behaviour by noting that he had been terribly abused by family members that he had been sent to as an evacuated child. Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010.

contrast, later narrators did not have such a clear cut discursive strategy to conceptualize inequalities. Either they expected that they and their husbands would both have to undertake some modifications to ensure marital accord, as Mary Johnston, Joyce Martin, and Nancy Wilson did, or they found themselves at a loss to explain why they alone had to bend themselves to suit the family. Jessica Bateman, for example, could never articulate why she endured the inequalities within her marriage even as she protested them and there were times that this inability caused her to become uncomfortable and even hostile during the course of the interview.

“But it was just sex and that’s all.” The (Un)Importance of Sex Within Marriage⁹⁵

By far the most coherent ideal presented by all the dominant body politics in the previous chapters was the importance of mutually enjoyable married sexuality. Social authorities continuously reinforced the sexualisation of marriage; each time that they wrote about, debated the issue, or showed it on television, they increased its prestige in the social consciousness. Sexual frequency and enjoyment were the ultimate barometer of normality and the chances of long term success within marriage.

Some interviewees, when asked about the sexuality of their marriages, supported this dominant idealization. Those who constructed their married lives within the narrative framework of grand romantic style were especially likely to do so. Karen Rand, though widowed relatively young, remained steadfast against the possibility of marrying again, stating: “I’m a one man woman.” She had an almost naughty smile on her face as she recalled her sexual relationship with her husband. “We had excellent sex. We did. We had a very good marriage, very compatible marriage and (um) oh sex was always there. He was [chuckles and pauses] *very virile*. Yeah he always liked his sex.” Karen also affirmed that she liked their sexual contact as much as he did.⁹⁶ Nancy Wilson, also widowed, likewise described her marriage as fated, even divinely constructed, and noted that sexuality was a key part of their connection to each other throughout their lifetimes. “It’s just a wave of energy. That just is...I don’t even know how the words...it’s so intense it blows your mind you don’t even know what your mind’s doing. It’s just so intense!”⁹⁷ However, the most moving story of sexual togetherness was narrated by Edith Small. When I asked if sex remained an important part of her relationship throughout her marriage, she replied by saying:

⁹⁵ Martin, interview, 4 October 2010.

⁹⁶ Rand, interview, 7 July 2010.

⁹⁷ Wilson, interview, 19 April 2010.

It was pretty well steady right throughout the marriage really. One of my most beautiful memories is the night before he went into hospital before he died. We knew it was serious but had no idea in our heads that this would be the last time we would be in a bed together and that was the last time that we had it. But (um) and it was very poignant because even though we didn't realize this was the end we must have realized it was pretty bad.⁹⁸

For all these women sexual intercourse with their husbands both created and affirmed the love they had for each other. They all firmly denied ever having sex solely to fulfill their husband's needs indicating that in addition to emotional compatibility these couples were also highly sexually well-suited. Further, in all three cases these narrators affirmed that sexuality was a lasting feature of their marriage in which they engaged throughout their lives, including in times of ill health or in the face of encroaching old age.

These women were thus in congruence with the dominant body politics in many ways. Nancy's description of the emotional, spiritual, and physical feelings surrounding the sex act is remarkably similar to the discourses of the Protestant churches describing the "one flesh" body. However, none of these women directly referenced the dominant discourses discussed in the previous chapter making the transmission of those ideals difficult to track. There was a sense of "rightness" expressed by the above narrators regarding their marriage and this romanticism was in direct contrast to the logical, even dispassionate, search for compatibility as demonstrated in the medical and religious discourses. Instead, these women used a romantic frame to narrate their acceptance of postwar sexual norms weaving their sexual lives with their husbands into a great story of romance and "fated" connection. By framing their sexual congruence in this way these women both fulfilled and subverted, if only slightly, the dominant prescriptive discourses, in telling the stories of their own lives.

Much more deviant were the many women who, when asked about their married sexuality, were noncommittal, almost indifferent, about their experiences. When I asked Marjorie Taylor (married 1946) to characterize her married sex life she merely said it was "not wildly exciting," even after she learned to orgasm during coitus. When I pressed her for further details she noted that she never really initiated sex, though she usually went along with it when her husband did. She concluded that, as a whole, their sex life was "fine." Marjorie then directed the conversation to other aspects of marriage such as her children, her tone making it clear to me that in the schema of her marriage sex was fairly low in the hierarchal scale.⁹⁹ These themes were repeated in other interviews. Verna King's (married 1942) only comment

⁹⁸ Small, interview, 19 September 2010.

⁹⁹ Taylor, interview, 17 October 2010.

when I inquired as to the quality of her sexual relationship with her husband was that “it was regular.”¹⁰⁰ Other women made it clear that sex within marriage was something that was more important to their husbands than to themselves. They either noted, as Fiona Shortt did, that they would attempt to avoid sexual contact or fake an orgasm to get it over with, or that, like Marjorie, they went along with it if their husband initiated the contact but more out of affection for him than a real sexual desire.¹⁰¹

For these narrators married sexuality was something that was either never a priority or only one during the early “honeymoon” phase of their marriages. In this, they rejected the dominant discourses that gave sexuality the primary arbitrator of marital compatibility and longevity. It is true that some of them, such as Fiona Shortt, ended up seeing their marriages end via divorce; however, the majority remained married and expressed their overall contentment with their unions stating they “would do it all again.”¹⁰² Many of the narrators, especially the older brides, focused on different indicators of marital success tied more to the fulfilment of gender roles rather than sexual enjoyment. They referenced more practical successes usually honing in on their husband’s consistency as a decent provider and a good father to their children as evidence that their husbands had satisfied their marital requirements.

In focusing on their husbands’ successes as a breadwinner and parent, these narrators demonstrate both the strengths and weaknesses of Leviathan body politics. That is, a male’s ability to be both a good provider and father were key features of the dominant gender discourses. The narrators’ lack of sexual desire had the potential to situate them on the abnormal side of the married heterosexual spectrum of normality. However, by foregrounding their husband’s gender role compliance traits while at the same time exhibiting the outward signs of gender normalcy and sexual compatibility, these women displayed perfect congruence with the Leviathan bodies, at least within in the public eye.¹⁰³

At the same time these narrators demonstrated the fundamental weakness of the authoritative body politics, they also demonstrated their greatest strengths. In nearly every interview when I asked the narrator about the frequency of their sexual congress with their husband, they replied with some variation of “average.” When I would press them to define average for me they would usually reverse the question, asking me, ostensibly an expert on sexuality, to tell them. To me this exchange, repeated so often, belied not only the narrators’ desire to be defined as sexually normal but their ultimate ignorance

¹⁰⁰ King, interview, 20 September 2010.

¹⁰¹ Taylor, interview, 17 October 2010. This was also echoed by Mary Johnston. Johnston, interview, 19 April 2010.

¹⁰² Carter, interview, 20 September 2010.

¹⁰³ This normality was manifested most clearly by the having of children and simply staying together over the long term.

of what “normal” or “average” sexual frequency or sexual enjoyment really was.¹⁰⁴ Though the dominant body politics clearly imprinted their message that married sex was good and should be enjoyed frequently their failure to impose exact numbers left a wide range of interpretation as to what was within the realms of normality. At the same time all my interview subjects clearly wanted me to define what was a statistical average (that being the most recognizable form of normal to them) so that they could then identify themselves as in congruence to that number. Only in one case did I actually do this – in an interview with Jean Simpson. Her response is important not because she and her husband as an individual couple did not conform to the North American average of sexual contact but because of her desire to change her answer once she inadvertently found herself in the “abnormal” category.

Heather: Yeah. So after the children were born did the sexuality remain the same?

Jean: Yeah I don’t know. Well that’s not true I’m thinking probably average. You know.

Heather: What would you consider average?

Jean: What would we consider average? I don’t know would it be somewhere between two and four times a week?

Heather: That’s actually above average.

Jean: Is it? Yeah. You see I think that’s another myth that one has this idea that if you’re happily married you’re sort of having sex all the time yeah but nobody tells you what is an average amount. Well you know that is interesting...so maybe I am closer to two than four I don’t know. I was going to say two to three and then I thought four covers the whole thing.¹⁰⁵

Upon hearing that her marriage was more sexually active than the average North American – something that many people would not see as problematic or even view as worth boasting about – Jean backtracks to drastically reduce her number.¹⁰⁶ Further, it is obvious that Jean, highly educated with a Masters in social work, was at least partially aware that her desire to be average was something imposed upon her by outside authoritative forces. She made the attempt both here and in other points of her interview to

¹⁰⁴ At least they wanted to be seen as sexually normal for the majority of their sexual lives. Most of the narrators seemed to recognize that variations in sexual frequency and enjoyment were to be expected.

¹⁰⁵ Simpson, interview, 5 July 2010.

¹⁰⁶ According to several large scale studies in the United States and Canada the average amount of sexual activity for heterosexual couples is seven times a month, or slightly less than two times a week. See: Amy Muise, “The Passion Paradox: The Ins and Outs of Sexual Frequency,” *Psychology Today* 8 June 2012, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-passion-paradox/201206/the-ins-and-outs-sexual-frequency>. However, what is important about this exchange is not that Jean Simpson had more frequent than average sexual contact with her husband but her reaction against being defined as not average and thus, not “normal.”

examine her sexual life as an outside academic observer might. Yet, despite her discussion of the “myth” of average sexuality, she still ends the dialogue by trying to change her answer to put her closer to what I, as the resident sexuality expert, define as the “normal” amount.

This desire to at least appear normal to the public, represented by me as the interviewer, also manifested itself when narrators became difficult, even hostile, during the interview process. The clearest example of this occurred in my interview with Jessica Bateman (married 1964) who had an evasive and even aggressive response to many of my questions despite being briefed as to the interview’s content as part of the process of informed consent. Indeed, I wondered for a long time after the session why she had chosen to contact me for an interview at all. It was only in reviewing the transcripts later that it became clear that Jessica was deeply conflicted about her sexual normalcy and the role of sex within her marriage. Having been brought up a strict Lutheran, Jessica admitted that she was taught that “sex was dirty,” a fact reinforced by her mother whose own sexual history was complex and often tragic.¹⁰⁷ Jessica stated that she enjoyed having sex with her husband at the beginning of the marriage and rated it “a 9 out of 10.”¹⁰⁸ Later, her desire to return to work full time as a nurse and, subsequently, open her own business, strained the gender dynamic between her and her husband and caused them to become estranged, though they remained married and still lived together. However, it was only near the end of the interview that Jessica’s sexual conflict became truly illuminated. When I asked her if she had ever wanted to break up with her husband or have an affair (after he had engaged in one during their estrangement) she answered forcefully in the negative. She said that she would never have an affair, not out of loyalty to her husband (as she said she had very little left), or out of lack of opportunity, but because she simply did not want to. She explained that she was currently taking high blood pressure medication that had the side effect of drastically lowering her libido. She described the medication as “a bit of blessing,” while at the same time admitting her reaction meant that “something was wrong with [her].”¹⁰⁹ Jessica then described how her upbringing, combined with her experience as a community nurse where she once witnessed a threesome during a nursing home visit, as well as the sexually casual attitude of young people, caused her to view sex as a degrading act. She ended her story with the statement, “Who needs it?”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ According to Jessica she found out much later in life that her mother had been molested by her mother’s uncle. Also, her mother had been forced in to what amounted to an arranged marriage. Bateman, interview, 19 July 2010.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

I conclude that Jessica's original hostility during the interview process was part of her struggle with a desire to tell a story that she felt was true and important, but yet totally incongruent with authoritative norms. The only positive sexual experience she could draw on was the early sexual encounters with her husband. After their estrangement, which Jessica blamed on her husband's continued enforcement of patriarchal gender relations, she notes that those early sexual experiences became tainted with overtones of submission and degradation. The fact that Jessica was trained as a nurse and so would have come into contact with the medical body politic more than most of the other narrators might have also contributed to her difficulty in expressing her deviance.

Jean's reframing of her answer, Jessica's difficulty in expressing her "abnormality," and the desire of all the narrators to be seen as "average" demonstrates that for all my interviewees the ideal postwar body would be one whose normality was guaranteed by its adherence to a statistical mean. For them being "average" was the most concrete marker proving that their bodies were non-deviant. This "tyranny of the average" was present even in cases when the narrators had no actual number on which to focus. Almost none of the dominant discourses ever mentioned what was the "correct" amount of sexual contact within a marriage yet every single woman I interviewed, with one key exception, policed their responses in order to live up to the completely unknown median standard.¹¹¹

"I was angry! Oh I was angry!": Bodies Beyond the Reach of the Leviathan¹¹²

The bodies of my narrators were rarely in direct defiance to dominant postwar norms, preferring instead to alter or stretch the boundaries of normal, or the appearance of normal, to make change. Even their most direct defiance of the dominant body politic was usually unintentional. However, there were two cases in which my narrators found themselves in a state of subversion, not due to differences in nuance between generally similar dominant and corporeal bodies, but because their experiences were almost completely unaddressed by, and so outside the control of, the dominant body politics. These silences are what Foucault calls the "affirmation of non-existence" or the muzzling of certain aspects of sexuality within the dominant body politics.¹¹³ Foucault notes that during the Victorian era aspects of

¹¹¹ Significantly, only Nancy Wilson, whose whole narrative was built around her concept of herself as an exceptional woman, and self-professed "indigo" – a new age term denoting a special person with a unique destiny on earth – was comfortable in proclaiming that her personal sexual drive, as well as the frequency of her sexual relationship with her husband, was uniquely high. Wilson, interview, 19 April 2010.

¹¹² West, interview, 19 July 2010.

¹¹³ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction Volume I* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 4.

sexuality that were deemed unsavoury or uncomfortable were made to disappear. As he explains it, using the example of the sexuality of children:

Everyone knew, for example, that children had no sex, which is why they were forbidden to talk about it, why one closed one's eyes and stopped one's ears whenever they came to show evidence to the contrary, and why a general and studied silence was imposed. These are the characteristic features of repression, which serve to distinguish it from the prohibitions maintained by penal law: repression operated as a sentence to disappear but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence, and, by implication, an admission that there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know.¹¹⁴

Though not completely absent, marital infidelity remained elusive within the dominant discourses. Though mentioned very occasionally in the Protestant religious documents the subject was never the focus of the intense study or debate to which other aspects of marriage were subject. People looking for guidance in the face a partner's infidelity were given some brief Christian homilies about forgiveness before the article, paper, or pamphlet moved on to another topic.¹¹⁵ In contrast infidelity was a common feature of the television show *I Love Lucy* as Lucy, Ricky and in one case Ethel, imagined a scenario in which their spouse was unfaithful. However, this infidelity was always a fantasy used for comedic and narrative effect and the audience was always "in" on the gag –letting the audience believe, even for a short time, that any of the characters could behave in such a way was unthinkable.¹¹⁶

Thus the dominant body politics had very little to offer the women who discovered that their husbands had been unfaithful and had to somehow make that betrayal fit in with narrative of their marriages and their own sexuality within those unions. Some of the narrators, as with the case of Jessica Bateman, felt they had no choice but to ignore the indiscretion and move forward holding the marriage together the best they could, especially if they deemed the affair to be primarily physical or if they had no proof than an actual indiscretion had occurred.¹¹⁷ More difficult was a case such as Diane West's, whose first husband had an affair that she deemed both sexual and emotional. Diane's sister, who came to her house to clean it while Diane worked, caught her husband and the woman in the act.

¹¹⁴ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 4.

¹¹⁵ See: *The Lambeth Conference 1958 Encyclical Letter from the Bishops Along with Resolutions and Reports* (S.P.C.K. and Seabury Press 1958), 115; *The Hallowing of the Union* (Toronto: Diocesan Marriage Services, 196?), 187; "Fourth Finger Left Hand," (United Church Publishing House, n.d.), 121-123; 136 United Church Archives of Canada (hereafter UCAC), Accn. 77051C f. 117, David A. MacLennan, "Family Life," 3 February 1946.

¹¹⁶ See: "Lucy is Jealous of Girl Singer," *I Love Lucy*, Marc Daniels, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 17, 1951; Ricky's Old Girlfriend," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, December 21, 1953; "Fan Magazine Interview," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, February 8, 1954; "Don Juan and the Starlets," *I Love Lucy*, William Asher, dir., Desilu Productions, Inc. Originally aired CBS, February 14, 1955,

¹¹⁷ Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010; Johnston, interview, 19 April 2010.

Diane: My sister told me. I was teaching you see and so I was working full time and so she used to do my housecleaning for me. And one day she came in and caught them.

Heather: Oh my goodness.

Diane: So she told me what had happened and so I confronted him and I was angry. Oh I was angry!

Heather: And did it take a long time to forgive him?

Diane: Yeah it took probably a while...quite a while I would think. It took a while to trust him more than.... Forgive I could do. Trust was harder.

Diane was the only narrator who sought out an authority – her female United Church minister – to obtain marital counselling in response to infidelity. Using that resource she notes they were able to get past the affair and they never spoke about it for the rest of their marriage.¹¹⁸ However, one has to wonder what other options, other than forgiveness, Diane was offered or felt she had. Dominant sexual body politics were built on the foundation that sexuality was a positive barometer of marital happiness. Therefore, sexual infidelity in marriage signaled that the union was fundamentally broken – abnormal. At the same time, though increasingly accepting of divorce as a last resort, all the dominant discourses were invested in keeping marriages together. These two priorities conflicted with each other and essentially paralyzed the dominant body politic in regards to this issue making forgiveness or careful ignorance the only options available to women; this was one more way Leviathan bodies, when confronted with the reality of real fleshy bodies in actual marriages, were weakened by that interaction.

The second, much more glaring, silence was the almost complete absence of sexual danger within dominant married sexual discourses.¹¹⁹ Foucault notes that when an undesirable discourse cannot be fully silenced it is pushed to the margins of society. Thus, not only was sexual danger almost completely absent in the authoritative discourses, when it did happen it only happened to “bad” or somehow “damaged” women who engaged in “risky” behaviours such as prostitution. It was made inconceivable that a “normal” married woman would ever find herself in that situation. Yet, as feminism has striven to point out throughout the latter twentieth century and into the twenty-first, any woman can

¹¹⁸ West, interview, 19 July 2010.

¹¹⁹ It should be noted that no sexual danger of any kind was present including danger from within the marriage itself. Marital rape was completely ignored. However, as none of my interviewees reported it I cannot provide any oral history context to that issue.

become a victim of sexual danger. The fallacies of these silences were exposed by two of my narrators: Fiona Shortt and Edith Small.

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Fiona framed her sexual life as being bookended by two violations. The first occurred when she was molested as a young child. The second occurred during the 1980s, when she was in her fifties and after her husband had left her, as a strange man grabbed her and attempted to force her into the home she shared with her son (who was away working at the time). She started by describing how, as she was getting off the bus, a gust of wind blew her coat aside.

Fiona: Showing my leg and I thought my God I'm inviting rape. And I walked down the lane. And I was putting my key in the lock to open the back door there was just three little steps up. And this arm came up between my legs. Like this. And the other one around my waist. And I had my hand up and the head was under here [gesturing under her arm]. And the shoulders. And I pulled the key out right away. And I started pummelling like this. "Let go! Let go! Let go!" I thought you stupid twit. [laughs]

Heather: And did he just run off?

Fiona: Nope. He stood up and I was there I was backed against the door you see. Couldn't do anything 'cause he was there. And he was telling me all the "nice" things he was going to do to me. And I couldn't scream I couldn't call for help I couldn't do anything because I'd [sharp intake of air] you know. Atrophied or whatever I couldn't do a thing. So I... I... I stood there. Just stood there. I couldn't do anything. Anyway I began to get my voice back because I [high pitched sound] this little squeak coming out! And he started backing off. And then the home at the bottom of the road was being renovated and the carpenters had come back to work and they were hammering. And I was getting my voice back so I think he began to understand that I might really be yelling soon. So he started backing off ...backing off. And I went to put the key in the lock and he jumped so I pulled it out again. And by this time I'm yelling a bit more. So he backs off more and I get the key in the lock and open it and jump in and then slam the door! And I sit down and I think should I call the police or shouldn't I? Cause I didn't get raped. And then I thought don't be so stupid he might go after someone else. And I called the police. It took them about half an hour to come.¹²⁰

Initially, Fiona said she felt fine but later she began to experience symptoms of anxiety and fear. Luckily the police had left her a handbook with resources for assault survivors including the rape assault hotline. Fiona used these services and credits the latter in helping her deal with the attack.

I remember being shocked by Fiona's narrative – both when she first recounted it to me and later when I transcribed it. I was surprised by how often she laughed in the retelling of what was a horrific and traumatic event in her life. It was only when I interviewed Edith Small that I began to formulate a hypothesis as to why the women framed their experiences as they did.

¹²⁰ Shortt, interview, 5 July 2010.

Edith Small seemed even less concerned than Fiona was when she narrated the story of her attack, which occurred while she was working at a greenhouse as part of the Land Army during the war. Edith did not even go so far as to frame the attack as a significant event, only mentioning it in passing as part of her larger explanation of why her first boss was such a big influence on her life. The exchange, though lengthy, is worth inclusion here in its entirety as it demonstrates how often Edith veered away from the topic which I argue is indicative of her discomfort in its inclusion in her life's sexual narrative.

Edith: Yes well I he [her first boss] became a great friend really. And I think the foreman of the place was of call up age but he'd got an exemption because of his job. (um) I couldn't stand the man. He once jumped me in a...in a shed. They'd borrowed a horse from somebody to do some work at one point and I was the only one there that knew anything about horses and so I used to have to get up early in the morning and this animal was shedded not too far from where I was living. It was sort of on my way to the nursery. And so I used to (um) to go to this barn and look after the horse and take him to the nursery if we were using him. [long interjection talking about wartime food shortages] And so we borrowed this horse. I think that was the time that we harvested the potatoes. And of course I felt like somebody; 'cause here was me driving on the main road through from London with a horse and cart [laughs] when everyone else was on four wheels. And stopping this horse at the traffic lights [laughs] now I can remember I just felt like somebody up there. Everybody looking to see this woman. But um.... [trails off]

Heather: So you said he jumped you. Do you mean he sexually assaulted you?

Edith: (um) He really...he came in the shed and I didn't know he was there. And he had nothing to do there. Cause it was quite a distance from the...from the premises where we worked and just a place that we had rented for the short time we had this horse. (um) Anyway I was harnessing up the horse and all of a sudden somebody grabbed me from behind and put their arms around my neck and pulled themselves right tight to me. And I turned around and it was him and [laughs] oh dear I gave him an elbow in the face for one thing.

Heather: And so nothing happened you didn't...

Edith: No. Nothing happened. But that's what he came there for so....

Heather: So when you gave him the elbow in the face did he just sort of give up?

Edith: Well he went very red. He was mad! He went red in the face. But I mean...I'd never...I couldn't...I didn't like the man anyways so I certainly never encouraged him. But...and he had a wife and family! But I'd gathered that this wasn't the first time that he'd...done this sort of thing so.... He was good at his job but I don't think anybody liked him as a person. You know he was I think they only kept him there because he was a very good foreman and he knew as much about growing things under glass as the owner did.

Heather: And you didn't report him to your boss or anything?

Edith: I told the boss's son who was the one that most of us talked to. And who I kept in touch with until after he died and after that with his wife because they were very good to me (um) especially around the time I got married. My mom was pretty upset about this whole thing, my marriage – she was heartbroken and so I think that his wife kinda stepped in and helped me find stuff cause during the war you had to travel miles to find stuff for the wedding and I borrowed her veil I remember. Because we couldn't get one.

Heather: So what did the son say?

Edith: Hmm?

Heather: What did the boss's son say about this guy attacking you?

Edith: Oh he was furious and (um) he told me he spoke to him and had a good talk with him and he said, [to the man] (ah) "If it weren't for your wife and children," he said, "you would be gone." And of course it was very difficult to get anybody in his place because they were all away in the war. And he said, "If there's even a hint of this again," he said, "you will be gone." So I guess he worked there until he retired but um... [she then switched to another subject entirely]¹²¹

Initially Edith was not planning to discuss the details of the assault at all, instead moving the discussion to how she felt so proud driving the horse and wagon through town. Only when I prompted her did she expand the story and even then veered off on to several tangents including about the boss's son's demeanour, getting the material for her wedding dress, and her mother's concern over her upcoming marriage. Her tone was also confusing to me as it remained even throughout the story as if the tangents had the same emotional impact on her as assault did. Upon later analysis of her and Fiona's story together, however, I suspect that their seemingly inexplicable reactions to their assaults – humour and indifference – were likely coping mechanisms, especially given the time the assaults had taken place. I was shocked that Edith would remain working at a place where a man who had assaulted her was permitted to remain working; Edith alluded to the fact that the man had even attacked other girls. However, in addition to living a culture prior to second wave feminism that often overlooked sexual assault, it was war time and the British national motto was "Keep Calm and Carry On." Edith also noted that in every other way it was an excellent job that she enjoyed. Nor is it surprising that the boss's son, though sympathetic, did not dismiss the man citing both his need for skilled employees during the war and the man's family. Indeed, the boss's son's discussion with the man in which he reminded him of his role as a breadwinner and provider was in agreement with the medical opinions of the time which prescribed marriage and the nuclear family as a cure-all for many sexual deviances. Edith, with little real

¹²¹ Small, interview, 5 July 2010.

power, at a time when war propaganda urged women to make sacrifices, had few options. Indifference, with the notable exception of her assertion that *she* had nothing to be ashamed of (asserting her innocence and his guilt), was one of the only ways she could cope and minimize the long term impact that the event had on her.

Similarly, Fiona used humour, calling the man a “stupid twit” in her discourse to take back some power, even if it was just rhetorical, from her attacker. Fiona was more open about the dramatic nature of her experience both because it occurred later, in the 1980s when feminists were beginning to have successes in reframing violated women as innocent, and also due to her own personality. Perhaps because she was able to access better counselling resources, Fiona seems to have processed the event more fully and been able to understand it as part of her sexual history in a way that Edith, forty years earlier, could not.

Studies of rape and sexual assault, both contemporary and historical, suggest that out of eighteen women more than two women should have reported these kinds of experiences. Yet Fiona and Edith were the only narrators to reference sexual danger in their life stories. It is possible that the other sixteen women were lucky enough to avoid these situations; however, it is also likely that some of them experienced sexual assaults but chose not to tell me, as an interviewer, about them.¹²² Indeed, while I do not deny Fiona and Edith’s cases were frightening and traumatic they were also unusual. Most sexual assailants are not strangers and belong to the victim’s circle of immediate friends or family. To have to admit that such an attack happened closer to home, especially in the case of incest, would be extremely difficult to discuss with a comparative stranger. Further, as Karen Dubinsky and other authors have demonstrated, women were more likely to discuss (and prosecute) a sexual assault if the occurrence could not possibly be seen as their fault.¹²³ Neither Fiona nor Edith were involved in so-called “risky” or “immoral” behaviour such as being out late, visiting bars or unsavory parts of town, or keeping company with men, that would have been used against them both in the legal courts and the court of public opinion. Indeed, despite this ultimate innocence Fiona still referenced this kind of “blame the victim” mentality when she mentioned “inviting rape” when her coat blew open demonstrating that discourse’s penetrative power. The other reason that Fiona and Edith might have been more willing to tell their

¹²² It should be noted I never asked a question directly about sexual assault only asking more generally about “bad times” sexually to open to the door to a discussion of general sexual issues.

¹²³ For histories of sexual assault see: Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Constance Backhouse, *Carnal Crimes: Sexual Assault Law in Canada, 1900-1975* (Toronto: Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 2008) and Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Women’s Lives, Men’s Laws* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2005).

stories is that their attacks were unsuccessful as they fought off the men and prevented a rape from actually occurring. Other women, attacked during a time when the victim of rape was culturally conditioned to feel shame, might have maintained the imposition of social silences about a more complete violation.

Cracks in the Leviathan: Assessing the Activist Potential of Partial Compliance and Private Feminism

Can bodies that, by their nature both benefitted from, and reinforced, dominant norms also create change and challenge those norms? Can, and should, such bodies be characterized as feminist or activist corporeal entities? On the surface, when the bodies of the eighteen narrators profiled in this chapter are profiled against the publically political activism of the subsequent generation it is easy to dismiss them. Women of the immediate postwar era thus become straw women lacking both a feminist outlook and the political will to employ that outlook to create change. Yet, if we move beyond such narrow definitions of feminism and activism a different picture emerges.

Veronica Strong-Boag provides a useful framework for understanding the feminist potential of the women in this chapter having faced a similar dilemma in her article “Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie,” which examines what happened to feminism after suffrage was achieved in the interwar period. Rejecting the notion that feminism “died” during this period she notes that, though traditionally understood (public) political gains were few in the interwar period, feminist thinking survived. She argues much of the feminist energies of women were directed inward towards their families especially in the difficult times of the Great Depression. “In the 1920s and 1930s women continued to talk about and act on the politics of the private sphere. Theirs was the feminism of...everyday life.”¹²⁴

According to Strong-Boag even the act of identifying gendered inequalities in ones’ personal life constituted a feminist outlook though “the optimism or the energy or the experience to demand the solutions we have traditionally come to define as political” was lacking.¹²⁵ Jean Simpson and Mary Johnston, the only ones to self-identify as feminists, demonstrate this personal, family-based feminism in the more egalitarian running of their households and in their pride in that equality. However, even

¹²⁴ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie,” in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd Edition, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 403.

¹²⁵ Strong-Boag, “Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load,” 411.

more subtle examples occurred. Both Alice Hall and Ruth Bell distanced themselves from feminism with Alice noting that “those feminist women were a bit crazy” and Ruth dismissing the movement as irrelevant to her.¹²⁶ Yet both Alice and Ruth reframed their acquiescence to stringent gender role separation as necessary due their husband’s particularly masculine weakness, demonstrating at the very least an awareness that natural gender role separation was anything but natural. Feminism could occur within the confines of one’s own consciousness.¹²⁷ Similarly, Lois Adamson’s claim of ownership over the house she shared with her husband bears hallmarks of feminism. Despite the fact that she did not contribute monetarily to the buying of their home (as Karen Rand did) Lois’s claim that it was “her” house and that “she owned it” demonstrates an awareness that her unwaged labour was a significant contribution to the family and thus had monetary and social capital. Though seemingly a small matter of semantics the recognition of the value of unwaged domestic labour not only was part of the second wave manifesto it was key to changes to married women’s property laws during the first wave when, in the aftermath of World War I, prairie women demanded legal recognition of their contributions to the viability of their farms and homesteads. Lois, by staking her claim to her house, was a conduit of continuity between the second and first wave whether she knew it or not.

The recognition of this personal or private feminism begs the question of efficacy. Could such small acts serve to change the status quo especially when many of the women interviewed chose to work within the confines of dominant social frames, stretching or manipulating their boundaries, rather than challenging them directly? According to sociologists Jane Mansbridge and Katherine Fraster, who echo Strong-Boag’s determination to expand the definition of political action, the answer is yes – through the workings of “everyday activism.” In their definition, “everyday activism” occurs when a person who is not formally and publically engaged in a particular social movement chooses to enact elements of that movement’s dogma in the “micronegotiations” with the people in their everyday lives.

Everyday activists further the social movement both through their cognitive acts of selection and by wielding their selected cultural critiques in micronegotiations with their bosses, husbands and friends. The everyday activists work both through power defined as the threat of sanction and the use of force, and through persuasion. . . . They thus participate, along with the interlocutors whose behavior they are trying to change, in a process of meaning making that challenges hegemonic understandings by deploying some aspects of the hegemonic values themselves.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Hall, interview, 28 June 2010; Bell, interview, 21 September 2010.

¹²⁷ Indeed, the second wave feminist movement saw this as the crucial first step towards engaging in political action – hence the importance of “consciousness-raising” within the movement.

¹²⁸ Jane Mansbridge and Katherine Flaster, “The Cultural Politics of Everyday Discourse: The Case of ‘Male Chauvinist,’” *Critical Sociology* 33 (2007): 628.

Margaret Brown's refusal to be shamed by her abortion narrative, her rewriting of that event as a sacrifice rather than as the epitome of selfishness demonstrates this principle. Though Margaret utilized the "mother as martyr" dominant ideal to disempower and disregard another, more unpalatable, Leviathan which painted "women like her" as selfish and mentally disturbed, she still used her body to challenge the status quo. In other cases, such as that of Fiona Shortt, it was the women's bodies that served as historical actors in destabilizing the efficacy of Leviathan body politics. According to the hegemonic discourse, Fiona's actions in modifying her maternal body to preserve the health of her husband should have been rewarded by greater familial health and happiness overall. Instead of reflecting this image of domestic bliss, however, Fiona's body portrayed the distorted and broken image of her miscarriage and, later, her eventual separation and divorce.¹²⁹

These acts, personal challenges to the status quo, are valid and important; however, they should not be viewed as the first steps in a triumphant linear march towards feminism and sexual liberalism. To do so would deny the complexity of daily negotiations the eighteen narrators made in the framing of their gender and sexual roles. Instead – to borrow Susan M. Carini's term from Chapter Four – the narrators' corporeal experiences served as "Coney Island" funhouse mirrors; sometimes they reflected only minor distortions and other times disfigured the image so greatly as to obscure the original picture.¹³⁰ Further, it cannot be forgotten that, while on the one hand many of the narrators expressed varying degrees of subversion, they also had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and therefore usually preferred working within dominant norms rather than challenging them directly. Those norms were not only comfortable and familiar to the women interviewed, they were also source of considerable power both as women as well as half of a heterosexual married couple. The eighteen narrators were involved in a constant and very complex dance performing corporeality that simultaneously challenged and supported the embodied postwar gender politics which both constrained and empowered them.

In many ways it was their very corporeality that most exposed the inherent weaknesses of the Leviathan ideals that they were supposed to emulate; that is, the inability of those ideal bodies to encapsulate the individuality of their corporeal reality. It is not surprising that the more generalized

¹²⁹ In other instances, unable or unwilling to change the status quo for themselves the narrators focused on creating change for their children creating change over time in that way. While many of the war brides reflected the importance of innocence in their sexual self-narratives they were determined that their daughters be more sexually prepared and most espoused a general acceptance most of their children and, in some cases, grandchildren living together and even having multiple sexual partners before marriage.

¹³⁰ Susan M. Carini, "Love's Labors Almost Lost: Managing Crisis during the Reign of 'I Love Lucy,'" *Cinema Journal* 43, no.1 (Fall 2003): 48.

messages of normality enjoyed the strongest reproduction in the bodies of the informants. For instance, the reliance by each of the narrators on me, the sexuality “expert,” to provide them with the parameters of normal sexual frequency so that they could perform their normality (at least rhetorically), demonstrates the efficacy of the general message of the importance of displaying sexual normalcy and the role of outside “experts” in defining those parameters. In contrast, specific details were rarely reproduced uncomplicatedly. The more specific the prescriptive discourse the more subject to contradiction and thus negotiation with the corpo-“reality” of everyday life. Finally, in some cases the corporeality of the narrative experience stood outside the reach of the Leviathan body politics reflecting an absence in the dominant discourses. Sexual situations such as marital infidelity or sexual danger were placed outside the boundaries of normal despite the fact that they occurred in otherwise “normal” lives. In promoting these silences, the Leviathan bodies also demonstrated their limited usefulness and over the long term those body politics that could not adapt would become increasingly irrelevant. While it would be a misnomer to characterize all of the bodies in this chapter as consciously activist there can be no doubt they, in large numbers, could weaken the structural integrity of the dominant structures. By creating such distortions from within, they helped make those structures vulnerable to future defiance from without.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion: Making Good (Sex)

Everyone has a sexuality, even those who don't practice it or those for whom the practice of it dictates not having it. In this way, sex might just be the ultimate in national belonging, that which is fundamentally shaped by gender, race, class and age but also transverses across those divisions.¹

As historian Stephen Maynard writes: sexual history is national history. Sex and sexuality, even the act of repressing it, is a part of our common humanity; mapping sexual history is the cartography of one of the prime motivating agents in our society. The preceding chapters of this dissertation have given ample evidence of this, demonstrating that sex in the postwar era was so central that many experts viewed it as the rock upon which a nation could rebuild itself. For the experts surveying the damages wrought by two world wars and an intervening economic disaster – damages including shifts in the understanding of gender roles, perceived changes in morality, and the altered face of the family as social stronghold – sex became a matter of importance nationally and for Western civilization as a whole. Experts sought, via the creation of sexual body politics – structures of sexual knowledges and mores that centred on an ideal or Leviathan body – to make sense of this seeming chaos and by policing bodies, especially female ones, to steer society into a new era of growth, stability, and moral certitude.

The foregoing chapters provide four different “archaeologies of the normal,” stemming from medical, Christian religious, popular cultural, and individual points of view. In this, the concluding chapter, I seek to bring these disparate archaeologies together, moving from the narrower, in-depth investigations of the previous chapters to create a broader, generalized understanding of the negotiated impacts of dominant body politics and their implementation as a whole. Developing this type of understanding begins with the analysis of the general organization of postwar discourses, notably their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the complex interaction between dominant body politics, their related ideal Leviathan bodies, and how they combined or conflicted to create an overarching female body ideal. This chapter also reflects how the corporeality of real bodies problematized the ideal Leviathans and how distortions from within the frame of normality could simultaneously signal change and continuity.

¹ Steven Maynard, “The Maple Leaf (Gardens) Forever: Sex, Canadian Historians and National History,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 97.

The Power to Compel: Structure and Weakness in Creating “Patient” Compliance

In this dissertation the dominant discourses represented move from the most contained – the medical voices of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* – to the least, the Lucy body in *I Love Lucy*, with its multitude of creators and consumers. That is, the *CMAJ* was the most uniform in its presentation of its body politic due to the tightly controlled layers of mediation that served to homogenize the discourse as a whole. Medicine during this time was a highly institutionalized and regularized society with a rigid focus on national standards of practice and of professional decorum, especially given the incipient development of social medicine. A supplementary layer was added by the mediated nature of the *CMAJ* as a source. Controlled by a panel of editors who were older and at the top of their profession, they were heavily invested in maintaining the conservative status quo.² Though the *CMAJ* was not fully expunged of any discourses that negated or complicated the dominant mother body, dissenting voices were significantly marginalized.

The highly constrained medical discourse left very little room for alternative readings of its body politic (though some did occur). Bodies within the *CMAJ* were overwhelmingly pathologized as ill and aberrant; they were portrayed as under complete control of those with the medical expertise to know them, physically and psychologically, from the inside out. Such corpora, often truncated into separate bodily fragments, demarked by disease, had little agency to protest their representation within the pages of that publication. Further, the fact that medical discourses were literally prescriptive discourses, as medical proclamations were socially endowed with the power to make people well, or prevent them from becoming ill, their ability to compel compliance was high.

The three main Christian denominations were in a very different position. Even the Anglophone Roman Catholic Church in Canada, which was fairly united within its own internal orthodoxy, brooking only minute defiance of its norms within the Anglophone context, still had to contend with a “free market” approach to spirituality. The faithful could, and did, shop around for their different belief systems, moving within and outside of the control of the three main spiritual body politics, and even drifting away from religion entirely. Correspondingly, religious body politics seemed to generally carry less weight and total “patient” compliance was rare. This was especially true of the Protestant sects whose theology became less and less tied to concrete canonical anchors under the period reviewed. All three churches were constrained by sexual frameworks that were increasingly difficult to justify in the face of changing sociocultural paradigms. The Protestant denominations chose to discard much of that

² LAC “Minutes of the Meeting of the CMA Executive Council,” Mflm 7491.

moral framework as irrelevant, but with it they also abandoned much of their theologically- and historically-based authority. Perhaps the churches were equally “damned” no matter which strategy they employed, as the Catholic Church’s attempts to remain relevant by clinging to conservative orthodoxy also proved problematic.

The inherent instability of the “Lucy body” was highlighted throughout Chapter Four as was the plurality in general of media discourse in both its creation and absorption. There is no doubt that *I Love Lucy* is the most loosely confined discourse in this dissertation, being subject to many dominant and perverse readings. What is interesting to note, however, is that while diffusion was a weakness in the religious body politics, it was a strength for *I Love Lucy* as it allowed a greater number of viewers to engage with the characters, especially Lucy, and therefore to more readily consume the show-as-product.³ Part of this strength also has to do with the surreptitious nature of media discourse in general which masks its role as cultural authority and as a producer, as well as a reflector, of societal norms. Television viewers are both passive and active participants in the pedagogical or transmitting process of a show’s message. That is, while viewers could reframe the Lucy body in multiple ways, the central message of the show legitimating postwar nuclear family bliss, as well as gender and sexual norms, could never be fully denied and viewers were encouraged to identify with the show’s characters, particularly Ricky and Lucy, to the point of replicating their clothing and household goods in their own homes. Thus, perhaps more than another other discourse in this dissertation, the media body politic of *I Love Lucy* obscured how postwar norms were actually social creations. The show’s façade as simply jolly fun successfully masked the coercive element of constantly performed, and positively portrayed, postwar norms.

Another layer of complexity is added when we consider the ways in which dominant discourses interacted with one another. Though they were focused on the same general goal – the overall legitimation and promotion of monogamous, heterosexual, married sex – they nonetheless differed on the details of what monogamous married sex should look like. As demonstrated above, the influence of each body politic was not the same as they were working from already unequal power bases. As a constructed whole the dominant body politics were most successful in demarcating the general boundaries between normal and abnormal bodies, but within those groupings the plurality of discourse made room for individual agency in negotiating the details. However, it is very difficult to determine

³ Interestingly the show was enjoyed by interviewees who identified themselves as feminists and those who eschewed the movement speaking to the Lucy body’s malleability.

when a woman, represented by the narrators from Chapter Five, chose one discourse over another; each dominant discourse was subject to its own internal negotiation, and such choices were rarely the result of a conscious weighing of one discourse against the others. However, there were a few instances where this occurred. Mary Johnston, who married a widower in 1952, went on the Pill after her fifth child was born despite self-identifying as a devout Roman Catholic. She justified her decision by invoking her doctor's medical authority – he informed her that at fifty her husband's health would be severely compromised by the necessity of supporting another child. Mary took the Pill until menopause. It was clear to me as the interviewer that Mary did not want to have additional children. Their family was already very large, with three children from her husband's previous marriage plus five of their own. Her unconscious use of one dominant sexual discourse (the medical ideal that birth control was positive for married couples) to counteract a personally less palatable one (the Anglophone Roman Catholic focus on preserving the potential for conception in all sexual acts) demonstrates that divergent discourses could be used against each other.⁴ Just as internal cracks, divisions, and perverse readings could be used to create individual power and agency within a single dominant discourse, the spaces in between such discourses could also be used to “work the system” from within.

Confronting Weakness from Unexpected Quarters: Rural Reality Disrupts Urban Ideals

One might expect that rural bodies, given the similar nostalgic framing of the postwar era as sexually bucolic and socially conservative, and the way that rural areas have been idealized as sexually “safe” since the Industrial Revolution, would support Leviathan ideals.⁵ This was not so. The interplay between rural and urban had a significant negative impact on the assimilation of dominant body politics by individual women demonstrating the drawbacks of a gendered historiographical gaze that remains firmly fixed on urban women's experiences. In the first place, the trope of sexual innocence simply could not be sustained by those who lived with the constant evidence of sexual activity that the livestock provided. For example, when I asked Nancy Wilson how she understood sex without the benefit of sexual education courses in school, she retorted, “I lived in one.”⁶ Joyce Martin echoed Nancy's comment, noting her sex education happened “behind the barn.”⁷ Narrators who grew up in those

⁴ Her privileging of the medical discourse also hints at the greater strength of the medical body politic over that of the religious. Mary Johnston, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 April 2010.

⁵ Karen Dubinsky explore the myth of rural sexual “safety” in: *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

⁶ Wilson, interview, 19 April 2010.

⁷ Joyce Martin, (pseudonym), personal interview, 4 October 2010.

circumstances were much more matter-of-fact about the mechanics of sex and in discussing sexuality with me as an interviewer. However, the rural influence goes deeper in disrupting the dominant body politics which were, by their nature, urban Leviathans.

A general lack of services and a corresponding attitude of “make do” disrupted both medical and religious claims to authority. Several of the war brides interviewed who had grown up attending their parish church in their particular sect found denominational fealty impossible in the Canadian rural west; the general lack of denominational diversity made barriers between sects extremely fluid. Florence Anderson, who was raised in the Anglican Church, attended the Lutheran services whenever the itinerant minister came to their small Manitoban town to preach because the only other religious option was the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Though the Lutheran services required a fairly large theological adjustment it was less so than Ukrainian Orthodox Church where the services were still conducted in the mother tongue.⁸ While living in an isolated logging town, Karen Rand, a Methodist, had to content herself with attending occasional Anglican services with a friend and only when her friend had access to car to drive them.⁹ This denominational scarcity resulted in many women being exposed to several different religious body politics over their lifetimes, weakening the hold of a single sect’s Leviathan hold on their own corporeal experience. Others chose to practice their faith privately rather than attending alternative services effectively removing them from contact with their faith’s hierarchy and limiting direct religious control over their embodied experiences.

The dominant medical discourse was almost completely urban in its make-up. Medical training, as well as major medical investigative studies, were (and remain) necessarily housed in major institutions which are only feasible in large cities. The institutional biomedical model is also more generally based on an ideal urban setting where a physician, in treating a patient, has access to a variety of diagnostic tools and apparatus, specialist consultations, and support from medical structures such as pharmacies, paramedics, and hospitals as necessary. In the absence of such structures the idealized postwar relationship between the doctor and the patient changed, creating a different power exchange not based on the appearance of detached infallibility advocated by contributors to the *CMAJ*.

Verna King’s son became seriously ill with bronchial pneumonia while the family was living in an isolated area of Manitoba; the local doctor, the only one with a car, had to drive the boy to the nearest hospital during a blizzard. As Verna tells it, on the way the car hit a snow bank and the crash damaged

⁸ Florence Anderson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010.

⁹ Karen Rand, (pseudonym), personal interview, 7 July 2010.

the front driver's side door so it no longer closed. The doctor drove the rest of the way with his arm through the open window holding it shut.¹⁰ Joyce Martin's doctor diagnosed her, and her family, largely over the phone because it was expensive and difficult to get into town to see him. She would describe the symptoms to him and he would send a prescription by mail or tell her how to treat the illness with what she had on hand, including, in one case, veterinary medicine they had for their livestock.¹¹ This kind of personal interaction disrupted the dominant authoritative role of the emotionally detached medical man who inspired patient compliance via his wielding of a dominant body politic and replaced it with a deeper, more individual, sense of trust that came from physician and patient working together. Verna and Joyce both felt that they were partners working with the doctor to ensure their families' health. As Joyce put it: "things like that just meant a lot to us because we had no money and a trip to the doctor for no reason was unheard of. And we just had such a good working relationship."¹² Joyce's use of the term "working relationship" denotes a collegial, rather than authoritarian, relationship and is particularly illuminating.

Rural life also affected the way that narrators viewed *I Love Lucy*. On the one hand, the impact of media-based discourse was lessened for many rural women because of accessibility issues. Media is a luxury product; for some it was out of reach due to the cost of a television set or impediments such as access to electricity.¹³ On the other hand, for those who could access television, its status as a luxury item gave it more weight and made it an indulgence to be cherished.¹⁴ Joyce enjoyed relaxing by watching television programs, including *I Love Lucy*, only during the winter since they had no power in the summer and were too busy to watch television during the planting, growing, and harvesting seasons. For her and others, sitting down to watch a program such as *I Love Lucy* was a both a monetary luxury and a gift of free time that they gave themselves. During the interviews there was a distinct sense that because of television's status as an extravagance they connected with the program more and gave it extra attention than other interviewees with more entertainment options might have done.¹⁵

¹⁰ Verna King, (pseudonym), personal interview, 20 September 2010.

¹¹ Martin, interview, 4 October 2010.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Many of the urban born war brides were shocked at the initial primitiveness of their husband's prairie farms. However, after the war was over improvements such as the electrification of rural areas commenced quickly. Margaret Brown, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 July 2010; Rand, interview, 7 July 2010; Edith Small (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 September 2010.

¹⁴ Martin, interview, 4 October 2010; Rand, interview, 7 July 2010.

¹⁵ This applied to the consumption of media products beyond television. Though Edith Small did not watch *I Love Lucy* she remembers the joy she felt when the bookmobile would come to town from the Winnipeg Public Library. Small, interview, 19 September 2010.

Negotiations within the Frame of Repression and Control: The Complexities of Power in Authoritative Embodied Discourse

One of the enigmas that this dissertation sought to unmask is the political right's deployment of the postwar war era as a bucolic and sexually uncomplicated era – a designation so oversimplified, reductive, and reactionary as to be ahistorical. The false image of the postwar era as naturally “normal” is belied by the extensive efforts required to reinforce social structures that were supposed to be innate processes and qualities. The proceeding chapters have demonstrated that there was a concerted effort by multiple authoritative groups to police the sexual bodies of the English Canadian populace. This control was not limited to those whose bodies were deemed abnormal and who experts assumed needed to, in the best case, be reformed into acting with acceptable societal parameters or, at worst, be contained. Those bodies who fulfilled the crucial gender/sexual norms of being married, monogamous, and heterosexual were also policed and punished by embodied Leviathan ideals which were ever watchful for any deviation that might signal the first slip on the road to greater abnormality. However, such discourses were not always interpreted exactly in the way intended and the power dynamics were never as simple as a one-way project of repression.

One of the prime examples of this complexity can be seen in the ways that motherhood was imagined and reimagined in the postwar world. All three dominant discourses placed immense focus and importance on women's roles as mothers. In the *Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)* the medicalized mother body was the keystone of the family; their gender role deviations were written on her flesh and she, in her role as keystone, had the potentiality to warp her family, such as emasculating her sons, if she failed to uphold that burden. Likewise, both the spiritual one flesh body and the Lucy body supported the role of mother as martyr who had to continuously sacrifice herself to the needs of her family or face the consequential familial breakdown. Together these discourses created the well-known postwar “blame mother” phenomenon wherein mothers were subjected to a disproportionate amount of censure for wider societal issues. Yet, this concept, negative as it was, could be inverted. Mothers could, and did, take on the identity of “capability Mom,” whose domestic prowess gave her social legitimacy as well as personal power and satisfaction as demonstrated by Lois Adamson in her proud assertion, “I was a good little mum!”¹⁶

¹⁶ Readers will remember that Lois was one of the narrators that centred her identity and a good deal of her self-worth on the fact that she was a self-declared excellent mother. Lois Adamson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 March 2010.

“Management” of the family, especially husbands, was a recurring theme within most of the interviews. Even in cases such as that of Fiona Shortt, who portrayed herself as a victimized martyr to her family, there were clear elements of power infused into that role.¹⁷ Indeed, sixty years later it is still common for mothers to invoke their maternal sacrifice, their role in “holding it all together,” as a source of power and identity rather than as a legitimate social complaint. The idea that “if mother does not do it then nobody will” was in many cases, though not unproblematically, negotiated into “nobody but mother *can* do it.” This complex dance along the spectrum spanning from subordinated victim to maternal four-star general demonstrates that power cannot be limited to the oversimplified binary of those who have it oppressing those who do not.¹⁸ Though dominant body politics only allowed women, such as the women interviewed, a narrow range of legitimate identities in which to engage, it also empowered those who were willing and able to fulfill those roles.

Dominant discourses could also unintentionally empower those bodies they sought to disenfranchise. The best documented example of unintentional empowerment within the sexuality historiography is the ways that, throughout the twentieth century, dominant body politics, particularly medical ones, denigrated and codified same-sex attraction as deviant and pathological. Many scholars argue that such scrutiny, the very acts of classification, gave the homosexual – especially the gay male – community a vocabulary with which to name their identity as well as the assurance that they were not alone in feeling the way that they did.¹⁹ As this dissertation demonstrates, unintentional empowerment was also a factor, albeit to a lesser degree, for women with nonconformist heterosexuality such as in the example of the diffusion of birth control and abortion knowledges. Though the medical men and women within the *CMAJ*, as well as the authorities in the Protestant churches, were seemingly united in restricting birth control methods, including new innovations such as the Pill and IUD, to married couples, their framing of family limitation as beneficial could not help but reach the ears of the unmarried. As demonstrated via the testimony of the group of interviewees who married in the 1960s,

¹⁷ Fiona Shortt, (pseudonym), personal interview, 5 July 2010.

¹⁸ This complexity in understanding body-based empowerment has important implications for the continued work of feminism, especially within international contexts. It is imperative to understand that what is perceived as dominating by one group may be empowering for another. Motherhood in particular has remained highly contested terrain for multicultural feminists. See: Daisy Hernández, ed. *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism* (New York: Seal Press, 2002); Carole R. McCann, *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, 3rd Edition (New York: Routledge, 2013); Joyce Green ed. *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Black Point, N. S.: Fernwood Publishers, 2007).

¹⁹ See: George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987); Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001); Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

once the rhetoric of birth control had been established as a positive right of married couples, unmarried women could and did demand that its benefits be granted to them. Despite well documented cases of Pill refusal,²⁰ none of the women interviewed who sought birth control prior to marriage were asked about their marital status, never mind being refused service because of it.²¹

Margaret Brown's abortion narrative also demonstrates the principle of knowledge appropriation. Margaret was aware that a medically safe abortion could be obtained illegally and indeed it is arguable that the very notoriety of illegal abortion allowed that knowledge to penetrate the willful innocence that Margaret and many of the other war brides saw as part of their sexual identity. Similarly to some homosexual men from the same era, Margaret adopted the medical knowledge of illicit abortion but discarded the mores that accompanied it. She understood that society characterized her choice as immoral, selfish, and as a violation of true motherhood but negotiated this knowledge by substituting a different medical idealization of the mother body. She rewrote the abortion script to make her decision one of sacrifice to her family's ultimate good. She therefore used the medical profession's own idealization of the mother body as designed to bend and modify itself to the greater needs of the family in a way that was not intended by the creators of that discourse, using a "perverse reading" of the medical discourse to empower herself and normalize her actions.

Changing the Rhetoric versus Changing the Body: A Case Study of Gender Roles Compared to the Construction of Sex as "Good"

Despite their different foci on the details of sexuality, and the ways in which some narrators were able to use those to play one dominant body politic off another, Leviathan bodies did overlap; when such intersections occurred, the overall postwar dominant embodied sexual discourse was the strongest. In addition to their policing the role of mothers, all of the dominant body politics examined in this dissertation advocated the importance of the separation of gender roles to the harmony of a marriage as well as the health and wellbeing of the persons within that union. Whether it was the *CMAJ*'s assertion that gender role deviation made women ill, the United Church's passive-aggressive stance on working

²⁰ Christabelle Sethna, "The University of Toronto Health Service, Oral Contraception, and Student Demand for Birth Control, 1960-1970," *Historical Studies in Education* 17 no. 2 (2005): 265-292.

²¹ This included women such as Nancy Wilson who was quite young when she went to the doctor to request a Pill prescription accompanied by her aunt – factors that should have suggested her unmarried status. When I asked Jean Simpson if being a doctor's girlfriend made it easier to access birth control she was surprised at the question noting that every single girl she knew had access to birth control at that time. Nancy Wilson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 April 2010; Jean Simpson, (pseudonym), personal interview, 5 July 2010.

women, or Lucy's inevitable return to the domestic sphere at the end of each episode, there was a clear message that a woman's first duty (if not her sole duty) was to the family and domestic sphere. Gender role separation was so normalized that narrators such as Jean Simpson and Mary Johnston, who saw their marriages as defying those standards, felt the need to explain that non-conformity when interviewed for this project. Yet even in the face of what was clearly a strong dominant ideal, reinforced from multiple body politics, there was evidence of tension. Even small, personal challenges to the status quo created new meaning as when Ruth Bell and Alice Hall reframed their acquiescence to gender role separation as being necessitated by men's general weakness. At the very least such mentalities challenged the dominant claim that gender separations were natural. Further, it should be noted that while most of the narrators accepted gender role striation this did not mean that they saw their roles as worthless. Many took great pride in their abilities as mothers and felt such a role had both monetary and social value. Indeed, Joyce Martin, though she stated firmly that, "if my husband would have said not to go to work I never would have entered the workforce and it never entered my head to go to work before my kids were ten years old," felt that the government should pay mothers to stay at home with their children until they were of school age.²² Incongruities such as these demonstrate that for many of the narrators, a surface conservatism often masked hidden or personalized activism, which in some cases, such as Joyce's rather socialist solution to childcare, could be quite radical.

Despite these tensions, gender role divisions were clearly a compelling force in the narrators' lives. In contrast, other themes, despite being present in multiple dominant body politics, seem to have taken longer to become socially encoded or were more unevenly absorbed. This dissertation clearly demonstrates the centrality of married sex in the postwar period; its prominence was both reflected and simultaneously reinforced and created by expert authorities. Contradictorily, a significant number of women interviewed, especially amongst the older cohort, negated sex's importance or dismissed it as a part of the early phase of marriage. This incongruity, especially when compared to the relatively easy acceptance by the same women of the naturalness of gender role divisions, sheds more light on the ways that dominant Leviathan bodies work within history over longer periods in history. Gender role separation was legitimized through embodied norms long before the postwar era, creating continuity from pre-Victorian times in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when scholars "proved"

²² Martin, interview, 4 October 2010.

women unfit for the public sphere with theories combining science and theological morality.²³ In contrast, the positively sexualized female body was a fairly new concept – the continuum of a woman’s sexual drive and enjoyment having been disrupted by the Victorian ideal of the sexually demure, even frigid, “angel of the home.”²⁴ The more complete acceptance of gender role separation might demonstrate that it was easier and thus more common to change the rhetoric –the body politic – of a Leviathan body than to alter her (or his) embodied features. Thus, medical and other postwar discourses normalizing women’s subordinate domestic role were simply reinventions of previous interpretations that no longer made sense given the socio-cultural framework of the time.²⁵

This reinvention process frequently focused on women’s reproductive functions using the same “problematic” sights within the female body to anchor changing discourses legitimating women’s socially inferior position. The reinterpretation of menstruation throughout history is an excellent case study demonstrating that changes to the understanding of female embodiment are usually reinterpretations of the same corporeal phenomenon rather than changes to the Leviathan body itself. The natural act of uterine bleeding, historically interpreted as a sign of women’s biological inferiority, has been constructed in a variety of different ways by the scientific ideals of the time. In the early modern era menstruation was supposedly a way that women’s bodies removed toxic impurities from her system; men’s bodies were more efficient, innately burning these impurities away. In the Victorian era menstruation became a devastating biological event that severely weakened all women and from which “it would seem hardly possible to heal satisfactorily without the aid of surgical treatment.”²⁶ (In)famous physician Havelock Ellis described menstruation in 1904 as a type of “biological roller coaster” that caused powerful emotional and biological fluctuation that impaired otherwise healthy women on a cyclical basis.²⁷ In all these cases a woman’s menses was used to disqualify her from assuming male (public) roles. Even as menstruation became seen as a normal and natural part of women’s reproductive

²³ See: Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990); Londa Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993); Londa Schiebinger, “Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteen-Century Anatomy,” in *Feminism and the Body*. ed. Londa Schiebinger, 25-57 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁴ Of course the de-sexualisation of the female was an enormous change.

²⁵ For example, the argument that women were physically and mentally incapable of public work had been largely delegitimized by the internationally heavily propagandized woman war worker. See: Jeffrey Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004); Ruth Roach Pierson, *Canadian Women and the Second World War* (Ottawa: Historical Association Booklet, 1983); “*They’re Still Women After All*”: the Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).

²⁶ Laqueur, *Making Sex* 221.

²⁷ *Ibid.* See also: Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie eds. *Menstruation: a Cultural History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

functioning, it, especially when it changed such as during menarche or menopause, was still constructed as a site of psycho-biological danger, with the period immediately before the bleeding increasingly fashioned as a time of female emotional weakness. As this dissertation demonstrates, medical contributors to the *CMAJ* envisioned physical “inadequacies” in both the premenstrual and menstrual period as “red flags” of women’s gender role nonconformity, ranging from a general lack of femininity to full blown disgust at being a woman. In all of these cases the dominant rhetoric explaining *why* menstruation was both a time of weakness, as well as evidence of women’s more general biological inferiority, changes to reflect the scientific understandings of the time; however, these rhetorics orbit around the Leviathan body within which the equation “menstruation equals illness” has remained largely static.

Accepting women as sexual creatures required a complete reframing of the Leviathan body, and that took time.²⁸ The conclusions we can draw from this are twofold. First, we need further studies of embodied histories to more fully understand how often shifts in the bodily make up of Leviathan ideals occurred and the rhetorical and societal weight needed to create such a change. Such knowledges would have important historical and contemporary relevancies. For example, understanding the differences between a rhetorical reframing of ideal bodies and their actual embodied metamorphosis might shed light on the long-term successes and failures of the liberal feminist movement in gaining acceptance for women’s right to control their own bodies in the second wave feminist movement and beyond. Second, the comparison of how the narrators accepted changing gender roles versus her sexual nature demonstrates the ways that bodies can act in history as entities in their own right. It is clear from the testimony of the interviewees that one of the factors in the overall acceptance of positive female sexuality was the pleasure that they and other women felt; their general desire for sexual relations translated into a literal “lust” for change. Edith Small noted that she was a virgin on her wedding night only “by a great deal of restraint” because waiting to have sex with her husband was “very, very difficult I tell you!”²⁹ Margaret Brown described her sexual life with her husband as “hot and heavy!”³⁰ Their physicality, combined with the weight the experiences of other women like them, must have been a factor in such a change.

²⁸ It could be argued that the reason that this reframing actually took a comparatively small amount of time was that it was not a completely new creation but a refashioning of an older Leviathan that saw women as having strong sexual passions.

²⁹ Small, interview, 19 September 2010.

³⁰ Brown, interview, 27 June 2010.

The Literal Embodiment of Normality: The Triad of Sex, Sexuality, and Gender Roles

This dissertation originally intended only to map the sexual geography of postwar heterosexual married women; it sought to comprehend how they understood and engaged with their bodies and their sexual navigation of postwar morality. Framing the dissertation in this narrow way was based on my own post-second wave feminist point of view where sex and sexuality can be understood in isolation from related gendered concepts such as motherhood, femininity, and domesticity. In the immediate postwar era, however, sex, sexuality, and gender roles were irrevocably intertwined both in ideal body politics and in the narrators' understanding of their corporeal existence as women.

The conflation of sex, sexuality, and gender into an unbreakable triad situated a great deal of power into the body, both in congress with, and separated from, the person inhabiting that corpus. Crucially, according to the Leviathan ideals a body performing normality of any one aspect of the triad was, by association, performing normality in the others. Deviance in one area could also manifest itself in, and would affect, other stations of normality. A woman lacking domestic will or ability was often created as lacking essential femininity which further called into question the normality of her sexual identity. More importantly, gender role normality was the public face of heterosexual normality – an act that usually occurred behind closed doors and so had to be policed indirectly. The influence of the dominant body politics created a structure in which a heterosexually married woman with children, suitably domestic, was automatically assumed to be engaged in relatively frequent and fulfilling sexual intercourse with her husband. It is no wonder that the pregnant body became practically a fetish within all three Leviathan body politics – it was the only real proof that the all-important and legitimated sexual acts were actually occurring.

Elements in the triad were not created equal; the sex act was given primary place in dominant body politics. Normal coitus engendered femininity and strengthened marital, and thus family, happiness and unity. “Good sex” between husband and wife was therefore both a barometer and a remedy, for multiple gender and sexual dysfunctions. And though the internalization of this sexual ideal was uneven, it also proved inescapable, becoming, by the later period, fully, though not always unproblematically, internalized by the narrators. Notably, many of the markers of embodied sexual normalcy were largely beyond the control of the mind, making the body, and not the person inhabiting it, the prevailing historical actor. The ability to engage in sex without pain, become pregnant, carry a pregnancy to its smooth and successful conclusion, even the basic fact of possessing a working set of clearly female

identified genitalia, were all markings of sexual normalcy only nominally in control of the individual – an irony which was expressed by more than one narrator.

One of the most problematic, and the most poignant, examples of this type of embodied irony concerns orgasm, especially penetrative vaginal orgasm. The ability to gain pleasure from the heterosexual act was coded with a wealth of positive meanings despite the difficulty obtaining it.³¹ Women who could not obtain pleasure from the penetrative sex act alone were constructed medically and psychologically as “immature,” and, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, intermittent or absent orgasm was attributed to masculinized women who rejected maternity, domesticity, and a woman’s subordinate social role.

Religious discourses gave further weight to the medicalization of the orgasm. Roman Catholic women’s roles in achieving orgasm were truncated as it was her husband’s duty to “bring” his wife to orgasm, or “give” her pleasure. Such passivity did not alleviate her from blame if “completion” was not achieved; orgasm signalled God’s blessing on a union and his gift for accepting the burden of procreation. Orgasm in Protestant discourse, as in *I Love Lucy*, was much more ephemeral – implied rather than stated unambiguously. However, both the euphemistic spiritual “joining” expressed by the Anglican and United Church discourses and the metonym of the kiss that Lucy and Ricky enjoyed added further weight to the definition of a sexual experience as successful or unsuccessful on the basis of female vaginal orgasm alone. If sex was the epitome of gender and marital normalcy, then vaginal orgasm was the litmus test that sex was being engaged in correctly – in other words that it was “good.”

Despite this, and in the same way that many narrators decentred the importance of sex overall in their marriage, orgasm was not the centre of sexual intercourse, writ large, with their husbands. For most of them (those who enjoyed sexual intercourse), sex was a multifaceted experience that was not immediately negated if left “incomplete” via their lack of orgasm, giving me the impression that orgasm was more of a subsidiary bonus rather than the focus of the activity. At the same time, however, it is clear that the importance of sexual normalcy in a more general sense gradually permeated their consciousness, especially those who married later in the time period under review. Whether it was Jean Simpson’s largely unconscious attempt to change her answer about her marital sexual frequency to be

³¹ The focus on penetration based vaginal orgasm would be challenged by second wave feminists as fundamentally damaging to women and their sexual well-being. The most famous of this was: Anne Koedt, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm,” *Notes from the First Year* (New York: New York Radical Feminists, 1968). See also: Jane Gerhard, “Revisiting ‘The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm’: the Female Orgasm in American Sexual Thought and Second Wave Feminism,” *Feminist Studies* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 449-476.

more in line with the statistical mean, or Jessica Bateman's struggle to articulate her distaste for sex in the face of a dominant body politic that constructed that feeling as profoundly abnormal, sex clearly remained crucial to their understandings of themselves, their bodies, and their relationships with their husbands.³²

“The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side”: Normality, Resistance, the Coney Island Mirror Effect, and the Immolation of the Straw Woman

How do we reconcile the multiple paradoxes that characterize the sexual landscape of the postwar era? How can we comprehend the irony of an era of seeming sexual quiescence and conformity with a generation that would raise the women who swelled the ranks of the second wave of feminism and the sexual revolution, and in some cases, who joined those ranks themselves? Years before the first performance of *The Vagina Monologues*, how did women understand and relate to her vagina?³³ What did postwar wives and mothers, reduced by popular reimagining to a straw avatar cheerfully vacuuming in her heels, think about sex? Should we see her as a victim? A co-conspirator in her own sexual confinement? Or a sexpot wielding multiple forms of embodied power?

The answer is necessarily complex. It begins with the abandonment of the myth that the immediate postwar era was a bucolic, desexualized oasis in history epitomized by the anomalous pop culture image of twin beds in the master suite chastely separated by a nightstand. As this dissertation has aptly demonstrated, the period between “khaki fever” and “sex, drugs and rock and roll,” despite its repressive social climate, indeed because of it, was profoundly sexually productive. Further, we must understand that bodies, in order to create change, need not be in direct contravention of the dominant ideal. The majority of the time, in the majority of ways, the bodies of the narrators in this dissertation conformed to the general prescriptions of the authoritative ideal. They benefitted from their veneer of normality. Yet, it was also from this position of power that their bodies, in their inescapably individuality, were able to realize change. Some of these changes were the result of conscious choices made to rework the boundaries of the sexual frameworks that constrained them. Margaret Brown chose to rewrite her abortion narrative as one of familial self-sacrifice rather than personal selfishness.³⁴ Mary Johnston chose to take birth control on her doctor's advice despite being a Catholic, rationalizing her

³² Simpson, interview, 5 July, 2010; Jessica Bateman, (pseudonym), personal interview, 19 July 2010.

³³ Eve Ensler, *The Vagina Monologues*. Premiered HERE Arts Centre, 1996.

³⁴ Brown, interview, 27 June 2010.

action as one of concern for her aging husband who could not physically bear the burden of supporting any more children.³⁵ Joyce Martin accepted that it was right and proper for her son to engage in domestic labour to support her return to work despite the fact that the idea that her husband would do the same was unthinkable.³⁶ It is this seemingly paradoxical mix of moments of feminist consciousness with the wholesale rejection of feminism expressed by many narrators – the blending of radical and conservative viewpoints – that makes the evaluation of the embodied political standpoints of those women so difficult. At the same time, such conflicts also demonstrate the inherent complexity of individual experience.

Indeed, many of the embodied subversive acts engaged in by the narrators, only radicalized in hindsight, were not conscious subversive statements made for political purposes – they were private acts meant to have effect solely within the personal realm. In this way the bodies of heterosexual, married women, such as the eighteen narrators in this dissertation, could serve as fractured or distorted “Coney Island” mirrors reflecting imperfect reflections of the ideal bodies they were meant to emulate.³⁷ While the women interviewed in Chapter Five are not meant to be representative of English Canadian women, their experiences do demonstrate how individual corpo-“realities” often simultaneously reinforced and disrupted Leviathan bodies. Instead of producing a never ending series of perfect copies as two intact, parallel mirrors would do, real, “fleshy” bodies rebounded their own distortions back onto the Leviathan body creating imperfections within, through demonstrating the unreality of, the ideal.

Do such personal acts of deviance mean that we should historically reconstruct the feminist and sexual revolutions as evolutions? The individual cases of the women narrators, though only a snapshot, demonstrate the ways that postwar mores could be subverted, even by the groups they were supposed to enfranchise. However, to totally reframe the women’s movement as an evolution rather than revolution is perhaps overstating the case to the detriment of both generations. Attempting to connect postwar women such as the eighteen narrators too closely to the sexual revolution or the second wave denies them agency in developing their own strategies to negotiate the terms of their lives and make decisions about their own corporeality. Making too close of a connection also disenfranchises the work of second wave feminists in breaking free from the strategy of internal negotiation to create a new standard based

³⁵ Johnston, interview, 19 April 2010.

³⁶ Martin, interview, 4 October 2010.

³⁷ The concept of the Coney Island mirror is borrowed from Susan M. Carini. Susan M. Carini, “Love’s Labors Almost Lost: Managing Crisis during the Reign of ‘I Love Lucy,’” *Cinema Journal* 43, no.1 (Fall 2003): 44-62.

on directly challenging oppressive social structures. Such an important paradigm shift should not be compromised by a better understanding, and appreciation, of what came before.

The Invention of “Good Sex”

It is a truism that every subsequent generation thinks they “invented” sex. While sexual coitus is a fact of humanity, social constructions of its meanings can, and do, change over time. It is no coincidence that in our modern society every television celebrity psychologist or female- or male-oriented general interest magazine regularly addresses the importance of “quality sex” to the health of a relationship. What most of us do not realize is that “good sex” is a relatively new concept and one that owes little to the excesses of “free love” and the sexual revolution. Rather, the ideal of sex as the ultimate relationship barometer springs from the repressive body politics that established Leviathan bodies to rebuild Western civilization in the wake of disaster and which sought to limit “good sex” to the narrowly defined realm of the heterosexual married couple.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview Data

Pseudonym	Date Interviewed	Birth Year	Year Married	Number of Children	Religion of Birth
Lois Anderson	19-Mar-10	1927	1945	4	Catholic
Florence Anderson	20-Sep-10	unknown	1945	3	Anglican
Glenda Baker	20-Sep-10	1926	1945	3	Unknown
Jessica Bateman	19-Jul-10	1941	1964	2	Lutheran
Ruth Bell	21-Sep-10	1926	1943	4	Anglican
Margaret Brown	27-Jul-10	1930	1947	4	Anglican
Evelyn Carter	20-Sep-10	unknown	1945	3	Presbyterian
Alice Hall	28-Jun-10	1921	1945	3	Anglican
Mary Johnston	19-Apr-10	unknown	1952	8 (5 plus 3 of husband's)	Roman Catholic
Verna King	20-Sep-10	1922	1942	3	Presbyterian
Joyce Martin	04-Oct-10	1939	1961	2	United Church
Karen Rand	07-Jul-10	1935	1954	3	Anglican
Fiona Shortt	05-Jan-10	1932	1952	3	Roman Catholic
Edith Small	19-Sep-10	1921	1945	5	Anglican
Jean Simpson	05-Jul-10	1939	1963	2	Jewish
Marjorie Taylor	17-Oct-10	1925	1946	2	Congregational Church
Diane West	19-Jul-10	1936	1957	2	Anglican
Nancy Wilson	19-Apr-10	1945	1966	2	Unknown